



We hope you have all had an enjoyable summer's cycling despite the rain in June and July. The Friends' summer social ride along the Ashton and Peak Forest canals on Sunday 22 July had the good fortune to hit a dry morning, with the sun appearing on cue for the picnic in Reddish Vale. As we discovered, however, the canal paths can get quite muddy in wet weather, so this is a route that is advisable to ride in a dry spell. A detailed description and map of this route has had to be postponed to our next newsletter, by which time we hope that the dispute over access at the Fairfield Station end will have been resolved (see next item).

Old Fairfield Goods Yard

Members who have recently used the Loop at the north-eastern end between Wright Robinson College and Fairfield Station will have found the route obstructed by heavy fencing installed by Bellway Homes to facilitate their building work on the old goods yard. The only way through is by a steep and potentially dangerous path at the top end of Gorton Reservoir. Bellway have not sought permission to close the right of way, or provide a suitable diversion. Following strong representations from members of our committee and other Friends, the issue is now being taken up by the Tameside Public Rights of Way Officer, who is working to get the fencing removed. However, Bellway's solicitors claim that they are acting within their rights, and the dispute at this moment is unresolved. We will continue to press for a speedy resolution in the interests of all users. Thanks to Phil Hardy for first drawing this to our attention, and to Steve Keeney for keeping the pressure up on Bellway and Tameside Planning Dept.

Old Reddish Maintenance Depot

Another former railway facility being developed for housing is the disused land on the west side of the Loop between Sandfold Lane/Station Road, Reddish, and the railway bridge towards Hyde Road. This was the site of the maintenance depot for electric locomotives that operated on the Manchester-Woodhead-Sheffield route. It has been something of an eyesore for several years as the repository for tipped building material, so its development behind the recently established security fence has to be welcomed. However, it is unlikely to be the sort of sustainable development envisaged by Andy Bispham, the Sustrans manager who supervised construction of the Loop, involving highly insulated houses with solar panels etc., but a more mundane development of the Bellway/Barratts type. And again, our concern is that it should not involve any obstruction or degradation of the cycle/pedestrian way. Dick Venes has examined the draft plan of this development, and the good news is that it shows a 'green corridor with existing footpath and cycleway' along the eastern

boundary of the site with new links to Sandfold Lane and the Reddish industrial estate. We will be examining the planning application proper at our members' meeting next Monday to ensure that the Loop is preserved in the form we would wish.

Executive Committee FotFL

As the above two items make clear, members of your executive committee, besides meeting regularly between bi-monthly members' meetings, are continually alert to potential threats to the Loop and its users, and work actively with all members to help improve it. The committee members were all reappointed at the AGM in July, with the addition of Philippa Lloyd, whose contacts and expertise from her work for MCC Parks Department have already proved a valuable resource to us. The full list of officers and members is set out below for information:

Sandy Broadhurst: chair
David Beetham: secretary and newsletter
Dick Venes: treasurer and membership
Steve Keeney: minutes secretary
Cos Harnasz: archives
Julian Fox: website
Alec Cowan
Pam Flynn
Philippa Lloyd

Cycling Training for Juniors on the Fallowfield Loop?

Oli Lougheed, the Cycling Development Manager for Manchester Leisure Services, aims to get 'every child cycling, more often, more safely'. He is looking for enthusiasts to help run regular youth and family sessions to encourage juniors to learn to ride their bikes, fix the bikes and start riding a bit further as they develop. The Fallowfield Loop offers an ideal environment for beginners to progress from a school playground or youth centre nearby to take longer journeys as their skills develop. His team will provide training for coaches and volunteers, as well as all the necessary insurance etc. Anyone interested who would like to discuss the possibility further can contact Oli at the Sports Development Centre in Denmark Road, tel. 232 3125.

Future events

Monday 17 September: Members Meeting, 7.30 pm, Union Chapel, Wellington Road, Fallowfield. We will start with a talk by Raichael Lock about the sustainable schools programme and the place of cycling. Besides other business, the committee has proposed that we have a brainstorming session about what we see as future priorities for the Loop, so that we can draw up a 'management plan' for FotFL. All are welcome to come and share your ideas.

Sunday 23 September: social ride of about 25 miles on the TPT to Lymm and back by the Bridgewater Canal, with a pub lunch or bring a picnic. Start: Highfield Park, lattice bridge, 11 am; Sherwood Street, 11.10; Chorlton Park, Beechwood Ave 11.30. Contact person: David on 445 1524.

Sunday 7 October: Chorlton Wanderers ride organised by FotFL, 35 miles with hills at reasonable pace. Meet Chorlton Water Park 10 am; contact Dick on 224 3483.