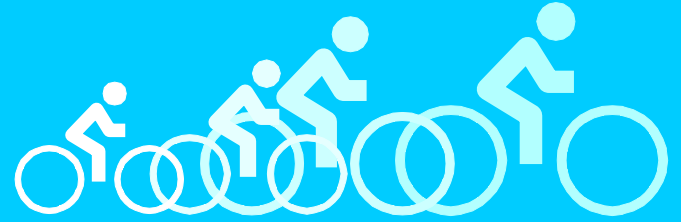


CYCLING Wakefield

Promoting and campaigning for cyclists



Newsletter of Wakefield District Cycle Forum

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John Harvey Memorial Ride Saturday 26th May 10.15 am Queens Mill, Castleford

To celebrate the contribution of our late, great volunteer, John Harvey, to Wakefield District Cycle Forum, we will be holding a John Harvey Ride. John led rides for us from Queens Mill in Castleford, so it is appropriate that this should be the venue for his ride.

Join us for this celebration.

Two Faces of Partnership

This edition of the newsletter will concentrate on the partnership that Wakefield District Cycle Forum (WDCF) has developed with Wakefield Council.

As you will see most of the news is positive and reflects a willingness on the part of most Council departments to work with WDCF in developing and improving our network of cycle routes.

Unfortunately this is not universally true and we are yet again in conflict with some council officials who put the needs of cyclists very low on their list of consideration.

Castleford to Wakefield Greenway

Official Launch of New Path

The much-anticipated official opening of the latest addition to the Castleford to Wakefield Greenway took place on the 13th March. Over 20 Cycle Forum members assembled at the Whitwood Golf Club, which sits adjacent to the new path, along with officials and councillors from Leeds and Wakefield Councils.



Thankfully the weather was kind with no sign of the wintery conditions we had been suffering up until then. The original launch was a victim of the weather and had been cancelled. As our group of happy cyclists approached the ribbon was cut by Councillor Peter Box, leader of Wakefield Council.



The opening of the new path was featured on the evening news bulletin on Radio Leeds. Our Chair, Sandy Clark, was interviewed for the programme. He pointed out that Wakefield District Cycle Forum had been campaigning for this stretch of path for around 20 years, but that the wait had been worth it. 'This is the first time in almost 20 years of campaigning on behalf of cyclists in Wakefield that I can say I find nothing to criticise about a piece cycle infrastructure' stated Sandy.

After the launch of the new path we were treated by City Connect, the Joint West Yorkshire Authorities group responsible for the project, to a drink and butty in the Clubhouse. As you can see this was most appreciated.



The path has already proved popular with all groups of users. Over a period of an hour one Monday morning there were 8 cyclists, 12 walkers, 4 dogs, a baby buggy and a jogger.



The path will now enhance the routes available for our guided rides from Castleford's Queens Mill. This is already one of our most popular rides and is likely to be an even more popular venue now that riders can enjoy the beauty of the River Calder free of traffic.

(Spot the rider wearing their helmet correctly)



Castleford to Wakefield Greenway

Inaugural Ride

Not contented to wait for the official launch of the new Methley Bridge to Fairies Hill section of the Castleford to Wakefield Greenway, the Cycle Forum decided to have its own 'unofficial' opening with a ride along the new path. The official opening had been postponed for a couple of weeks due to bad weather.



After a cup of tea from the café at the Mill it was down to the river and along the amazing new path. When the participants arrived at Whitwood Golf Club butties were ordered and drinks were drunk.

That's what you call a proper 'easy' ride.

Over twenty joined our easy ride from Queens Mill in Castleford, where our Vice-Chair David Leigh, the man with the most interesting rides in our programme, claimed a first again by leading the inaugural ride on the new path.



After the Flood



Only weeks after the launch of the Methley Bridge to Fairies Hill section of the Castleford to Wakefield Greenway, Mother Nature decided to show us who was boss.

A few days of torrential rain and melting snow, from somewhere up in the Pennines presumably, caused the River Calder to burst its banks and our brand-new cycle path became impassable.

When the waters subsided, we were left with a very muddy path for around 200 metres. A bit of a mess as you can see from the photo.



But not to worry our every-ready workgroup came to the rescue and on a bright Monday morning they were out with their shovels and brushes clearing the path of all obstructions.

10 of our volunteers turned up and within a couple of hours the mud was gone.

What a group of HEROES!! (See headline photo)



Castleford to Wakefield Greenway

Repairs and Completion

The new section of cycle path from Methley Bridge to Fairies Hill does not unfortunately complete the whole of the Castleford to Wakefield Greenway.

One section at the beginning in Castleford will be completed by developers who are building a housing estate. This is partially completed and hopefully will be finished by the end of the year. The other 'missing link' is at the Wakefield end at Chantry bridge.



This latter link was promised as a part of a proposed development between Doncaster Road and the canal. The likelihood is that this will not be complete for many years and the cycle forum is anxious that, in the meantime, the route is not spoiled by an 'impassable' section at the Wakefield end of the route. We are therefore proposing that we organise a 'workgroup' weekend to lay a temporary path. The Council have agreed to provide the materials while the Cycle Forum would provide the labour.

If you would like to help with this project get in touch at info@cyclling-wakefield.org.uk

There are also a few sections of the existing route that need a bit of repair, so we will be contacting the Canal and River Trust to gain agreement that our workgroup can work on these.

Workgroup Report

Our workgroup continues to meet on a regular basis, usually twice a month. They are at present building a new path through the woodland on the Nostell Estate just off the Doncaster Road.



The group has already shifted a few tons of bricks from the local brickyard as hardcore, around ten tons of surfacing material provided by the Council and only have about fifteen tons to go. If you think you can help let us know at info@cyclling-wakefield.org.uk



Putting up the Barriers

In our newsletter in September 2010 we reported on a successful campaign to open an access point to Anglers Country Park on the north side of the lake, which previously required cyclists to dismount and lift their bikes over a horse step-over. The report in the newsletter suggested:

‘Now that the access is open, after nearly 2 years of campaigning by the WDCF, life is easier for cyclists but also for wheelchair and pushchair users. It took a long time, but we got there in the end’



The photograph opposite showed the new access point after it had been opened in 2010.

In 2013 we were also successful in getting the Council to recognise, in its Cycle Strategy that ‘barriers which exclude motorcyclists also exclude many cyclists, most wheelchair users and many others. The Council will attempt to minimise the level of restriction’

Cyclist know that barriers can be annoying to some of them but to other they are debarring. The new strategy seemed to signal a recognition of this throughout the council

So it came as a great surprise when in March this year a kissing-gate appeared at this entrance (right). Council staff informed us that this was to be accompanied by a horse step-over, returning us to the pre-2010 situation. To add insult to injury the council officers involved had failed to inform or consult with the Cycle Forum. At our AGM we passed a motion opposing the new barriers and wrote to the Chief Executive asking that the project should stop. Unfortunately, once again without consultation, the project was continued.



The kissing-gate was then removed. Your editor was told by the contractors that a new, bigger one would be installed next to the newly installed horse step-over (left). As one of the workmen remarked ‘what a waste of money’.



The reason being given for the new barriers is the intrusion into the Country Park of motorcyclists. Different officers have given different tales to different members of the Cycle Forum, but it seems the instances of such intrusion is rare, some at night when no one else is about (traces of motorbike tyres have been spotted). It is remarkable that no

Cycle Forum members have ever reported sightings of motorbikes given the popularity amongst the cycling community of Anglers Country Park.

We will be meeting with the council officers soon, but it would help our campaign if cyclists, and others, made their feelings known to the council.

Below is a draft letter/email which you could personalise using the information in the draft and this article but if you don’t have the time to do that please feel free to use the draft provided. (continued on next page)

If you know of any others who might join in the protest, including users of wheelchairs, mobility scooters, baby buggies, etc, please forward this to them.

Letters/emails should be sent to one or all of the people listed below:

Merran McCrae, Chief Executive email mmcrae@wakefield.gov.uk
Councillor Peter Box, Leader of the Council email pbox@wakefield.gov.uk
Councillor Maureen Cummings, Cabinet Member, Countryside email mcummings@wakefield.gov.uk
Charlie Tindill, Street Scene Manager, email streetscenemr@wakefield.gov.uk

The postal address is Town Hall, Bond Street, Wakefield, WF1 2QW

Dear
I am writing regarding the installation of barriers at the North entrance to the lake at Anglers Country Park, Winterset. As a cyclist I wish to register my protest at this action.

One of the positive policies of Wakefield Council over recent years has been the removal of barriers which deter cyclists and other user and the installation of more appropriate barriers, e.g. bollards, on new paths. As a regular user of the cycle routes that run through Anglers Country Park I am appalled at this reversal of policy.

Not only will these barriers be a disincentive to cyclists, but they will I am sure debar many cyclists with non-standard bikes and other potential users with mobility aids.

The funds used to install these barriers might better have been used to improve the paths round the lake, which remain the worst on the local path network.

I urge the council to reconsider this action and remove the barriers immediately.

Yours

Overcoming the Barriers

It is sad that the decision of the Council to erect more barriers to entry to the countryside in the Wakefield District comes as a new group emerges with the purpose of helping disabled people to enjoy the countryside.

As you will see below part of that effort by Open Country is the establishing of a Tandem Club, which has just started meeting and will continue doing so

over the summer. Fortunately, at present, their venues do not include Anglers Country Park.

If you know anyone who would like to join as back rider or would like to volunteer as front rider please do get in touch. Contact details are below



OPEN COUNTRY'S WAKEFIELD TANDEM CYCLING CLUB

Wednesday evenings from April to October
Join Open Country, the award-winning charity that has over 25 years experience in helping disabled people enjoy the countryside. We meet on a Wednesday at 6pm at Pugneys or Thornes Park and cycle for 2-3 hours, usually with a pub stop thrown in! We are keen to welcome ambulant disabled back riders (stokers) or non-disabled volunteer front riders (pilots). Join us – it's fun!

Tel: 01423 507227 • wakefield@opencountry.org.uk • www.opencountry.org.uk

Increase your fitness
Improve your health & well-being
Visit the countryside
Enjoy fresh air
Meet new friends
Develop your self-confidence



New sign for Anglers

As suggested by one of our members

~~Welcome to Anglers Country Park~~
Restricted Access Ahead

If you do not have a radar key there is no access for:-
Overweight or Obese persons with a girth greater than 51.33 inches

Please use the attached measure to determine your girth

Mobility scooters with turning circles greater than say 5 and a bit feet

Large buggies or prams with turning circle greater than 3.33 feet recurring

Would such persons return to Santingly Lane and travel to the Car Park Entrance
Please reflect that this route though more dangerous is an extra mile of exercise.

Mobility scooter riders please ensure sufficient power for this diversion.

Have a Nice Day

Club Standard Registered Users
Welcome to Anglers Country Park

Please have your radar key to hand

Remember to smile smugly for the CCTV Cameras

