



Cycle Alton Newsletter

Edition 2, October 2020



Welcome to the second edition of the Cycle Alton newsletter! We've been busy since our first newsletter back in July, and here follows an outline of a few of the bicycle-related projects we've been involved with since then, as well as news of what we are turning our attention to next.

In this edition of the newsletter: New Bike Stands in Alton; My Journey Hampshire & the new Cycle Map of Alton; Town Centre Survey of Businesses; Adult Cycle Training Classes; Fix Your Bike Voucher Scheme; Routes into and out of Alton; Cycling-related developments from the Authorities.

We'd be very pleased to receive any feedback from you, positive or negative, and will take on board any comments or suggestions you may have. Just get in touch via email at cyclealton@gmail.com, or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/cyclealton>, or Twitter at <https://twitter.com/CycleAlton>.



New Bike Stands in Alton



Alton Town Council (ATC) successfully applied for funding from the M3 Local Enterprise Partnership for the purchase of fifteen bike rack planters and three cycle repair pods, which arrived during September. Cycle Alton supporters were able to advise ATC on the best locations for these. The photo shows several members of Alton's Hearty Riders cycle group with the recently-installed bike rack-planters in the Market Square. The attractive bike stands make a welcome addition to facilities for bicycle riders in Alton, allowing cycling visitors to the High Street to lock up their bikes nearby while they shop.

The three cycle repair pods were installed at Jubilee Fields, the Market Square, and Normandy Street by the Paper Mill Lane junction. The photo below shows Cycle Alton supporter Chris using the one in Normandy Street.



My Journey Hampshire and the new Cycle Map of Alton



My Journey Hampshire is an offshoot of Hampshire County Council and there is now an excellent web page devoted to all aspects of cycling in Alton:

<https://myjourneyhampshire.com/cycle/active-alton/cycling-in-alton/>

Cycle Alton supporters were asked to advise ATC and My Journey Hampshire on updating a previous out-of-date cycle map of Alton, which is being published by My Journey Hampshire. Aimed at residents and visitors, the map will show the best routes to use when cycling around Alton, and the ways in and out of Alton by bicycle, including NCN route 224. Once it's ready, the map will be viewable on the web page above, and also hard copies will be available. We will advertise the launch of the map once it arrives.



Town Centre Survey of Businesses



A car-free Alton High Street!

During July and August, a group of Cycle Alton supporters undertook the huge task of consulting all town centre businesses on their opinions on the three alternative proposals Cycle Alton had put together to trial the restriction of through-traffic through the town centre.

We collated the responses and presented the findings to ATC on 26th August. It was encouraging that 76% of respondents were in favour of trialling one of the 3 options, and 83% of members of the public who responded via email and at the Summer Fair on 8th August were in favour of the same. ATC then started a consultation for the Regeneration of the Town Centre at the Open Air Market on 12th September. Any thoughts and suggestions can still be emailed to townclerk@alton.gov.uk.



Adult Cycle Training Classes

Pedal Power Training <http://www.pedalpowertraining.co.uk/> is an organisation that provides Bikeability cycle training for Hampshire County Council. A group of up to five adults can receive training together in Alton in one two-hour session at a cost of £20 each. Training can be divided into:

Group A: for those needing to gain/regain confidence in riding a bicycle. Training would be delivered in an off-road environment to practice turning, hand signals etc. such as the cut-off at the far end of Chawton.

Group B: for those needing to gain/regain confidence riding a bike in traffic, e.g. through Alton.

Individual: for those wanting to learn how to ride a bike.

Volunteers from Cycle Alton will be happy to take out small groups for extra practice after their training, if desired.

Hilary Hills is happy to provide a weekday session on simple bike maintenance.

Dates will be organised when we have a group of five. Please do pass this on to anyone you know who has expressed an interest in cycling but falls into Group A or B, or just wants to learn to ride a bike. All they need to do is email cyclealton@gmail.com with their name and which course they're interested in.



Fix Your Bike Voucher Scheme

The government's Fix your Bike Scheme allows members of the public to receive a voucher worth up to £50 towards the cost of repairing a bicycle. The scheme was hugely popular and all vouchers in the first batch were soon allocated. The government has said that further vouchers will be released when they are confident that people will be able to get their bikes fixed at a wide range of locations without significant waiting times.

Vouchers can only be used with repairers registered with the scheme, and here in Alton our registered bike repairer is Hilary Hill, located in the Greenfields area, who can be contacted via her email hilaryhillrepairs@gmail.com. When we hear of the release of the second batch of vouchers we will let you know.



Roadside repair



Routes into and out of Alton



The issue that concerns many, if not most, bicycle riders in Alton and the surrounding villages, is that of safe cycling access to the town. Those who live outside of Alton know that the roads into town are either narrow, rural lanes where you often meet speeding traffic, or they are fast but narrow A or B roads. Similarly, those who live in Alton find it difficult to access the beautiful Hampshire countryside on our doorstep without risking life and limb amongst the speeding traffic.

A number of our supporters have volunteered to look at the different access roads into and out of Alton, that is the routes from Beech, Four Marks, Farringdon/A32, Binsted, and the routes within Alton itself. The volunteers will identify the issues facing cyclists wanting to use each of these routes and detail the possible solutions. Safe cycle routes to Selborne and East Worldham also need to be found, and as yet do not have anyone looking into them.

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 at cyclefourmarks@gmail.com if you can help out in any way.



Cycling-related developments from the Authorities

The Department for Transport has published two new policy documents: 'Gear Change'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf

which gives 22 summary principles for cycle infrastructure design;

and 'Cycle Infrastructure Design'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906344/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20.pdf

which gives guidance to local authorities on designing safe, high-quality cycle infrastructure.

Hampshire County Council recently hosted an 'Active Places' meeting to discuss their ten draft walking and cycling principles which they sought and gained agreement for. These will form the basis for a new Local Transport Plan, to be consulted on in due course.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1stSDEAH3O40fv9ceKYwVydzd931nUkOW/view?usp=sharing>

Five Cycle Alton supporters were among 125 attendees who joined the well-run and informative session and workshops. There were three excellent keynote speakers on aspects of active travel: Brian Deegan (Design Engineer), Jess Read (Independent Cycling Engineer) and Megan Streb (Sustrans Partnership Manager).

We learned: what can and what has been done elsewhere; the need to consult widely beforehand; that cycles should be treated as vehicles; the need for national design standards of active travel routes, and that these must be baked into the planning process before developers become involved.

East Hampshire District Council published their 'Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan' after consulting earlier this year. These are the two parts relevant to Alton:

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

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

Cllr Rob Mocatta, (Community Development, Placemaking and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder) said:

"the whole purpose of a LCWIP is to give the district councils, the town councils, the parish councils, the county councils, the infrastructure request that as funding becomes available they will be able to put it in place in order to improve the infrastructure for these two activities in East Hampshire" [ie cycling and walking].

