



Newsletter March 2016

Now that some spring weather has finally arrived, here are some important initiatives due to take place shortly:

Trial Barrier Opening

Many members have found negotiating the barriers along the Loop to be a cumbersome experience, and they also prevent certain categories of potential users from venturing onto the route at all, whether in wheelchairs, tricycles, trailer bikes, or tandems. Together with Sustrans we are planning a trial opening of all the internal barriers along the Loop on six successive weekends starting shortly. Actually this will be on each Sunday and the following Monday, so that those using the route for travel to work or school can experience the change as well as leisure users. Subject to review, the barriers will then be open continuously for a three-month period following the weekend trials. We will inform members of the start date of the weekend openings, as soon as small posts have been installed so that the barriers can be locked open safely – we hope by early April.

Lorenza Casini, who jointly organised two successful Kidical Mass rides last autumn, with the barriers open, has drawn up an extensive plan and schedule for the trial openings. Our thanks are due to her for an impressive document, which can be accessed on our website. She sees opening the barriers as offering the opportunity for a step-change in the use of the Loop, bringing new users in, and better linking up the different communities through which the route passes. Different events will be planned to take place while the barriers are open, culminating in a 'Fallowfield Loop Festival' some time in the early summer. Towards the end of the period we will conduct a survey of users, to gauge their reactions to the opening.

What can members contribute to the success of this programme? There are many things you can help us with, such as:

- Letting your friends and others know of the plans and publicising them, once we have a definite start date for the weekend trials.

- Helping with the opening of the barriers at the start of a Sunday and closing again on Monday evening (offers please to Dick Venes).
- Coming up with ideas for events to take place while the barriers are open (suggestions and offers to Lorenza Casini).
- Giving your own feedback to us on how you find the experience of the trial openings (to David Beetham).

For our part we will be keeping members informed about the progress of the programme. We are planning to run a stall at the Levenshulme Market on Saturday April 2nd to publicise the barrier opening, and volunteers for this are needed (offers to Pam Flynn).

New Raised Beds at the Levenshulme Quadrants

Incredible Edible Levenshulme have been hard at work on many of the zones around the High Street, Levy Market and the station, trying to bring a touch of green to unloved areas. Now two of their members, Pauline Johnston and Sarah Butter, have taken responsibility, along with other volunteers, for the development of the quadrant which borders Crayfield Road and Broom Lane. Three further raised beds will soon be installed for vegetable planting to add to the soft fruit beds already in place. Plans for the site include a wild strawberry crescent and herb crescent, a wild flower area and a woodchip pathway leading to a picnic and resting area. Last Sunday Pauline led a group of volunteers to dig over the strawberry and wild flower areas. Besides removing the surface turf, a vast array of assorted rubble had to be dug out from what used to be the old station platform. Help from members of the Friends with the further installation, planting and maintenance of the area will always be welcome. The next working party will take place on Sunday 17 April, from 10 am.

Together with the community orchard on the quadrant opposite, this whole site can provide a valuable education facility for learning about the growing, maintenance and harvesting of garden produce. Part of the cost of the new installation has been paid from moneys made over to Sustrans by United Utilities as compensation for the felling of mature trees over their water main adjacent to Crayfield Road. Further financial support will be sought from local sources, and the Friends have also agreed to make a contribution from our own funds, as the IEL project forms part of our long-term plan for the development of the quadrants as a whole.

Spring Clean-up of the Loop

On one of the weekends in April/May, to coincide with the barrier opening, we shall be holding a rolling spring clean-up of the Loop. This is part of our contribution to maintaining the pathway as an attractive route for users. Some of our members already contribute by keeping individual sections clear of litter, but the weekend action provides the opportunity to cover more neglected sections and review the Loop as a whole. We will circulate dates and directions once they are decided at our forthcoming members' meeting (see next item), and also appeal for help with this important and sociable activity.

Forthcoming Members' Meeting

To take place next Monday 21st March at 7.30 pm at the Union Chapel, Wellington Road, Fallowfield. All the initiatives mentioned above will be discussed, as well as other suggestions for our spring programme of events. All members will be given a warm welcome, especially new members and those attending for the first time. There is always a time set aside for members to air their own interests and concerns.