

HAMPSHIRE CYCLING

'more cycling more often'



ANNUAL REPORT: 1 October 2005 to 30 September 2006

CTC Hampshire Cycling Background

CTC Hampshire Cycling (CTC-HC) was set up in 1999 to increase cycling levels in the county with the slogan "more cycling more often". It consists of campaigners (see appendix for names) from the areas of the three CTC District Associations (cycling groups) in Hampshire, i.e. Portsmouth, South Hampshire and North Hampshire.

CTC Hampshire Cycling seeks to achieve its objective by liaison with officers and politicians in all tiers of government, and especially at the County level. We have good links with Hampshire County Council (HCC) and with several of the District Councils, but we have had less contact with Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils.

CTC Hampshire Cycling seeks to obtain an overall view of county policy and countywide trends (e.g. proliferation of traffic islands) and to influence policies and practice, as well as supporting individual campaigners through networking.

Political and financial background

- **Hampshire County Council:** During the year, HCC has run into serious financial problems, partly arising from major overspending in what are now called services to older people. As a result other departments of the County Council have had substantial cuts in funding. In Environment, which handles most cycling affairs, there has been restructuring and loss of jobs at the top. There is also – partly driven by the planned reconstruction of the Ashburton Court buildings – to be a relocation of highways people in Environment away from Winchester to the "Areas" within the County, with people responsible for capital projects to be housed together with maintenance staff. This change may in itself be helpful, but overall the picture is little or no money for cycling. In September 2006, Cllr Mel Kendal (also Leader of New Forest District Council) took over as Hampshire's Executive Member for the Environment. It's not yet clear what effect this will have on us.
- **District Councils:** in May there were changes in political control of some District Councils. We see no reason to expect a favourable impact on cycling.

Challenges and campaigning activities during the year

- **LTP2 (Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011)** (see also report of last year) Lack of consultation continued to be a theme despite promises to the contrary. We eventually obtained an interview with planners in February just a week before the County's LTP2 submission was to go for final approval. Although it was a cordial meeting we felt that our submission had not been taken seriously, as HCC

believed that it was not possible to increase cycling. Given the downward trend in cycling perceived and forecast by the County, their chosen target to maintain the present level of cycling was seen by them as quite challenging. We disputed this on the basis of favourable cycle counts and increased levels of cycle parking in Winchester. Hampshire's LTP2 is focused on the headings of safety, accessibility, congestion and pollution but it seemed that - because of the way in which these are measured - cycling is not prominent under any of the headings. Our message that cycling needs to be promoted by the County had not been getting through¹.

- **Highway design for cycling:**

- **Systems:** CTC-HC has been campaigning for the equivalent of COPECAT (a system developed by another UK highway authority) for Hampshire for many years. This summer "Gateway" was introduced by Hampshire. Unfortunately, it transpires that its purpose is more a method of tracking the progress of schemes and making sure that they do not lose their original aims over the years. We have not seen any documents relating to Gateway but we suspect that cycle audit will not figure largely in it.
 - **Road Narrowings:** It still remains the case that the County believes that road narrowing is a good method of reducing speeds, so that islands continue to proliferate, and where roads are reduced from two lanes to one there is no provision for cyclists because cyclists must not be encouraged to use such roads. In Hampshire there have been two innovative narrowings this year on trial, involving islands with a red advisory cycle lane of substandard width close to the kerb. CTC-HC has submitted comments as requested. (Originally CTC-HC recommended the cycle lane should be in the centre of the road where cyclists are taught to ride under the new cycling standard). HCC showed interest in a questionnaire that CTC-HC started designing to assess the impact of traffic schemes on cyclists and motorists.
 - **Design choices:** the county continues to be very cautious in its provision for cyclists, so that offroad solutions are preferred and the demand from cyclists ignored. E.g. there is a road closure in Basingstoke which has a well-used mud track through the pile of earth. Requests for it to be made official with tarmac have been turned down on the grounds that it would be "dangerous" (leading on to a small roundabout on the A30) and there is not enough demand to make it economic.
 - **"Cycle routes"** When cycle access improvements are requested, often because of severance e.g. across a roundabout or a busy main road, they are sometimes rejected on the grounds that they are "not on a cycle route". There still seems to be the mindset that cyclists are only to be allowed on official cycle routes as shown on the map despite our campaign that the whole highway network is the cycle network.
- **"Road Safety"**
 - **Highway Code:** CTC-HC met HCC Road Safety department with a detailed response to the proposed changes in the Highway Code. Sadly, they saw nothing wrong in the new proposals and we were unable to influence their

¹ The county booklets *Getting About Guides, travel information for older and disabled people* list information on trains, buses, taxis, plane, ferry, car etc but have no mention of cycling.

submission. They were dismayed to learn that we consider that substandard cycle lanes etc. are dangerous and therefore they concluded that much cycle infrastructure was a waste of resources. Diplomatically tricky.

- **Cycle Training**: Cycle training as a means of promoting cycling was one of the main things we asked for in LTP2, as fear is a major barrier to cycling. However HCC Road Safety does not approve of the new national Cycling Standard, nor does the county (Kent?) which they are benchmarked against. HCC Road Safety is unwilling to promote cycle training (there is no need, they say, as accident rates are low and demand from schools low); they are also unwilling to advertise private cycle trainers on Hantsweb or go into partnership with private cycle trainers. Other sources tell us that there is an unmet demand for cycle training, and at least one of the professional trainers in Hampshire reports a boom in business with individuals and with schools.
- **Local matters**: CTC-HC members have been involved in many local matters with varying degrees of success. Traffic calming measures, road narrowings and permeability of town centres such as Basingstoke, Andover and Winchester are still problems. Links between rural settlements is another major problem - research shows that cycling infrastructure is best concentrated on the towns so therefore there is reluctance to provide alternatives to busy A or B roads.
- **National affairs**. Several CTC-HC members have contributed to the national CTC "Right to Ride" online discussion group, and correspondingly we have benefited from information and advice from others in the group. One of us attended the Birmingham conference in May 2006.

Countryside issues

South Downs Way: The public inquiry into the crossing of the A32 was held. The objections were lodged by equestrians concerned at safety issues at this crossing. The Inspector made no significant changes to the existing orders and so it is likely that they will be confirmed. Implementation date unknown./

Itchen Navigation Trail: No progress as HCC has no money for the agreed feasibility study and LTP money cannot apparently be used for feasibility!

Bishops Waltham – Botley railway trail : This is a tripartite project between CTC, BHS and RA with officer support from HCC designed to provide a multi-user route more or less following the line of the old railway. The group is currently looking at the southern end where land is in County ownership.

Countryside Access Plans: Plans are now published for the Forest of Bere, Forest of Eversley, South Downs and New Forest. Consultations are in progress on Solent and Test and Itchen will start in November. The aspirations in the plans are admirable but lack of resources makes implementation much more difficult.

Progress/Good news

- **Basingstoke**: the "nagging and snagging" pilot project using LTP monies has now started after a delay because the officer responsible was busy on LTP2. Phase 1 of Cycle Links project has now received a budget of £400,000 to come from developer funding, not from LTP monies as we were given to understand.

- **National Cycle Network (NCN)** route 23 from Basingstoke to Alton and Alresford via Four Marks has been completed by Sustrans and HCC, with successful opening ceremony in April 2006. A leaflet is now available.
- An off-carriageway cycleway has been built alongside the A3057 at Timsbury which forms part of NCN 24. This is a useful link but the surface is poor. Objections have been raised and hopefully this will be remedied.
- **Miracles Bikeabout** (an experiment funded by the EU): some bikes from this popular Winchester project may be made available to Basingstoke
- **Utility cycling growth** in Winchester: cycle parking counts by one of us showed a 10% increase from 2003 to 2004 and a further 15% rise from 2004 to 2005. The 2005 level has been maintained in 2006, including further growth in parking at the rail station. We commend this method of producing a robust and convincing measure of local utility cycling. It's not at all onerous – to cover all of Winchester City Centre takes an hour's ride weekly with a clipboard.
- **Bike Week in June**
 - **Winchester**: after ten successful years, the City Council quit. CTC-HC people and Hampshire Cycle Training took over and ran a full program of events, minus only the Bike Fair on the opening Saturday in previous years.
 - **Basingstoke**: a one-day exhibition with several stands was a new venture.

Conclusion

The problems across the County remain much the same as in previous years, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure design, lack of cycle audit, lack of cycle promotion and training, and lack of consultation. There is a belief by many non-cyclists, including some County Council officers and Members, that cycling is dangerous and not part of the solution to traffic and transport problems. Despite these hindrances we have had some successes to reward our efforts. The significant changes in Hampshire during the year include further reductions in public funding and a possibly more difficult political situation, but also substantial growth in cycle training by the private sector.

The future

At the most recent meeting of Hampshire Cycling it was decided that we needed to change our approach and to concentrate our efforts more on the politicians. We agreed a list of infrastructure aims so that there is a uniform voice. We are also proposing to make closer links with the new cycle trainers.

As we write this, the national political scene seems to be changing rapidly with all major parties now saying that climate change needs urgent and drastic action. Cycling is of course part of the solution!

Heather Rainbow
Chair Hampshire Cycling

John Edwards
Secretary and Treasurer

October 2006

Circulation:

- CTC-HC members
- CTC North Hampshire DA
- CTC South Hampshire DA
- CTC Portsmouth DA
- CTC HQ
- CTC National Councillors for South East

Copies to:

- Cycle groups in Hampshire and neighbouring areas

Appendices included below:

- Financial account
- Current membership of Hampshire Cycling

CTC Hampshire Cycling

Financial Account for the year from 1 October 2005 to 30 September 2006

Funds in hand at start of year		£ 117.77
Income received during year		
Subscription from North Hants DA	£30.00	
Subscription from Portsmouth DA	£30.00	
Subscription from South Hants DA	£30.00	

		£ 90.00
Less expenditure during year		
Expenses Heather Rainbow	£ 58.90	
Expenses John Edwards	£ 15.00	

		£ 73.90

Funds in hand at end of year, 30 September 2006		£133.87

Account prepared by John Edwards, Hon. Treasurer		October 2006

Membership of Hampshire Cycling, September 2006

Heather Rainbow	Basingstoke and Deane
Virginia Mason	East Hampshire
Mike Wilson	East Hampshire
Bob Damper	Eastleigh
Jim Deeley	Eastleigh, Southampton
Ron Harrop	Fareham, Gosport, Portsmouth
Jim Weeks	Fareham, Gosport, Portsmouth
(vacant)	Hart
Chris Davies	Havant, Portsmouth
(vacant)	Rushmoor
Thomas Lankester	Rushmoor (Farnham)
Angela Rackham	New Forest
Roger Upfold	Test Valley (Andover)
Patrick Pavey	Test Valley (Romsey)
Sue Coles	Winchester
John Edwards	Winchester

Additional volunteers would be welcome in any area, because the time available for individuals to work on campaigning matters varies considerably. Even small amounts of time can be valuable.