



Newsletter November 2013

Improvements on the Loop

1. The Levenshulme Quadrants

A new term has been coined for the old station site in Levenshulme, with its access points from Crayfield Road and Kersh Avenue. The term refers to the four quarters or 'quadrants' into which the area surrounding the pathway is divided. One (south east quadrant) is already occupied by the community orchard. The one diagonally opposite (north west) has been the subject of considerable concern as United Utilities are due to cut down the larger trees because of potential interference to the Thirlmere aqueduct, which runs along the border of Crayfield Road. The workday run by Lara Moore of LoveLevy in early September cleared a lot of the undergrowth from the site, and the plan is to create a children's play area using some of the trunks cut down. Local residents are naturally upset at the loss of the trees, and one of our members, David Mottram, who lives locally, has circulated a letter to them explaining the reason and setting out our joint plans for improving the site, with an artist's impression of how it might look. A meeting with UU at the Sustrans Manchester office has just taken place, and they have been made aware of our concerns. The trees are due to be felled in January, and any work needed on the pipeline will take place in February, we are assured with minimum disruption.

The other quadrant bordering Crayfield Road (north east) is designated for soft fruit and vegetable growing on raised beds, and Abbie Kempson from Incredible Edible would like to incorporate it into the wider plan for growing edibles in Levenshulme. We hope to see her at our Members' meeting next Monday to discuss her plans. Ideas for developing the final quadrant (south west) are still at an early stage, and are complicated by the presence of Japanese Knotweed on this part of the land.

The whole quadrants area is a key site both for local residents and for Loop users, and we continue to work closely with community groups in Levenshulme to realise its full potential. You will probably already have seen the splendid notice board erected at the Crayfield Road entrance during the workday in September, and we are grateful to Jamie Moore for donating it to the site. A litter-picking rota has also been established to keep the quadrants as free of rubbish as possible.

2. Sherwood Street Entrance

We have now taken delivery of 105 free hedging plants ('wild harvest') from the Woodland Trust for planting at this entrance. They comprise blackthorn, hawthorn, dog rose, elder, crab apple and hazel. They are to be planted in the next few weeks by Back on Track Manchester volunteers, and will eventually form a colourful screen by the fencing on both sides of the entrance site.

3. New Community Orchard

We have identified a third and last remaining workable site for orchard planting, to the right of the Debdale entrance to the Loop next to the allotments. We hope to work on it with community groups and a local school, and to plant a variety of fruit trees there in February/March next year. In view of our limited budget we are putting out an appeal for tree sponsorships, and the accompanying page to this Newsletter sets out more details. With the completion of this project we will have an orchard on all the main sections of the Loop, and we hope members who are able to will consider giving us their financial as well as physical support towards the planting.

4. Aggro on the Loop

Recent numbers of the *South Manchester Reporter* and *Manchester Evening News* have highlighted incidents of mobile phone snatching and motor bike aggression along the Loop. The latter led to a court conviction, while police are urging mobile phone users to install a tracking device on their mobiles. We believe that these incidents are rare, and that the more people who use the Loop the safer it will be. All our policies are focused on encouraging greater awareness of the Loop and use of it. At the same time we have our own local difficulties, with complaints from cyclists about dog walkers, and from dog walkers about cyclists. We urge everyone to be aware of, and respect, other users, and we are looking for funding to install notices to this effect at key entrances. All categories of users have an equal right to enjoy this marvellous facility, and a corresponding responsibility to ensure its safety for others.

5. Rolling Clean-up

Over the first May bank holiday this year we undertook a rolling clean-up of the Loop. This succeeded in providing a litter-free base line for the summer season, and in making the more regular work of our Rangers lighter. In view of its success we plan to repeat the exercise this coming weekend. Dick Venes has already sent out an email notice giving details. We start on Saturday at 10 am at Sainsbury's Fallowfield, and will be working eastwards to the Levenshulme Quadrants, and from there on Sunday (10 am) towards Debdale. Members who wish to help can join us at any time they choose at an appropriate point. This is sometimes unpleasant but always sociable work, and makes a real difference to the attractiveness of the pathway.

6. Members' Meeting

Our next members' meeting will be this coming Monday, 18th November, at the Union Chapel in Wellington Road Fallowfield at 7.30 pm. All members are welcome, and will as usual have the opportunity to raise any issues that concern them, as well as to help plan our future programmes.