



CYCLE NORTH CHESHIRE (CNC) NEWSLETTER **SPRING 2021**

CONTENTS:

- A) DEDICATED CYCLE PATH TO HELSBY HIGH SCHOOL. HAVE YOUR SAY**
- B) ROUTES ACROSS THE MARSHES.**
- C) HELSBY - MOULDSWORTH RAILWAY; THE HELSBY GREENWAY OF THE FUTURE; VOLUNTEERS WANTED.**
- D) LINKING HELSBY TO THE CHESTER GREENWAY AT MICKLE TRAFFORD**
- E) POTHLES AND (EVER) MORE POTHLES**
- F) HONDSLOUGH LANE; APPLICATION TO BE A PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY**
- G) A533 /A56 NEW BRIDGE AT MURDISHAW. PROVISIONS FOR CYCLISTS**
- H) SAFE PASSING DISTANCES BETWEEN CARS AND CYCLISTS**
- I) SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS**
- J) BECOME ACTIVE AND JOIN CNC**

A) DEDICATED CYCLE PATH TO HELSBY HIGH SCHOOL. HAVE YOUR SAY

It is understood that CWaC have successfully applied for funding for the first stage of a proposed pathway that would run from the Halton border around Frodsham Swing Bridge, through to Tesco Helsby.

This first (and long overdue) stage is to improve safety and access from Frodsham to Helsby High School; this is something CNC has been liaising with HHS over many years for safer cycling provision for the school and wholly welcomes this proposal. The proposal can be summarised as following:

- Properly segregated cycle tracks between Netherton Hall & Helsby HS on both sides
- Widened footpath on the A56 by Castle Park
- A new Toucan crossing for cyclists & pedestrians at Helsby HS.
- Speed limits reduced by 10 mph along the route.

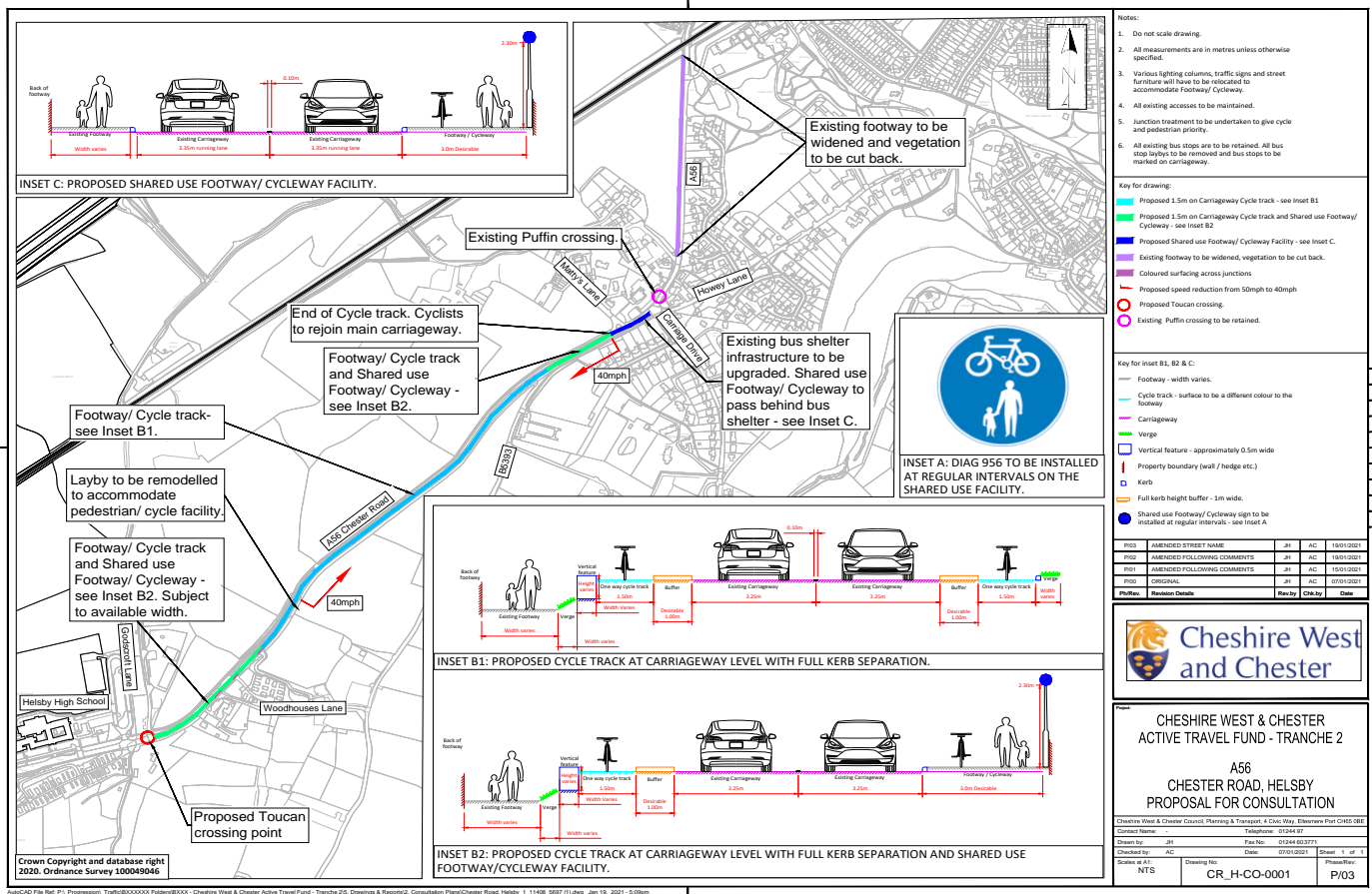
This represents a great start and a commitment to improve this important link. Initially the plans help Frodsham based residents more than Helsby, in terms of safely accessing the High School by Active Travel means, (cycling and walking), but must inevitably be developed towards Helsby at some point. This project is a direct outcome of the Cheshire West & Chester Councils Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, (LCWIP.) The funds to build this first phase were successfully won by the Council from the Governments Active Travel fund. Clearly this is the first step in the plan to create a connection between the Halton border and Helsby, focused primarily on enabling commuter journeys, particularly the accessibility of the High School by active travel means. This link will take you to a summary of the proposals.

<https://www.cyclenorthcheshire.com/assets/documents/engineering-design>

The consultation on this plan has now closed but CNC issued an essentially positive but constructive response to the plan but questioned why the plan did not extend to Helsby.

Assuming that the consultation does not throw up any major blockages the plan is to begin construction in March, it is reasonable to expect significant progress to begin on the scheme to deliver safe, segregated paths very soon. As such Cycle North Cheshire congratulates our Councillors and officers in pursuing the agreed goals with commitment and making this start. We are hoping to see a definitive plan for the rest of the path this year and see the next stages of what will be a significant project emerge.

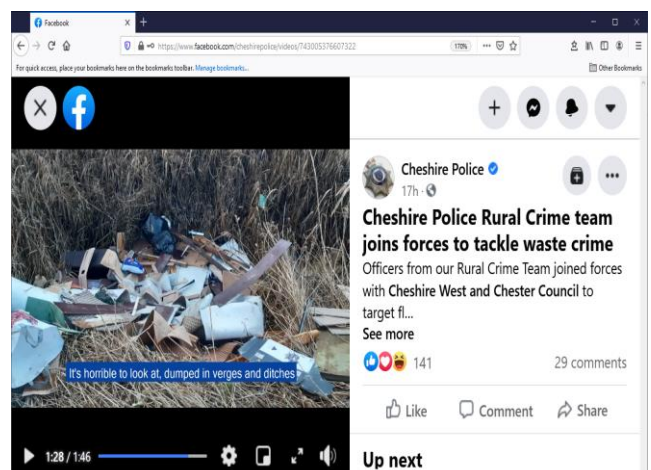
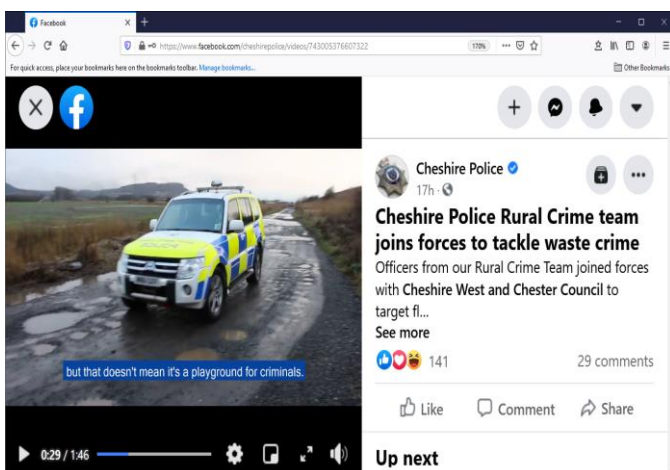
CNC recognises that the scheme, as described, does facilitate a safer option than currently exists particularly for walkers, however its limitations mean that for cyclists, the gains appear marginal, (although welcome.) From a cyclists' perspective the link from Frodsham Centre to Mattys Lane remains a particularly hazardous stretch, the road is narrow with a footpath only on the northern side, the wall of Castle Park is obviously a major obstacle to any widening plans or provision of a footway/shared user path on the southern (park) side.



B) ROUTES ACROSS THE MARSHES.

Cheshire Police have recently been pro-active in their attempts to address the ongoing issues blighting the marshes namely that of fly-tipping. Officers from the Rural Crime Team recently joined forces with CWaC to target fly tipping and other waste crime, wildlife crime, off road bikes and anti-social behaviour on Frodsham Marsh and Ince Marsh. <http://orlo.uk/xByOd>

It is understood that CWaC will also be taking further measures to deter anti-social behaviour in terms of signage and access restriction measures but still ensure free access for walkers, cyclists and controlled access for vehicles with genuine reasons being there. Where controlled access has been introduced on various routes down on the Marshes, antisocial fly-tipping has largely been eradicated.



CNC is still lobbying to see a significant improvement of the road surfaces that are very poor across significant stretches. Generally, tracks to the minimum standard of those found in Delamere forest are clearly required for cyclists to have. CNC continue to liaise with CWaC and Sustrans National Route 5 on options for it to be upgraded.

C) HELSBY - MOULDSWORTH RAILWAY; THE HELSBY GREENWAY OF THE FUTURE; VOLUNTEERS WANTED.

How many residents of Helsby are aware that there was once a second railway station in the village? If you cross the bridge at Tesco's and look south on the other side, a grey stone building there was once Helsby & Alvanley Station, marking the northern end of a four mile line from Mouldsworth which existed between 1861 and 1996, when the track was lifted. Although it was only used for passengers for part of its existence, it was an important connection for freight traffic, particularly oil from Shell at Stanlow during the Second World War and survived until the mid-1990's when the track was lifted.

Unfortunately it has now become very overgrown and impassable in places, but Cycle North Cheshire have been leading a drive to reopen it as a foot and cycle path that could help to link it to the Chester Greenway at Mickle Trafford via Manley and Barrow.

With the help of Sustrans we have been applying gentle pressure on CWaC to review the opening up of this already built link which would also bring the western edge of Delamere Forest into play for residents of Helsby & Alvanley. The views to the south west of the line over Cheshire are stunning and it would be an amazing amenity if it can be opened up to cyclists and walkers.

A co-ordinated drive between CNC, Helsby Parish Council, Sustrans, Network Rail (which own the track) and other bodies and individuals could achieve this.

Just like the Chester Greenway was converted two decades ago to be one of the area's best outdoor amenities, ours in Helsby is another old railway line offering similar popular potential for walkers, cyclists, runners and horse riders. Cycle North Cheshire (CNC) wants to bring about its transformation to our own Helsby Greenway. CNC is looking for volunteers to champion the cause of having this dilapidated route being developed into a delightful outdoor amenity for all. We are looking for Helsby based volunteers with a few hours to spare (and not just a cyclist) to act as focal points and champion in liaising with interested stakeholders e.g. CWAC, local community, activity groups etc. As is described in D) below, this Helsby Greenway could also form part of a viable link to the Chester Greenway. If you would like to see this open up again, please support CNC and this initiative, please contact: spemberton@me.com



D) LINKING HELSBY TO THE CHESTER GREENWAY AT MICKLE TRAFFORD

The eight mile Cheshire Greenway linking Mickle Trafford to the centre of Chester is now over a decade old. CNC'S long term objective is to connect our community into the Chester Greenway creating a safe segregated pathway for commuting and family leisure walks/rides. This would make the new path around 18 miles long, i.e. doubling the current length.

CNC is aiming to explore how the primary LCWIP concept for the Frodsham to Helsby link might be linked to the Greenway and also to the employment areas of Thornton, Elton, Stanlow and Ellesmere Port.

CNC believe that the disused former Helsby to Mouldsworth railway if it was converted to a Shared Use Path (SUP) between Tesco, Helsby and Towers Lane, might form part of a link to the Greenway and as part of a potential to link to Mickle Trafford. This section is not currently under any active study within the LCWIP process, so we are trying to draw together a community group to evaluate whether this is possible,

Any resultant pathway model must be as per the Greenway, which is largely a disused railway line too. Therefore, it must be accessible by anyone irrespective of age and mobility including wheelchair users, mobility scooter users, joggers etc.

CNC is engaging with Sustrans, CWaC Helsby Parish Council and Helsby's Councillor Paul Bowers to explore how these plans can be successfully developed. The Sustrans route through Helsby and Frodsham (NCN 5) is along the A56 has now been deemed unsuitable for an unaccompanied 12 year old. Note : this is the benchmark used to assess safety aspects of a cycling or walking route. As such they are delisting this section and seeking a new route. Contact: spemberton@me.com

E) POTHoles AND (EVER) MORE POTHoles

The ice and torrential rain has taken a heavy toll on the roads nationwide and members overall impression is that road surfaces generally seem to have overwhelmingly deteriorated over the past few years, potholes are proliferating and repairs are not keeping up with requirements. The much publicised March 2020 Budget announcement, whereby the Chancellor pledged “£2.5 billion of investment to fix 50 million potholes”,

A year on, on 15 February 2021, the government announced that councils across England have been allocated their share of £500 million for highways maintenance, with the funding expected to fix the equivalent of 10 million potholes across the country.

It is the second of five equal instalments from the £2.5 billion Potholes Fund, providing £500 million a year between 2020/21 and 2024/25, announced by the Chancellor in the 2020 Budget – and is part of wider funding the DfT provides for road maintenance, totalling over £1.1 billion across England in 2021/22. With the average pothole costing around £50 to fill in, the funding will ensure that the equivalent of 10 million potholes can be rectified, making thousands of local roads both safer and easier.

Transport Minister Baroness Vere said:

“We know potholes are more than just a nuisance – they can be dangerous to drivers and cyclists alike, and cause damage to thousands of vehicles every year. The funding allocated today will help councils ensure roads in their area are kept up to standard, and that the potholes that blight road users can be dealt with promptly. The DfT has already invested heavily in pothole filling since 2015, including the £296 million Pothole Action Fund, which ran from 2015/16 to 2020/21. It also topped up highway maintenance investment in 2018 with a one-off £420 million boost to all highway authorities in England, including London. The government is committed to supporting motorists. Through Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2), the government is investing £27 billion in the biggest ever roads programme – with £10 billion of the record-breaking sum specifically for road maintenance, operations and renewals”

It is difficult to see whether any of this sum allocated so far has trickled down to impact in North Cheshire and what impact this latest national tranche of half a billion pounds will mean to us locally.

CNC continues to urge all concerned users (be they car drivers, pedestrians or cyclists) to report potholes. Anyone wanting independently to report potholes is encouraged to do so to CWaC website:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it/potholes-an

Alternatively, there is now a CWaC mobile app available which makes it much easier to reporting potholes and other council related issues, e.g. street-lighting,

fly-tipping. How to download from Google Play or the Apple Store, go to :

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it-app.aspx>

But please remember : *If they are not reported, potholes will not be repaired!*



F) HONDSLOUGH LANE; APPLICATION TO MAKE IT A PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

An application to CWAC has been made to make Hondslough Lane, which is situated between Kingsley and Delamere, a public right of way; namely for it to be designated as a Public Bridleway. At the moment, close to the B5152 the gate is locked and a large sign has recently been erected specifically to deter access has been sited at the entrance. To facilitate the re-designation of this attractive, safe and convenient route into Delamere Forest, the application process requires there to be evidence stating that there has been long term usage by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. If anyone wishes to submit evidence in support of this application there is still time to contact CWAC.



G) A533 /A56 NEW BRIDGE AT MURDISHAW. PROVISIONS FOR CYCLISTS

Over the past year, CNC's Mark Warren has been liaising with Highways England's draft proposals regarding the new A533 /A56 Bridge at Murdishaw. CNC's view is that it is essential to incorporate good cycling & walking infrastructure into the A533 bridge replacement scheme as an important way of improving connectivity from Helsby and Frodsham to the Science and Technology facilities at Daresbury and the urban areas of Murdishaw, Norton and on to Warrington. Topics covered include path specifications, crossing points and route access, for which Highways England have been appreciative.

H) SAFE PASSING DISTANCES BETWEEN CARS AND CYCLISTS

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, David Keane stated in November 2020: *"Making Cheshire's roads safer is one of my key priorities as your Police and Crime Commissioner. I understand that motorcyclists, cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians often feel particularly vulnerable on our roads so it's important that we all play our part in helping them to feel safe"*

Cheshire Police has also been proactive this winter in educating cyclists in various locations throughout the county regarding safe passing. It has also stated it is now following up on video evidence submitted by cyclists that shows unsafe passing by cars. CNC welcomes any efforts made by Cheshire Police to highlight safer passing and make the roads safer for all users.

I) SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

[CWA's Climate Emergency Response plan](#) was published in November 2020. CNC's position is that the Council is setting a welcome and ambitious target for the borough to become carbon neutral by 2045 and has engaged experienced consultants (Anthesis) to help them develop this draft plan. CNC & the Chester Cycling Campaign (CCC) issued a joint response to the plan which contains a number of specific recommendations. See [CNC & Chester Cycling Campaign Response](#)

J) WANT TO HELP & JOIN CNC?

CNC would welcome new members to join and assist us with our aims. Regular updates and matters relating to cycling are posted on our Facebook page. If you are interested, and want to come along to a ZOOM CNC meeting, we meet every two months.

For more details regarding getting involved or attending our next meeting, please email: nick@mailsaq.net