

# Dorset Cyclists Network

## Spring 2022 News Sheet

Welcome to the Spring 2022 issue of DCN's News Sheet. Now that spring has well and truly sprung (on and off, anyway) we can all start cycling for pleasure again – long days, evening rides and hopefully a good dose of sunshine into the bargain. (Not that it wasn't without its good moments in winter as well).

Some of you might be wondering why it's a whole year since you received a News Sheet. It's simply that Michael Evans – founder and producer of all those excellent regular DCN newsletters – retired in late 2020. So far, we've been unable to find anyone to take his place as newsletter editor, so if you are interested in the role, see below.

In the meantime, let's get out and enjoy our bikes.

### **DCN Needs You!**

Dorset Cyclists Network needs three key volunteer roles to be filled as soon as possible. Please consider helping out, to keep Dorset's only county-wide cycling group active and effective. We don't just ride, we also lobby Parish, Town and Dorset/BCP Councils on cycling issues, and we are listened to. DCN can only carry out this work with support from volunteers.

#### **Membership Secretary:**

Long-serving Membership Secretary Gerry Bannister decided to leave the role at the end of 2021 and DCN urgently needs someone to take his place. Gerry tells us that it's not a difficult or time-consuming job, with most of the admin concentrated in October when all memberships are renewed. Most are paid by direct debit so it's not too onerous. Gerry is also happy to give guidance to anyone stepping into the role.

#### **Facebook Captain:**

We live in an online age, and it's increasingly important for groups like DCN to have an online presence. We need someone to set up and maintain a Facebook page for DCN members only, keeping it lively, up to date and interesting, and encouraging all members to contribute.

#### **Newsletter Editor:**

These News Sheets are all very well, but DCN could really do with a proper multi-page newsletter going out three or four times a year. No experience necessary, and it's just a matter of collating news from the area reps along with any other relevant cycling news or articles. This could be emailed out in digital form.

Interested in any of these roles? Contact Peter Henshaw – email [secretary@dcn.org.uk](mailto:secretary@dcn.org.uk), phone 01935 389357.

### **News from the Areas**

#### **Wimborne – Judy Windwood**

Work to build new sustainable travel infrastructure on Wimborne Road West and Leigh Road in Colehill has now been completed. The 2.3km stretch of new walking and cycle paths, crossings and bus infrastructure improvements are now open and ready for use.

The improvements form part of the 27km green travel route connecting Wimborne and Ferndown with Poole town centre.

It is the first project to be completed as part of Dorset and BCP councils' Transforming Cities Fund programme, which includes a 78km network of new walking, cycling routes and bus improvements being rolled out across south east Dorset.

The improvements include:

- New, continuous 2.3km footpaths and cycle lanes from the Canford Bottom roundabout to the junction with Brook Road. Some sections have one-way cycle lanes either side of the road, and other sections have a two-way cycle lane on one side of the road.
- Three new crossings, two of which are parallel crossings that allow both pedestrians and cyclists to cross at the same time.
- Significant improvements made to the bus stops along the road with raised kerbs to help with access to buses.
- A reduction in the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph to make the road safer for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.
- Junction improvements along Leigh Road giving priority to people walking and cycling around the area.
- The resurfacing of the entire road from Canford Bottom Roundabout to the Brook Road Junction with all potholes filled and repaired.
- Wildflower seeding and planting including new trees.

### **Weymouth & Portland**

The cycle lane on Dorchester Road between Nottingham Lane and Radipole Lane has been upgraded with a solid white line and intermittent kerbing to separate cyclists from traffic. Work was completed in early March and is aimed at encourage more students to cycle to Wey Valley Academy and provide a safer, direct cycle route into the town centre for residents in the Redlands, Broadway and Upwey areas. Some road markings have also been changed to improve awareness of the cycle lane at junctions.

Following comments on the changes, Dorset Council issued this response (edited for length):

We need to make clear that the changes introduced are designed first and foremost to improve conditions for those who aren't currently cycling, and to try and create conditions for some of the 300 or so children who are currently driven to the schools in this area to instead travel by bike/scooter etc. If we are serious about tackling climate change we need to find ways of shifting some of these very short trips for which there are obvious alternatives. This also comes at a time of soaring childhood obesity...enabling regular physical activity is part of the solution to this.

Changing surface colour rather than separators: the decision to include separators was made with considerable care and in direct response to guidance from the Department for Transport which deprecates the use of cycle lanes without some degree of separation. Surface colour only would have cost 4-5 times the scheme cost, as this type of material is very expensive to lay and maintain. 20 mph at school times: the road is unlikely to meet the restrictions necessary to reduce the speed limit, and it is not policy to introduce temporary speed limits. In any case, conditions on Dorchester Road are often quite congested at school pick up/drop off, so reducing the speed limit is unlikely to have an effect on perceived or actual safety.

Value for money: using these sorts of materials is far cheaper than introducing full kerb separation. For a link the length of Dorchester Road, a full redesign of the road to provide a two-way cycle track on one side of the road would likely cost £1-1.5m. To provide two kerb separated lanes on either side would likely be twice as much. We may still have to look at this in the long-term, but we simply don't have the resources to do that at the moment. By way of comparison, we have around £1.8m for all small scale schemes across the whole of Dorset, per year – this includes safety schemes, new crossings etc.

Cars parking blocking the cycle lane: this is an issue we will need to work with our enforcement team on, but the change from advisory to mandatory cycle lane actually may make enforcement easier. Double yellow lines do not stop people from parking (ie, blue badge holders, or briefly to load), whereas mandatory cycle lanes technically do.

Thanks again for all the responses – I would be interested in hearing about where your members feel are other areas of concern as we are developing long term plans for cycling infrastructure. It should be noted, however, that those plans will prioritise the links which offer the greatest potential to shift short car trips, rather than recreational or leisure routes.

*Thanks to Ken Reed, DCN Weymouth & Portland Area Rep, for sending this in.*

### **Blandford and Sturminster Newton - Dilys Gartside**

Throughout last year, I led regular rides for the slower or less confident cyclist to encourage folk to get fresh air and enjoy the company of others with the all important coffee stop! IS IT Wheely WEDnesday? and IS IT Tring-Tring TURSday? were promoted as social prescribing by our local GP surgeries with visits to the Yellow Bus Project and Handmade for Xmas at Stur's Workhouse Chapel.

**Simply FABULOUS** rides returned with a couple of National Garden Scheme visits and an Armistice Day ride on Wimborne's new Leigh Rd cycleway, crossing Canford Bottom's hamburger and Castleman Trailway to Moors Valley. A ride from Wimborne to Poole's Upton Park is scheduled for spring.

The 20sPlentyforDorset campaign continues with hundreds of Love20 wheelie bin stickers distributed across the county. Contact me to buy at bulk discount £1. The campaign is part of a national initiative and even bigger international movement with a push from town and parish councils asking Dorset Highways for a 20 limit in towns and villages where people mix with motors to accord with Govt guidelines; don't delay as DH is currently revising its speed management criteria.

Contact Dilys 01258 860157      Dorset@20splentyforus.org.uk

### **Poole – Stewart Sinclair**

The cycle way from the Sandbanks Ferry to Turks Lane has had the lane on Evening Hill made permanent. This was introduced with the first lockdown, and has replaced the parking at that spot. It is designated with 'orca' (black and white) fixed blocks with a reflective white pole.

At Turks Lane the cycle path turns to go along the bay on the Baiter Whitecliff Bayside walk. Work starts here very soon to lay in a segregated cycle way, which will run to the sluice gates for Poole Park lake, to join with the existing shared way to the skate park and on the Poole town centre. The closure of Churchill Road at Ferndown Road remains in place, but the Council has opened the narrow bridge into Poole Park.

Works continue with the cycle routes to join with the works taking place to join Merley, Wimborne, Ferndown and Christchurch with Poole centre. There are plans in draft state to link Wareham to Upton including Holton Heath avoiding the A35 roundabout near The Baker's Arms. Consultation has also been sought for improvement suggestions for Wimborne Road in Poole between The New Inn and Oakdale crossroads.

Judy Windwood also sent this link on a report on Keyhole Bridge in Poole:

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/press-release/council-ignored-own-policies-reopening-keyhole-bridge-traffic?fbclid=IwAR0s19I-vOvkPf6hX8uTbmFe9cG6FpLALVfbc1GbrC0TDQLypsaSHDieaaY>

### **Sherborne – Peter Henshaw**

As ever, things are quieter in Sherborne, though the A30 remains completely closed at Kitt Hill with an application to extend this to September 2023! At the same time, Chris Loder MP seems to think the closure will end soon, "fingers crossed." Closure is due to a wall collapse after a driver hit it then drove off. End result is extra traffic through the middle of town.

Cycle parking in the Conduit is being very well used, though the stands at Digby Road and on Westbury less so. We are seeing the usual seasonal upswing in cycling in town as the weather warms up.

DCN Thursday evening rides restarted on 21<sup>st</sup> April, and will carry on meeting at 6pm in Culverhayes car park.

## **How did DCN begin?**

“I blame my son,” says founder, Michael Evans

When I moved from London in 1989, my son Richard asked me what Wimborne was like. “It’s lovely,” I replied, “but there are no facilities for bikes – no parking stands, no safe cycle routes, no advance stop lines at junctions, in fact nothing at all for cyclists.” Richard was a hardened long-distance Audax cyclist (in 2014 he rode round the world on a recumbent!) His reply to my complaint was blunt: “So what are you going to do about it?”

It got me thinking, “If I don’t do something, who will?” So in 1992 I put out an announcement inviting anyone interested in improving conditions for cyclists to meet in a hall in Wimborne. Over 50 people turned up with ideas of what was needed. We decided to create a campaign group ‘Cycling in Wimborne’, with a £2 annual subscription for membership, a membership secretary, a treasurer and a small committee.

We started by meeting monthly in each others houses, deciding priorities and how to approach local councils. Dorset was well behind other parts of the UK for cycling facilities, but with persistence we got the attention of Poole and Dorset councils, and after a bit of a struggle, with Bournemouth as well.

Our first success in Wimborne was at the junction of Poole Road and Leigh Road ((by the present Mobility Shop) where we persuaded Dorset Council to create a right turn for cyclists against the No Entry sign, thus eliminating the need for them to negotiate a difficult roundabout. Later, we got safety improvements to the roundabout, where several cyclists had been knocked off their bikes. A few years ago we also achieved a large increase in cycle parking stands throughout the town. As word got round about ‘Cycling in Wimborne’, cyclists from other Dorset towns started to attend our early meetings. We encouraged them to set up local branches which led to a network of campaigns able to assist each other on shared issues. The title Dorset Cyclists’ Network was agreed on and soon covered Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth.

Most of the helpful facilities cyclists now enjoy would have been a lot longer coming if DCN had not persistently lobbied councils in the early days. There remains a lot to be done, but it is good that councils are at last spontaneously building better cycle paths, providing more cycle parking, improving junction layouts, and encouraging people to use bikes to improve our environment. On a national level, our affiliation to Cycling UK has at last helped that body to bring about a major revision of the Highway Code, with good advice for cyclists and drivers for their mutual safety. The DCN committee met formally for many years, but more recently they have acted more informally, and I retired as Chairman after about 25 years, but the original activists around the county are still well involved. They will need to give way to younger men and women soon, so if DCN members want to see further improvements, my plea to you is get involved, and ask our current coordinators how you can help. If you don’t know who they are, speak to our secretary Peter Henshaw.

I’m just approaching my 87<sup>th</sup> birthday, still cycling regularly (thanks to a good e-bike,) and I wish