

Bristol Walking Alliance – notes of AGM and general meeting 8th July 2019

Present: Alan Morris (Civic Society), Roger Gimson (BCR Community Partnership), Susan Carter (Bristol Ramblers), Tony Bowden (Living Streets Bristol), Donald Branch (Living Streets Bristol), Gavin Spittlehouse (Bishopston Society), Len Wyatt (Bristol Parks Forum), Ian Bickerton (Bristol Older People's Forum), Gillian Seward (Bristol Older People's Forum), Jenny Smith (Bristol Older People's Forum and Greater Stockwood Forum), Beccy Jesson (Severn Ride and Stride), Alexa Bingham (Severn Ride and Stride), Claudia Haslam (Walking for Health group), Anna Rothnie (on project re community engagement in transport policy)

Apologies: Ben Barker (Action Greater Bedminster), Suzanne Audrey (SHINE), Zoe Trinder-Widdess (Bristol Health Partners), Gordon Richardson (Bristol Disability Equality Forum), Jon Usher (Sustrans), Carew Reynell (Bristol Ramblers), Diane Jones (St George Community Network), Jonathan Flower (UWE), Anthony Negus (LibDem), Celia Phipps (City Council walking champion), Tony Carey (Conservative), Steve Hyde (RNIB), Peter Gould (Bristol Ramblers)

Annual General Meeting

Annual Report

AM introduced the Annual Report for 2018/19 – see slides. RG summarised the work of the Planning Group. SC summarised the work of the Policy Group.

AM invited questions and comments. There were brief discussions on:

- enforcement of pavement parking. The importance of reporting issues on Fix My Street was stressed
- national organization for walking improvements – this is Living Streets. The local branch is Living Streets Bristol, which works alongside BWA in Bristol.
- funding – how to ensure funding for walking improvements. The Department for Transport has written to councils advising them to spend a certain percentage of transport funding on walking and cycling. BWA has joined with other walking and cycling organizations to press West Of England Combined Authority (WECA) to do this.
- involving younger people. AR spoke of her plan to organise a transport planning 'camp' in Bristol. BJ spoke about the imminent Extinction Rebellion week of action in Bristol. BWA would welcome ideas on engaging younger people.
- One City Plan. SC reported from a recent OCP gathering that the thematic boards are open to ideas to improve the walking environment.

Elections

The following were elected to the Executive Committee for 2018/19: AM, RG, GR, SC, SA, BB, JU, Z T-W, DJ, JF

AOB

- Bristol Older People's Forum AGM on Thursday 25th July at 10am – Clean Air Plan
- Bristol Parks Forum is planning to write a position statement on standards for design for walking and cycling in green spaces

General meeting: Pedestrian crossing review

Jackie Davies of Bristol Council presented and took questions on the pedestrian crossing review.

This project is reviewing the operation of the system-controlled pedestrian crossings on main roads, optimising the balance between different road users. Some roads have already been reviewed and others are yet to be done. See Jackie's slides as well as the following notes.

The project has reviewed:

- Church Road (first pilot, done in greater detail)
- Stapleton Road

- Fishponds Road
- Muller Road
- Wells Road
- Bath Road

Still to do are (to be completed by March 2020):

- Gloucester Road
- Whiteladies Road
- Hotwells/Anchor Road
- City centre

Points made:

- the purpose of the project is to reduce pedestrian waiting times, both on centrally controlled signalised crossings and on locally controlled crossings.
- the Church Road pilot saw reductions in pedestrian waiting times of 30% to 40%.
- priority is given to pedestrians, but only if it does not delay buses or exacerbate air pollution by causing traffic queues. Many lights are programmed to clear a car queue before letting pedestrians cross. Both constraints increase the pedestrian waiting time from what they would otherwise be. The fundamental cause of pedestrian crossing waiting times is too much motor traffic – pedestrian wait times inevitably increase in peak hours.
- there are various types of traffic signal operational rules, some better for pedestrians than others. 'Pre timed Max' is best. See slides for details. There is no way for a pedestrian to know what the rules are when they arrive at a particular set of traffic lights – it would be helpful, but the technology does not exist. As there is no way of knowing, it is always worth pressing the button ! The maximum wait time anywhere is 112 seconds, but the waiting time at most signals is not more than 60 seconds.
- the software is flexible – it can take various information inputs to determine the optimum crossing operational rules, and the rules can vary by time of day. The SCOOT management system manages a series of traffic lights along a road corridor. Bristol and London are believed to be alone in implementing pedestrian priority on SCOOT the way this project is doing. Bristol has purchased a Siemens control system, as has Transport for London, and it is planned to add improved functionality over time, eg use kerbside detectors to allow for the number of pedestrians waiting to cross. The controllers in the signal units are much less flexible, and with a 40-year life are slow to change.
- modelling software is not used to determine the best balance, but the team would like that facility.
- problems with individual crossings can be reported via Fix My Street (which is map-based, and publicly records the council's response). The signals team is happy to review problems.
- the project has no budget of its own, only staff time. The team has an annual budget, which is usually for urgent maintenance or safety issues only. It has to rely on budgets for road maintenance, developer contributions and road schemes.

BWA would like to engage further with the pedestrian crossing review. Those interested will discuss how they would like to engage, and revert to Jackie with proposals.