



Newsletter September 2016

Open Barriers Trial – survey results

The open barriers on the Loop trial officially closed in mid-August, and we have been collating the findings of surveys of users. The following is the initial response of our expanded committee to the findings of the surveys. We have conducted three separate surveys – physical (144 respondents), online (135) and via email, Facebook and Twitter (71). Together they form an impressive compendium of opinions about the Loop as well as the open barrier experiment.

1. In the light of the findings we are unanimous in our view that the open barrier policy should be continued indefinitely. The overwhelming response of cyclists is that the experiment has proved positive and has in many cases increased their use of the Loop. This includes not only those who use a variety of wide or long bikes, but also many using ordinary cycles who have found negotiating the internal barriers extremely difficult.
2. However, the concerns of the much smaller number of walkers who have expressed disapproval of the experiment need urgent attention. One concern is that it encourages cyclists to speed up and become a greater hazard to walkers. We would recommend that Sustrans allocate funds to install notices at the main entrances with a 'Share with Care' message. We are keen to know how Sustrans has addressed this problem at their other routes. Possibilities include a message printed onto the tarmac and/or attached to a post. The 'Share with Care' message could be accompanied by pictures of the different users – cyclists, walkers with dogs on a lead, joggers, wheelchairs. Would an experiment with modest speed bumps constitute too much of a hazard?
3. The other main concern of walkers (and some local residents) is the presence of motorbikes, though there is some disagreement whether the problem has increased since the barriers were open. Are the prohibition signs on the bridges sufficiently clear? Might they be included in the 'Share with Care' messages? Are the police adequate in their response to

complaints? We need to show the very few concerned but vocal respondents that we can address their concerns.

4. We would recommend that Sustrans consider an audit of all the entrances to the Loop to identify the few which are impossible for wide bikes to negotiate, so that they all conform to a common pattern.

5. In the event of a continuation of the open barrier policy, we would recommend that the existing structure of the internal barriers be retained, but that the moveable lateral bars be removed as they constitute a possible future hazard.

6. We would welcome an early meeting with the relevant Sustrans personnel to discuss the points raised in this memo. At an appropriate time we think an item on the surveys and our agreed response to them should be sent to local media outlets.

An expanded version of the results of the survey can be found on the FotFL website at:

<https://fallowfieldloop.org/2016/09/12/summary-of-responses-to-the-open-barrier-survey/>

Volunteers at Work

Sustrans arranged a 'Great British Rake Off' event at the Sherwood Street entrance to the Loop on 1st September. The area was cut the week previously at a Sustrans scythe training event. Several FotFL members helped out, removing cut growth from the area, and focussing on weeding and pruning the two hedging strips we planted last year. The hedge has grown really well this year, like all plants, but this has meant we have had to keep on top of encroachment by nettles, thistles, docks and convolvulus, which seem to really like the area!. Some yellow toadflax seeds were also scattered, having been collected from our sister route in Liverpool, and a small patch of ground was weeded, prepared and scattered with wild flower seeds. Incredible Edible Levenshulme's wildflower drift at the Quadrants site has shown how attractive these can be.

Arts Workshop

Sculptor Rachel Ramchurn, who made the family group sculpture installed near the Highfield Park footbridge, is returning to the area to run an arts workshop in October. Here is her brief outline of the workshop she and her colleague Sharon will be running:

Sunday 9th Oct 11am-2pm, the Quadrants, Fallowfield Loop

A one day event making 'treasures' from clay. Inspired by natural shapes and forms found at the quadrant, and small 'Treasures' that participants may want to bring along, artists Sharon Campbell and Rachel Ramchurn will be engaging the public to make artworks and tell stories of 'treasures' that have been in their lives...those small trinkets that hold big memories. Spoken word Artist Ali Gadeema will hopefully be joining us, bringing a fun, live aspect to the event. The made treasures can then be taken home by participants, and will be documented by us to go online.

The idea of the project is to open up creativity in outdoor spaces and encourage communication. We have already been working with Chapel Street Primary School and have successfully completed an interactive sculpture for their EYFS playground. We will be using the content created from this workshop to go towards the next phase of this project that is currently in the planning stages but we hope will be in Highfield Park. We had envisioned the day with Marquees, information available about Sustrans and FotFL and an area for us to create with the public.

Members' Meeting, next Monday

We hold regular bi-monthly meetings of members on the third Monday of alternate months. The next one falls next Monday, 19th September, at 7.30 pm at the Union Chapel, Wellington Road, Fallowfield. All members are invited to take part, and new members and those who have not previously attended can be assured of a warm welcome.