



Harwell Bicycle Users Group (HarBUG)

## Annual General Meeting 2013

12:30 Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2103

Ridgeway House (Top Floor Lounge)

### Minutes

#### Attendees

W Atkinson, A Collings, J Greenhalgh, M Hillman, S James, S Joyce, I Roberts, R Stamper, S Swanton, A Watkins, G Wilkin, K Wilkinson.

#### 1. Chairman's Report – K Wilkinson

HarBUG ran two Cycle-to-Work Days this year. In previous years, one Day has been sponsored by Harwell Oxford, the other by another Campus organisation. This year we failed to find the 'other' sponsor - having tried MRC and ESA, and then running out of time. (More below, in Treasurer's Report.)

There has been some progress with cycling infrastructure. A funding award has been made through the local Enterprise Zone Partnership. The funds will be managed by Harwell Oxford – who are the budget holders. Oxfordshire County Council will carry out actual work and deal with legal aspects.

HarBUG met Goodman (Harwell Oxford Management Team) earlier in the year to set priorities. The Winnaway improvement has been costed at £212k – and seems to be progressing. There are ongoing negotiations with landowners. The next priority is to develop a more robust, direct route to Wantage via the Hendreds. There is a route issue at W Hendred churchyard – the Council are looking at options/feasibility.

Milton Park has also been given funds through the same award. The intention is to re-open Back Hill Tunnel (under railway, near A4130) for cyclists. We hope this will be linked-up to Harwell village, to provide a new route from Abingdon. This could happen as part of housing developments.

It is not known if there is a time limit for using these funds.

## HarBUG AGM 2013 Minutes

HarBUG conducted a cycle Survey. The four main routes into Campus were monitored. (Route 544 from Wantage, Route 544 from Didcot, Winnaway from Harwell village, and main A4185 road.) There was a fairly even split, around 25% across the four routes. A small number of people were also observed riding past Campus – possibly between Wantage & Didcot.

HarBUG has submitted official responses to local Planning applications. These were: Grove Airfield, Didcot Ladygrove North, White Horse Local Plan, Tesco 'dot com', and Crab Hill (in last few days). It was noted that Tesco will restrict HGVs to after 09:30, and operate staff shift times outwith rush hours. Crab Hill will directly affect Wantage/Grove commuters.

HarBUG also attended a Science Vale 'Design Charette' intended to share ideas for a Didcot 'Masterplan'.

A letter was written to the Herald newspaper, following a cyclist death in Didcot. This asked readers not to be discouraged from cycling, and argued for better infrastructure.

A request was sent to see if the local MP, Ed Vaisey would be attending the Parliamentary cycling debate in September. He responded that he could not attend due to ministerial duties.

The new HarBUG website has been up and running since last April. Feedback would be helpful. The website has suffered cyber-attacks (a problem with most websites). More security (lock-outs, passwords, etc) have been included.

HarBUG also contacted the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, regarding the A34 'link-route'. They are very interested and have offered to help with grant applications, dealing with rights-of-way issues, etc. Establishing a formal right-of-way may help tackle problems with hare-coursing and wood-yard thefts in this area.

### **2. Treasurer's Report – J Greenhalgh**

Partly as a result of the 2012 cheque to Elixir not being cashed, HarBUG's bank balance appeared higher than it should. Current balance only just over £61. Also web expenses have been higher than expected. Some ideas for change to income/expenses required, in order to avoid a shortfall in the coming year! A discussion followed:

- **Future Financing of HarBUG**

HarBUG could ask for the pavilion fee to be waived. But more would be needed.

It should be a principle that campus companies and organisations contribute. HarBUG must write to all companies to ask for contributions. A suggestion is that 50p or £1 is contributed per person on Campus.

The justification is that HarBUG carries out activities that campus organisations should be doing themselves to encourage sustainable travel. Indeed, STFC is mandated by Government to act on environmental and sustainability issues. By involving campus organisations in this way, everyone

## HarBUG AGM 2013 Minutes

becomes involved, not just the 'usual suspects'. HarBUG will need to provide a well-written justification to encourage organisations to authorise such funds. Equally, HarBUG should provide some kind of report back (such as an Annual Report, accounts) to provide 'evidence' of how these 'stakeholder' funds are used.

More robust funding might permit HarBUG to pursue additional ventures. For example, employing 'Dr Bike' (or similar) cycle-repairs at Cycle-to-Work Days. A 'Maintenance Pillar' could be installed to permit cyclists to make adjustments/repairs on campus. Some small tools and materials for route repairs could also be purchased.

It was thought that there might be around 2500 people employed on the campus.

Another idea is to use the HarBUG website for advertising, eg for local cycle shops.

One difficulty with attracting funding in this way is that a number of campus organisations do not have budget holders on-site. HarBUG needs to write to the right people. A 'standard' letter has already been started.

In a similar vein, HarBUG should have its own 'champions' within each campus organisation – who will be able to help liaise. Element 6 and ESA were mentioned in this context. The website could be used to ask for such people!

### 3. Election

The following were re-elected unopposed:

Chairman - K Wilkinson, Treasurer – J Greenhalgh, Secretary – G Wilkin, Committee Members – A Collings, S James, I Roberts.

### 4. Cycling Issues

- **Cycle Routes**

The Winnaway is likely to be upgraded – as mentioned above.

The short 'single-track' section of Route 544 (towards Wantage) near Campus. Goodman suggest using Section 106 funds from the new housing development at the North end of Campus. This part of Route 544 is in East Hendred Parish – the Parish Council has also asked for S106 funds. It was noted that the new housing development is in Harwell Parish.

Regarding campus housing developments, it was noted that Goodman is nominally the developer for these, but in practice will contract out. HarBUG had also commented on Chilton Fields development – but our suggestions (access between Campus and A34 link route) were rejected by AEA (landowner).

## HarBUG AGM 2013 Minutes

Staff changes at Goodman – M Morys (Innovation Manager) & D Russell (Park Manager) have left. Currently we liaise with J Stafford (Regional Construction Director) & D Rogers (Development Surveyor). It is not known if others will join.

It was noted that HarBUG has no plans for the main A4185 road up from Rowstock (nor for the roundabout itself). It was commented that there are various plans (Rowstock bypass, Harwell Field Road, etc). The new Tesco development will have an effect as well. There was general agreement that any A4185 improvements should address the road itself, and not result in parallel cycle-path (which would raise new concerns).

The Hagbourne Hill reservoir works (Thames Water) are causing additional heavy traffic on the road section of Route 544 from Didcot.

A contact address was sought for Mr Pill who lets us use the Ginge Farm track.

- **Encouraging Women to Cycle to Work**

A discussion as to factors which may discourage women from cycling to work: Security, safety and lack of facilities were suggested. There is an Oxford-based womens' cycling group who could be invited to come and talk to us? Also suggested that HarBUG ride leaders shouldn't wear lycra! The ITV4 'Cycle Show' had featured a nationwide movement aimed at encouraging women to cycle. This included help for novices to practice locally, before commuting. CTC have had similar campaigns (see CTC website). Noted that many (most) people think they live too far from work.

More generally, proposed that HarBUG conducts a membership drive? Brochures (such as those in RAL Restaurant) may tend to appeal to existing cyclists. It was suggested that a banner could be placed at Campus entrances from time-to-time, and moved around. Internal communication could be improved. Articles have appeared in Insight. It was noted that we tend to tell ourselves news; we need to tell others!

- **Local Building Developments**

A copy of the letter to Vale of White Horse Council re Crab Hill development will go on website. Specifically, there will be issues with the new Wantage Eastern Link Road (WELR), which will provide a route for cyclists through to 544. This proposes a shared-use cycle path alongside, but fails to provide proper crossing at the roundabout where it will join the A417 and link into W Lockinge. It is likely that experienced road cyclists will wish to use the road – not the path – and other cyclists will wish to find a way through the smaller roads within the development. A bridge is suggested to cross the Mably Way cutting.

The Eastern section of the Campus will soon be handed-over to Goodman. New development will start. One of the first elements will be to extend the north-south 'cut-through' road across the Campus.

## HarBUG AGM 2013 Minutes

There was general concern at the failure of developers and local authorities to recognise the Dept of Transport recommended hierarchy of cycle-infrastructure provision. In particular, road-crossings and points of conflict should be considered before the provision of parallel-to-road cycle-paths. This is an ongoing theme.

### 5. AOB

J Greenhalgh thanked the Chairman, K Wilkinson, for his considerable efforts on behalf of HarBUG through the year .

G Wilkin, Secretary

3 October 2013