



My apologies for being too late with this edition of the Newsletter to provide advance notice of our January members' meeting, which took place last week. However, we have a full edition, mostly taken up with reporting on the findings of the three surveys we have conducted of Loop users, two at different points on the Loop itself, and one by post to members. This is the first time that any systematic survey of Loop users has been undertaken, and we think you will be interested in, though perhaps not too surprised by, the findings. We are very grateful to members for the trouble you took in responding to the postal survey, which achieved a three-quarters response rate (unprecedented for any postal survey). The returns from all the surveys will help us to focus our future planning more effectively, and to prioritise the improvements to the Loop that we will be working on and pressing for.

Here now are some February dates for your diary:

Tuesday 9 February, 7.15 pm. Special showing of the climate change film, *The Age of Stupid*, followed by discussion and hot supper. Our usual venue, Union Chapel, Wellington Road, Fallowfield. There is an entry price of £4 to cover the cost of the film and supper. Open to all members, including family and friends. A flier for the event is enclosed, which you can show to others who may be interested.

Sunday 14 February, from 10.30 am. Sapling clearing and tidying-up of the section of the Loop around the Withington Road entrance, led by the Sale and Altrincham Conservation Volunteers. Help from members is needed and welcome. Please bring loppers, secateurs and work gloves if you have them.

Advance notice

The next members' meeting will take place on Monday 15 March at the Union Chapel, 7.30 pm. We shall be planning our spring calendar of rides and activities then. All suggestions are welcome to the secretary.

Survey Results Fallowfield Loop

1. Friday 16 October, Ladybarn Lane Bridge, 3.35 – 5.35 pm

Total passing checkpoint: 101

Of whom: 21 adults (18 cyclists and 3 joggers) missed or did not respond
8 young children were with family groups

Total adults answering survey questions: 72

Male, 53; Female, 19

Cyclists, 48; Walkers, 18; Dog-walkers, 3; Joggers, 3

Purpose of trip: Work, 35; Leisure/fitness, 17; Shops, 10; School/college, 7; Other, 3

Degree of Loop usage: Most days, 46; At least once a week, 23; Rarely, 3

New bridge signs: Very useful, 31; Some use, 35; Not much use, 6

Suggestions for improvement: 46 responses

Install lighting, 16
Remove barriers or make them easier, 7
Clear litter and glass, 7
More police patrols, 3
Fewer trees and bushes, 2
Make dog leads compulsory, 2
Stop horse manure, 2
Stop motor bikes, 2
Other, 5

Notes:

1. Many cyclists using the Loop for work also use it for walking/jogging, often including other family members, so there is a clear category of 'consistent and multiple users'.

2. No time-limited survey can be representative, and November 7 at the Chorlton end captured a different type of user; this one caught a pretty good cross section of weekday users in fine weather and before the clocks went back.

2. Saturday 7 November, Athol Road, 11 am – 1.30 pm

Total survey forms: 44, representing 62 people

Male, 39; Female 23

Main mode: Cyclists, 35; Walkers, 12; Dog walkers, 9; Joggers, 6

Purpose of trip: Leisure/fitness, 42; Work, 7; Shops, 6; Other, 7

Degree of usage: Most days, 20; At least once a week, 23; At least once a fortnight, 6; Rarely, 13

New bridge signs: Very useful, 29; Some use, 25; Not much, 8

Suggestions for improvement: 29 responses.

- Improve litter removal, 6
- Clear leaves, 5
- Make barriers easier, 5
- Install lights, 4
- Improve security, 3
- Other, 6

3. Postal returns from members

Total returns: 48, representing 54 members (three-quarters response rate)

Male, 38; Female, 16

Main mode: Cyclists, 44; Walkers, 7; Dog walker, 1; Jogger, 1; Roller skier, 1

Main purpose of use: Leisure/fitness, 26; Work, 14; Shops, 9; Other, 5

Degree of usage: Most days, 7; At least once a week, 20; At least once a fortnight, 17; Rarely, 10

New bridge signs: Very useful, 35; Some use, 16; Not much, 3

Suggestions for improvement: 37 responses. These were very varied and difficult to aggregate.

- Install lighting, 6
- Improved signage in roads to Loop (Debdale end), 3
- Extend Loop both ends, 3
- More benches, 2
- Deal with knotweed, 2
- Easier barriers, 2
- Remove pigeons, 2
- Restore Lattice bridge, 2
- Improve crossing at Wilmslow Road, 2
- Poop bins, 2
- Other, 11

4. Consolidated results from all three surveys (above plus Ladybarn Lane)

Total numbers surveyed: 188

Male, 130; Female, 58

Main mode: Cyclists, 127; Walkers, 37; Dog walkers, 13; Joggers, 10; Skier, 1

Main purpose of use: Leisure/fitness, 85; Work, 56; Shops, 25; School/college, 7; Other, 15

Degree of usage: Most days, 73; At least once a week, 66; At least once a fortnight, 23; Rarely, 26

New bridge signs: Very useful, 95; Some use, 76; Not much, 17

Suggestions for improvement: 112 responses, most usefully aggregated as follows:

- Cleaning issues (litter, glass, leaves, dog, horse and pigeon droppings), 27

- Install lighting, 26

- Make barriers easier to negotiate, 14

- Extend Loop and increase entrances, 7

- Improved security, 6

- Improved signage (adjacent roads, dual use signs), 6

- Environmental care, 4

- Compulsory dog leads, 3

- Improved crossing at Wilmslow Road, 2

- Other, 17

Some observations: in comparison with the other responses, our members tend to be less frequent users, more predominantly cyclists, most keen on the bridge signs, and have the widest range of suggestions for improvement.

5. Membership of other organisations (members only)

The postal survey of our members showed that 37 were members of other local groups and associations, with an average of two each. 53 different organisations were listed in total, and the membership of them could be categorised as follows:

- Cycle and cycleway groups, 17

- Friends of local parks and open spaces, 14

- Environmental groups, 12

- Community and residents' associations, 7

- Walking and footpath groups, 4

- Cultural groups/associations, 4

- Community help organisations, 4

- Activity and sports groups, 3

- Educational bodies, 3

- Church membership, 3

- Other, 2

