



Cycle Alton Newsletter

Edition 3, February 2021

Welcome to the February 2021 edition of the Cycle Alton newsletter!

Do let us have any comments or suggestions you may have via cyclealton@gmail.com, <https://www.facebook.com/cyclealton>, or look on Twitter for @CycleAlton.

Our website is here: <https://altonclimatenetwork.org.uk/our-groups/cycle-alton/>

What Cycle Alton has been doing

Cycle Alton on Wey Valley Radio

Our fabulous Chris was interviewed by David Way during his Wey Valley Radio programme on 14th January, where she talked about the progress that Cycle Alton has been making.

If you missed it, do have a listen here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n09asSbLHEk6Zo28nlZGvGIIfzIS8VsN/view?usp=sharing>

Open-Air Yuletide Market



Cycle Alton supporters Dave, Janet and Hilary – amongst those who helped out – thank you!

Cycle Alton had a successful stall in the Market Square at one of the Open-Air Yuletide Markets in December. We helped to raise our profile, due in no small part to the brand new banner being displayed for the first time. We had a steady stream of visitors and gained about half a dozen new supporters. Many cycling-related questions were answered, and copies of our previous newsletter and the new 'Cycling in Alton' maps were handed out.

Thanks go to all our volunteers who helped at the stall, including Helen and Ian from Walk Alton who stood in for an hour, and thank you as well to Alton Town Council for organising it.

The new Cycling in Alton Map

We are now distributing copies of the newly-published Cycling in Alton map which was produced by a collaboration of My Journey Hampshire, Alton Town Council (ATC) and Cycle Alton. The map contains a lot of useful information about cycling in general, and cycling in Alton in particular.



Covid restrictions have prevented its early distribution around the town but we have plenty to give away, so if you'd like a copy just email us at cyclealton@gmail.com. If you live in Alton we will pop one through your letterbox, deliveries elsewhere can also be arranged.

It is also available to view online at

<https://myjourneyhampshire.com/media/2902/myjourney-alton-cycle-map-a2.pdf>

Alton's Cycle Routes

With a view to feeding our views into East Hants District Council's (EHDC) Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) prioritisation of projects, small groups of Cycle Alton supporters have started investigating roads and off-road routes between Alton and some of the villages, and within the town itself. The aim is to identify the issues facing cyclists wanting to use each of these routes and to detail the possible solutions. Also see below under 'What our District Council has been doing'.



Routes being explored in Alton are the areas of Anstey Park, Beechwood Road, Borovere Farm and Butts Bridges, Brick Kiln Lane, Edward Road, Mill Lane and Montecchio Way, Netherfield Close

and Flood Meadows, and also consideration of Victoria Road as a low-traffic neighbourhood. The villages with routes being researched are Four Marks, Farrington, and Medstead & Beech.

This leaves a large area to the north-east and south-east of Alton where no routes are currently being looked at, for example safe cycle routes to Selborne and East Worldham also need to be found.

If you live in any of the villages and would be interested in joining one of the small groups of supporters looking into these areas, please get in touch at cyclealton@gmail.com. The Four Marks group already has its own email address, so please contact Chris King-Smith at cyclefourmarks@gmail.com if you can help out there.

What our Town Council has been doing

Festival of Cycling



Last year's inaugural Festival of Cycling, which had been planned to take place during the annual Festival of Walking, was cancelled for obvious reasons. Alton Town Council (ATC) is hoping to run the event this year instead and has chosen the weekend of 7th - 9th May. All rides will be bookable in advance. Details about the cycling weekend will follow in due course.

Electric Bike Hire Scheme

ATC has listed the hiring of electric bikes to the public in its Climate Change Action Plan reviewed last October (see 5.5):

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QVvx0tTfAO86ZFFMPJT1Sx9twjtUL_1K/view?usp=sharing

and also, we believe it will be included in ATC's Health & Well-Being Strategy Action Plan 2020-2023. We will be sending out the link to the final agreed version of this plan once it's in the public domain.

We await further developments with interest!

What our District Council has been doing

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

View the Alton sections here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JLoDLn7Jfy786geI1qrHR1O5QJlb-Q4d/view?usp=sharing>

and here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JbTBI1S1HXoRDiXsqSqL4pCAWjXR6qrN/view?usp=sharing>

The LCWIP was published last year and EHDC is now in discussion with Hampshire County Council to agree the scope and timeframe for prioritising routes to progress. EHDC has said it will invite Cycle Alton as stakeholders to be part of the process.

Alton Station Forecourt Regeneration

EHDC Cabinet gave this project the go-ahead just before Christmas. Although public input has not been sought, partly due to funding arrangements, Cycle Alton has submitted its comments on the plan.

We will be monitoring the promised delivery of “improved cycle access around the forecourt” as well as “the possibility of including more cycle parking, either on the forecourt or on the station platform” which we’d have hoped should have been designed in at the outset. As even more space than at present will be given over to car parking, it will leave little room for improving cycle parking or overall appearance.

The Alton Placemaking & Strategy Action Group, led and created by Cllr Rob Mocatta and comprised of all Alton Town & District Councillors, various EHDC officers, Alton County Councillors and our Town Clerk, is keen to involve local oversight when possible.

The documents in the proposal that was agreed can be viewed here (Item 23):

<https://easthants.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=126&MIId=2644>, and the layout is the last document here: <https://easthants.moderngov.co.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=12558#mgDocuments>

What our County Council has been doing

New Local Transport Plan

Hampshire County Council (HCC) concluded its Active Places Consultation last year with a Summit via Zoom in October which was attended by a number of Cycle Alton supporters, and the feedback it gained was used to inform its updated Local Transport Plan. They are now conducting an online consultation on this with the closing date of 28th February 2021.

Unlike the Active Places Survey which asked for specific issues to be raised, this is more general.

We encourage you to complete the survey as every contribution helps inform HCC on the direction they should be taking in the coming years. Cycle Alton will be submitting a separate response.

About the plan: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/localtransportplan>

Questionnaire: <https://ete Hampshirecc.researchfeedback.net/s.asp?k=160225603040>

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Numerous active travel groups in the county, including Cycle Alton, formed Cycle Hampshire to address county-wide cycling-related issues. Recently this group has been challenging HCC about its new booking scheme for HWRCs which was introduced after the first lockdown, and which has denied access to householders wanting to travel by foot or bicycle.

HCC has now recognised that vehicle-only access contradicts its climate crisis policy, and so proposed a three-month trial at Alresford HWRC, which was to have started this month, where cycle and pedestrian access would be allowed "to evaluate the impact of a designated half hour pre-booked slot on up to three mornings per week..." After issues about this proposal were highlighted by Cycle Hampshire, Cllr Humby, deputy leader of HCC, has deferred making a decision to allow further details to be developed about how the trial will be run.

We await further news.

What our Government has been doing

Cycle to Work Scheme temporary easement

This scheme, <https://www.cyclescheme.co.uk/>, which has been running for 20 years, is implemented by employers and allows employees to use a voucher to buy a bike via hire purchase. The bike must be used for 'qualifying journeys' i.e. commuting or work-related purposes. Because so many are working from home because of the Covid crisis, the Government has temporarily relaxed the 'qualifying journey' requirement for people who obtained bikes through the scheme up to and including 20 Dec 2020. The easement will be in place until 5 April 2022, after which the normal rules of the exemption will apply.

Other Cycling-related news

Recycle your old bicycles with BikeStart

If you have some unwanted bikes in your shed, this is for you!

BikeStart is a cycle restoration business in Aldershot which will collect from Alton (on Mondays by arrangement) donated bikes in almost any condition, restores them to a good working order and then sells them on ebay. Spare and unused bike parts can also be donated. All profits go to 'The Source Young People's Charity' in Aldershot which supports and empowers young people age 14-25 to transform their lives.

For more information phone: 07596 564428; email: bikestart@thesourceforyou.co.uk;
or see their website:

http://www.bikestart.co.uk/community/bikestart-13419/home/?fbclid=IwAR0_86xEdsf4R_0P7hjI3NblwDcaukCTyxCOI9qrAiu2NXt3nASCIHsql6Y

Missing Links

Cycling UK is running a campaign to [#findthemissinglinks](#) in the cycle route network and is asking for your help. The idea is that we can input to the map to suggest routes that aren't currently cycle-friendly but could be made so and could link up areas. For example in our area we can think of the disused railway from Farringdon to Alton which is currently classed as a footpath.

The map tool to suggest where future improvements could be made is here:



https://action.cyclinguk.org/page/68755/action/1?ea.tracking.id=FB&fbclid=IwAR3JSHWj4i8marhCZI026_bGy-hzhRJ-htUQfiIvWYYIFLMLhqzYRjzKNw

After making the suggestion you will need to tell the Council – they've made it easy by providing some draft text.

Binsted's Safer Cycling Survey

Binsted Parish Council is asking for views on the safety of local cycling routes, to find ways to make improvements, especially at the A325 crossing point at Bucks Horn Oak, and along the access roads to Bentley Station, which are particular safety worries. Please spare five minutes to complete their short survey, which you can find at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SaferCyclingBinsted>.

The Parish Council has requested as many replies as possible to demonstrate a community need for improvements, and to increase the likelihood of securing investments for them.