



A Happy New Year to all our members and other readers, and enjoyable walking, cycling, jogging, roller-blading and any other legitimate modes of self-propulsion along the Loop in the new season! We have a busy schedule of activities in the coming months, many of them arising from our successful grant applications (see below), and you are all invited to take part as and when you can.

Success for our grant applications

We reported in our November Newsletter that we had been successful with our application for a ward cash grant for the Chorlton Park Ward. This will enable us to install benches on the stretch from Chorlton to Princess Road, to plant trees, shrubs and flowers at appropriate points, and to site an informational lectern at the Chorlton end of the route. We will be having a tree planting and sapling clearing day on Sunday 17 February, led by the Sale and Altrincham Conservation Volunteers. Join us any time from 11 am at the Withington Road entrance to the Loop. Measures are also afoot to get a proper hard surface laid at the entrance point beside the new Princess Road flats. When all these improvements are finished we plan a big clean-up along the whole section, prior to a major publicity event or series of events. Members from sections of the Loop east of Sainsbury's should be reassured that we shall be targeting one of your wards for a cash grant in the coming year's round!

Since our November Newsletter we have also learnt of the success of our grant application to the Transport Thematic Partnership, which gives grants for projects to encourage non-car journeys in the city. This will enable us to install four more informational lecterns at key junctions along the Loop (Athol Road, Sainsbury's, Levenshulme Green and Debdale), and to reprint the Community Mapping Guide to the Loop for distribution to homes, schools, health centres, libraries, etc. adjacent to the route. We will need help from members with the distribution, and will inform you of any collective events we organise to do this. In the meantime, if you know of any useful contact persons in schools, health centres and so on, please let the secretary know (tel. 445 1524).

The lecterns will be metal with vandal-proof covers, size 800x600mm, and we are currently working on the design content. This will include a sketch map of the Loop with main places of interest, routes into the city and links to the Trans-Pennine Trail. There will also be pictures of birds, flowers and trees to look out for, and an old railway photo to make the historical connection. Eddie Johnson has kindly lent us

photos of the old line and stations appropriate to each of the five locations. Progress on the design will be reported to the members' meeting on January 21.

Success for Sustrans in the People's Big Lottery

Many thanks to all our members who voted for Sustrans to get £50 million in the ITV contest last month, and who encouraged others to do so. The result represents a big vote of confidence in the work Sustrans do, and will enable them to leverage supporting funds from local authorities for the 79 proposed schemes at a time when the London Olympics are threatening to drain resources from the rest of the country. The four approved schemes scheduled for Greater Manchester are:

- 1) Improving the Bridgewater Canal towpath and access points in Stretford and Sale.
- 2) Creating a new route and bridge over the River Goyt to link up with paths between Marple and Stockport.
- 3) Replacing the missing viaduct at Woolford on the railway path through Bury.
- 4) Connecting the centres of Rochdale, Oldham, Middleton and Heywood via an improved canal corridor.

There is also a reserve scheme to reconstruct the towpath along the Peak Forest Canal.

Members will know that Sustrans own and manage the Loop, and they are also a key partner in our own grant projects through Paul Thomas of the Manchester office. We wish them every success in the new schemes outlined above.

New Year Ride

Fifteen people, including children, took part in the ride on Sunday 6 January from Chorlton to Debdale and back. The weather was pleasantly dry and mild, and the Vale Cottage Inn provided a welcoming lunch point at the Debdale end of the Loop. A schedule of rides for the coming months will be arranged at our forthcoming members' meeting (see below) and will be circulated in the usual ways.

Forthcoming events

Monday 21 January: Members' Meeting, 7.30 pm, Union Chapel, Wellington Road, Fallowfield. All members welcome.

Sunday 17 February: Tree planting day led by the Sale and Altrincham Conservation Volunteers. Withington Road entrance to the Loop, from 11 am onwards. Wear appropriate footwear, gloves etc.