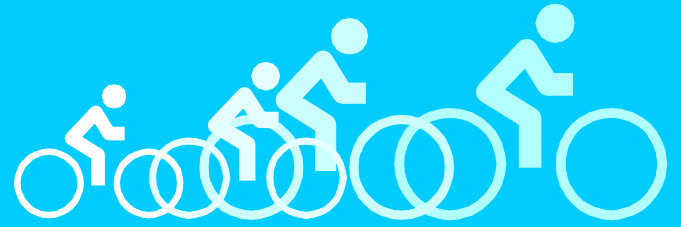


CYCLING Wakefield

Promoting and campaigning for cyclists



Wakefield District Cycle Forum – Annual Report

| 2016/17



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Annual Report

As Wakefield District Cycle Forum enters its 10th year as an independent community group this year's Annual Report records another successful year for the Forum in 2016.

The breadth and depth of our activities are such that we can't give full reports on all activities but you will get an idea of the great outcomes our busy volunteers are achieving.

A. G. M.

Get yourself along to the most important meeting of the year.

Thursday 30th March
6.45pm
Town Hall, Wakefield
Old Court Room

Guided Cycle Rides Programme

From humble beginnings, with only a few summer rides, our rides programme has become a central part of our activities. 2014 has, so far, proved to be the peak year for participation, no doubt stimulated by British wins in the Tour de France and Olympics and the arrival of the Grand Depart to Yorkshire. Over 2,500 registered on our rides that year and the average attendance doubled from the year before to 20. Nearly 500 new individuals joined our rides that year and the percentage of women rocketed to over 40% for the first time.

Although we have not maintained the same level of participation since then our rides programme must still be one of the strongest, if not **the** strongest, in the country. Most importantly we continue to attract people who want to start or return to cycling and join our rides to build their confidence and develop their cycling skills.



In 2016, 2158 people registered on our 139 rides. The average attendance was down to 15.5, which remains well above our pre-2014 average. It is gratifying to see our newest 'hub' at Castleford Queen's Mill becoming our most popular venue. The Steady ride there recorded the highest average attendance of 19.5. Our rides from Pontefract Park are also proving increasingly popular with an average attendance of 17.

Of the 425 individuals who joined our rides 282 were newcomers. Again, this is down on the previous year but still encouraging. Many of these make use of the free bike loan service which we provide at most of our rides and that was taken up 151 times in 2016

We continue to see good participation level from women, at 42% of individual riders. Women do however seem to attend less rides so of the people registering on rides women's participation is only 32%. The easy rides are the most popular with women with Castleford Mill, Nostell and Pugneys registering around 40% women participants.

Our 'Pedal in the Park' rides at Thornes and Nostell had a mixed reception, with Thornes in particular getting disappointing attendances. As a result we will only continue with the Nostell rides and hopefully the new paths in the Park at Nostell will prove a more attractive option for the novice rider.

Pedal in the Park
Entry level rides on
Nostell's new paths

Events Programme

Our summer events programme continues to be based at Nostell where our long-standing partnership with the National Trust is as strong as ever. Holiday Wednesdays take place throughout the spring and summer school holidays and attract large numbers of family groups. In 2016 we also attended a number of village events including South Kirby and Crofton. An event at Havercroft had to be cancelled because of bad weather.



1024 practised their Cycle Skills

We attended 15 events in 2016 where we offered information, maps and cycling advice. At 11 of these events we had our ever-popular skills course which attracted over 1000 participants.

A popular addition to our events in 2016 was cycle training for people who could not yet cycle. We are grateful to Richard Denbigh for providing this service to around 60 people. At Nostell we also offered short rides round the grounds which were enjoyed by 80 people. Last but not least, the tombola raised over £700 towards our funds. That will buy a few feet of cycle path. A big thank you to all 22 volunteers who helped at these events.



Bike Doctor

2012 was the first year the Cycle Forum ventured into running Basic Bike Maintenance Courses. They proved very popular, as did the Bike Doctor session we ran at some of our events. In 2015 we extended the Bike Doctor DIY session to an almost monthly event.



Monthly Bike Doctors

2016 saw the continuation of the monthly DIY Bike Doctor sessions at Anglers Country Park with Graham West and Dennis Bell helping those who dropped in to tweak their gears and repair their working parts. Around 50 people have benefitted from their advice and everyone enjoys the gossip, which is an essential part of the morning. These sessions will continue in our 2017 programme.

In addition to the DIY sessions the Bike Doctor ran Basic Bike Maintenance courses in 2016 with around 30 in attendance. Two more of these sessions are part of our 2017 programme.

The Bike Doctor was also in attendance at other events in Wakefield, Pugneys, and Nostell.

Once again, our big thanks to Graham and Dennis for providing such a great service.

Workday Report

It is only a few years since members of the Cycle Forum made their first tentative steps into repairing and creating cycle paths in our quest to improve Wakefield District's network of traffic-free cycle routes.

That was a project to put down hard surfaces on the muddy tracks that wound through the woods near the Nostell brickworks. The tracks are still there and have been extended over the following years by our workgroup.



Since these early tentative outings, the workgroup has developed into a regular feature of our work. In 2016 two workdays were scheduled almost every month of the year and nearly 300 hours of volunteer time has been devoted to improving our paths.

When the contractor who built the new path on the Nostell Estate (see following page) completed his work he gifted us a pile of surfacing materials which for a number of months provided sufficient materials for our workgroup to repair potholes in the other paths in that area. We may never have a completely all-weather network on the Nostell Estate as some of the paths are used by heavy farm machinery but the efforts of our workgroup have made an important difference to the path network.



The biggest project undertaken by the workgroup so far is the clearing and repair of the Trans Pennine Trail between Walton and Haw Park Woods. Every year the group clears the leaf fall from this part of the path to stop it from accumulating and becoming muddy and slippy. In addition we decided to carry out some major repairs on the surface and edging boards. The surface of the TPT is in remarkable condition considering it was laid around 25 years ago but understandable holes have appeared and some of the wood edging boards have rotted. The project will continue into 2017.

Unfortunately co-organiser of the workgroup, Richard Denbigh, had to relinquish his position. We thank him for helping to put the workgroup onto a firm footing. Stalwart, John Harvey, continues as organiser and has done an excellent job of developing this aspect of our work.

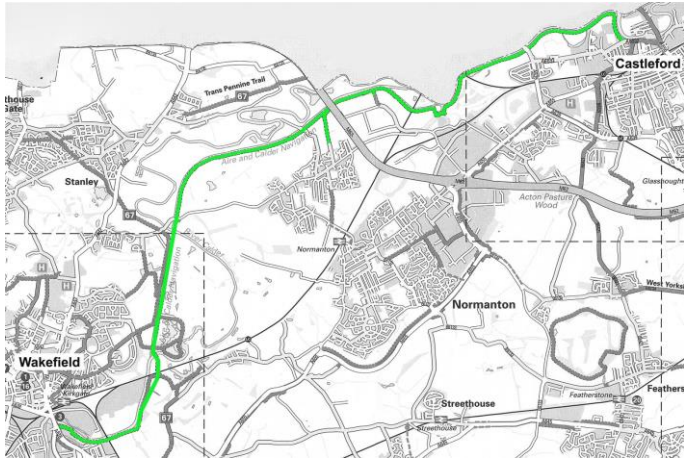
You can help with this work by volunteering to join the workdays. It is good exercise, you will feel good about your contribution and the friendly banter will keep you going. You can also make suggestions of places which you think would benefit from a bit of attention from the workgroup. Get in touch at info@cycling-wakefield.org.uk



Campaign News

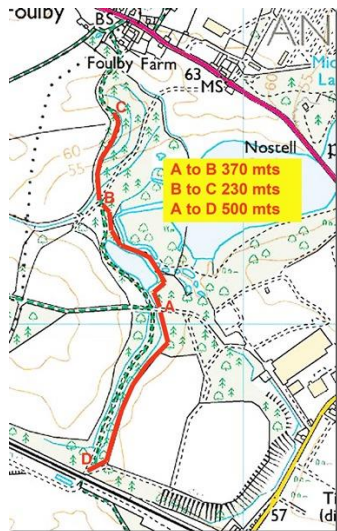
Given the wide range of activities in which Wakefield District Cycle Forum(WDCF) is involved it is easy to forget that our original, and still central, objective is to campaign for improved infrastructure for cyclists throughout the district. The final page of this report will give an outline of how we try to influence Wakefield Council to ensure that they take cycling seriously in the development of the transport system in the district. A number of the projects mentioned are about to reach fruition in 2017 when we will be able to judge how they are treating cyclists.

Every year we renew or wish to complete a ‘greenway’ between Castleford and Wakefield along the river/canal.



The council acquired funding for this project in 2015 and we had hoped we could report its completion at this year’s AGM. Unfortunately the project seems to be delayed by planning difficulties. Let us hope we can still look forward to riding the route by the end of 2017.

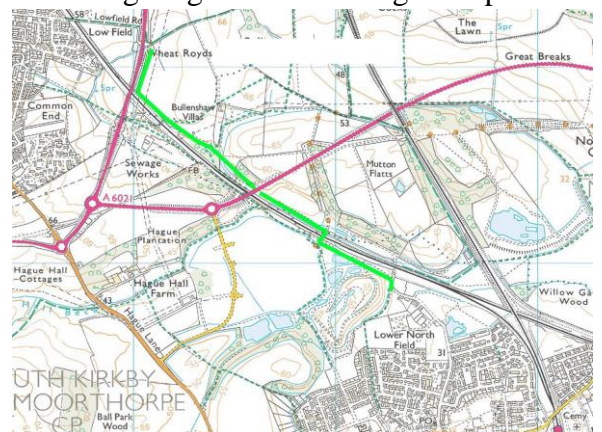
This ‘greenway’ project is important as it provides not only a strategic route through the district but adds a substantial traffic-free cycle path to the network. The extensive contact the WDCF has with members of the public who want to but don’t cycle, has convinced us that until we can boast a comprehensive network of traffic-free routes we will not convince these potential cyclists that cycling is a safe activity.



With that in mind WDCF set out to seek funding for projects which would enhance the existing network by filling in ‘missing links’. This year we can report that 2016 saw the latest success in that strategy with the completion of a new path in the Nostell Estate (see map on the left). The new path is over 1 kilometre long with an all-weather surface and has already proved to be a popular addition to the traffic-free network to the south-east of Wakefield City. The photo on the front page shows our Chair and Vice-Chair cutting the ribbon at the opening ceremony. They spent two years acquiring permission and funding to complete the project. We have ambitions to continue improving this network and are investigating further funding to improve and create more paths.

We continue to progress our project for a traffic-free cycle track linking Hemsworth to Moorthorpe (near the railway station). In partnership with

Wakefield Council Countryside Department, we will be investigating funding for this project. Unfortunately some of the land over which the path will run is in private ownership and we are at present seeking to meet with the owner in the hope of securing their agreement to the project.



We look forward to reporting further success in our path building ambitions over the next year.

Membership

Our membership continues to grow at a steady rate of around 100 new members per years. At the end of February it stood at 1,113.

Last year’s AGM voted to raise the membership fee to £5 for life membership. Still a bargain particularly as new members are entitled to two free maps of the Wakefield Wheel and the WoW, worth £3.



Annual Dinner and Award Ceremony

Our Annual Dinner and Award Ceremony was moved this year from the pre-Christmas period to January. This gave us the opportunity to view all of 2016's activities before deciding on our award winners. Around 50 diners attended the dinner, which was organised for us by Janet Taylor.

Our awards are not meant to be taken too seriously but it has become a fixture at our annual dinner and it is an opportunity for us to remind everyone of the hard work that all of our volunteers put in throughout the year. In this Annual Report and in our newsletter we try to acknowledge the individuals who made our work possible. Below are the few who had the (mis)fortune to be recognised with awards.

Apologies for so many images of the Chair.



Female Rider of the Year
Elaine Hillyard



Special Faceless Trophy
The Leigh Family



Male Rider of the Year
David Leigh



Newcomer of the Year
Gary Boyes



Cleanest Bike of the Year
Year Keith Shuttler



Volunteer of the Year
Mark Beswick



Silver Cyclist of the Year
John 'pothole' Wrangle



Janet Taylor
our dinner organiser,



Grace at Squires Tearoom
Faceless trophy for welcoming
cyclist with a smile

Working with Wakefield Council

Our Council Liaison Officer and Forum Secretary, Mark Beswick, reports on our quarterly consultation meetings with Wakefield Council:

'Two meetings have been held with Wakefield Council since our mid-year meeting on 27 October, these were on 8 November and 7 February.

Among the topics/issues discussed were:

- The Wakefield Eastern Relief Road which will incorporate significant cycle facilities and is due to open around 31 March. Will provide another river and railway crossing for cyclists.
- Town End, Pontefract where traffic signals have been replaced by roundabouts. Generally favourable reaction but an additional pedestrian refuge is to be installed on Mill Hill shortly
- Kirkgate Scheme, Wakefield. Will replace roundabout with straightforward cross roads and will incorporate significant cycle facilities making access to Kirkgate train station much better. Will start when Eastern Relief Road opens
- Cycle link behind Aldi, Durkar. M&S Foodstore application going through planning process. WMDC requiring provision of this much needed cycle link from developer
- Pontefract Cycle Fest 2017
- Lawns Lane, Outwood. A Traffic Regulation Order will be made after April and once vehicular traffic is prohibited some surfacing of the potholes will be undertaken
- Wakefield Road Wheel. A new circular cycle route based on the Wakefield Section of the 1980's West Yorkshire Cycle Route.
- Off road cycle route – Santingley Lane to Hare Park Lane, Crofton involving the developer of Bedford Farm housing scheme
- Pontefract Barracks Path – Work started on 26 February and will be complete by 31 March
- Hemsworth to Moorthorpe cycle path. Progressing slowly. The 90m of the path not in WMDC ownership is proving a problem
- City Connect Wakefield- Castleford Greenway. Planning permission now submitted. Site clearance processing. Lower costs at the Wakefield end mean that the overall scheme can be more extensive around Castleford. Date for installing bridge over Hallam rail line now agreed with Network Rail.
- New cycle/pedestrian route Cobblers Lane, Pontefract to TKMaxx Ferrybridge. Now complete
- Cycle facilities beside A650 Wrenthorpe Bypass.
- Incomplete Calder Park Cycleway (Durkar)
- State of Blue Bridge (near Eastmoor)
- Former rail lines towards Ryhill – potential for improvements for cyclists
- Variable quality of Top Trek supplied by WMDC for Forum Workdays
- Urban Renewal City Plan'

