



Newsletter November 2016

Open Barriers

Following the trials over the summer and our extensive survey of users which was reported in our September newsletter, Sustrans has agreed to keep the internal barriers open indefinitely. In response to the minority of respondents who objected, 'Share With Care' notices will be displayed on the tarmac at key entrances. In addition, Sustrans will seek funding for improving the few external barriers that do not allow non-standard bikes to enter.

New Map and Guide to the Loop

Funding has been agreed with the cycling unit of Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to enable us to design and produce a new map/guide to the Loop, matched by a similar sum from our own funds. Copies of the existing brochure are now exhausted, and in any case it is out of date as the last revision was in 2008. The revision has been coordinated by David Beetham and Cos Harnasz, working with Nick Scarle of Manchester University's Cartography Unit, who was responsible for the original design. Drafts of the new brochure will be circulated before it goes to print. Once it has been produced we hope members will help to distribute it to relevant outlets as well as to all the houses backing onto the track. Our pitch to TfGM looked for a substantial increase in the use of the Loop as a result of our efforts.

October events

Members of the Friends helped with and helped promote two innovative events which took place on the Loop during October:

A pocket full of treasures. On Sunday 9th October Sharon Campbell and Rachel Ramchurn organised a creative workshop for children at the Levenshulme Quadrants, using clay and other natural materials for modelling treasures. Ali Gadeema and Martin Visceral, spoken word artists, helped to create poems to match the other work taking place. The sun shone

and there was a great turnout of families taking part. Our members had prepared the ground beforehand, and were on hand as stewards and gazebo constructors on the day. Members of Incredible Edible Levenshulme had weeded the vegetable beds and offered planting advice to children and their parents. Many children also used the wild stretch of shrub land towards Broom Lane for hide-and-seek and tree climbing. Sharon writes 'What a splendid day! We had a really good turnout and were busy all day. The overall feel of the day, in the gorgeous October sunshine, was a buzzing community event...A huge thank you to all those involved.' For our part, the success of the event reinforced our view that this section of the NW Quadrant could be developed as a more permanent education area.

Cycle the solar system. On Sunday 23rd October as part of the Manchester Science Festival, graphics representing the solar system, designed by artist Nick Sayers, were laid out on the Loop from Chorlton to Fallowfield at a scale of 1 to 1,000,000,000. Two rides for ages 11+ took place in the morning and afternoon, and 'planet minders' showed off the respective planets at their measured out sites. Nick wrote afterwards: 'A massive solar-system-sized thankyou to all who worked on the project. It went so much better than I ever anticipated. You're all complete stars!' Permanent solar markers along the Loop have been suggested as a follow-up.

Future Events

This **Thursday 17 November:** Volunteer work day at the Sherwood Street entrance, 10 am, to create varied habitats by grubbing and cutting back self-seeded willow saplings and other small trees. **Thursday 1 December:** pruning and weeding at the Debdale orchard, 10 am. Thereafter the first and third Thursdays of each month have been assigned as volunteer work days, and notice will be circulated in advance through the usual channels.

Monday 21 November: Our next members' meeting, Union Chapel, Wellington Road Fallowfield, 7.30 pm. All welcome to discuss present and future plans for the Loop.

Sunday 8 January 2017: Our annual wassail celebration at the Levenshulme Quadrants community orchard, starting at dusk. A bonfire, fireworks and refreshments have featured in the past, as well as the ritual toast hanging on the fruit trees to encourage abundance.

Wildlife Champions: Matt Holker and Ray Dumbleton have prepared a schedule of guided walks on the 4th Sunday of each month, 10.30 am, beginning in January with birds, February winter trees, March signs of Spring, April Spring flowers, May bees and flying insects. Details of the venue etc. will be circulated in advance, but please note for your diaries.

New Friends' Hon Sec. David Beetham has been filling this role since 2004, and has often expressed the view that it is time for someone else to take over. Fortunately we have a well-qualified volunteer in Frances McCann, who has been a member from the outset, and has previously served on our committee. The transfer will not take place overnight, but over a transition period leading up to next year's AGM during which the responsibilities will be shared. David is not expecting to stop contributing to the Friends' activities, and would like to spend more time exploring possible funding sources for Loop developments, as well as helping to maintain our community orchards.

To end: Here is part of a poem from the spoken word artists at the Pocket full of Treasures day:

Sunday morning and

A pocket full of treasures

Bless my day's journey

People connecting

This is the real Treasure

Immaterial