



Happy New Year to all our members and readers, and best wishes for a healthy and active 2006, whether cycling, walking or (even!) on horseback along the Loop and its environs. We hope during the year to continue to make progress in improving the environment of the Loop and encouraging people of all ages to use it. A number of initiatives with this in view are detailed below.

Partnership with Burnage Multi-Agency Group (BMAG)

BMAG is a consortium of agencies and organisations in Burnage which promotes activities with young people, among other groups. They use the Loop already, and approached us in the summer to join them in an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to help map sites of interest along the Loop, as part of their cycling promotion strategy for young people. A consultation exercise with the young people themselves produced a number of further ideas for improving the Loop, including bridge lights, improved signing and art-work/graffiti for some of the bridges. One of these could be a Manchester Football Derby visual display. The workers at BMAG would like to develop some of the above ideas to form part of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, and to enhance the Loop environment for all users. The application has been lodged under the title TRANS-SPORT, and progress with it will hopefully be reported at our January meeting. We have been liaising on this with BMAG Project Manager, Margaret Slack, and Youth Worker, Brian Wilson.

Challenge Manchester: 100 Days Campaign

The Campaign, led by Manchester City Council Environmental Services, runs from mid-February to May each year, and 'aims to tackle anti-social behaviour and make Manchester a cleaner, safer city'. During the 2005 campaign over 5000 volunteers worked on 100s of projects across the city. The Loop has been identified as the site for a number of small-scale projects for 2006, since it spans a number of city wards. Suggested projects would include working with school groups on art work, making bird and bat boxes, creating a low-maintenance garden, going on a bug hunt, and much more. The activities could culminate in a ride and a BBQ. Sue Langford, Publicity and Communications Officer for Environmental Services (and a frequent user of the Loop), will be coming to our January meeting to show a video of last year's campaign, and to discuss with us the ideas suggested – and others which members might propose. So do come along to this meeting next Monday 16th (details see below).

Tree planting

This year's tree planting event with the Sale and Altrincham Conservation Volunteers will take place on Sunday 22 January along a stretch near the Longford Road West entrance to the Loop. Meet there at 11 am, with gardening gloves and spades (for those who can bring them). The contact persons for the Friends are Julian Fox (tel. 881 2440) and Dick Venes (224 3843).

Social rides for 2006

Our January meeting will also be arranging a programme of rides for 2006. We are already committed to hosting two Sunday rides for the reinvented Dawdling Doctors programme – 9 April to Daisy Nook; and 12 November to Werneth Low, both of about 30 miles. These will be substantially on-road as well as incorporating the Loop. We shall also organise a number of shorter rides for the spring and summer based on the Loop and other off-road routes such as the Trans-Pennine Trail. These will involve a pub stop and/or picnic. Details will be posted on the Web and in our March Newsletter.

Attracting new members

As last January, this circulation includes a copy of our latest membership leaflet (different from the Manchester Cycleway Leaflet included with the November Newsletter). As you will see, the membership rates are very modest and, unlike almost everything else in life, have been held constant for years. Recruiting new members (and keeping existing ones) helps us not only financially, but also because healthy numbers can increase our attractiveness as a partner for outside organisations and funding bodies, and assist us in pressing for improvements to the Loop. So please pass the leaflet on to a friend, neighbour or colleague, especially if they already use the Loop. And thank you for your own continued support.

Next members' meeting

Next Monday, 16 January, usual time and place: 7.30 pm, Union Chapel, Wellington Road, Fallowfield. As already mentioned, Sue Langford will be giving a video and talk about the Challenge Manchester: 100 Days Campaign, and we shall be planning for this and other initiatives and rides in the year at this meeting. So do come along if you can spare the time and brave the weather (warm room and mug of tea or coffee guaranteed!).