

Gloucestershire Cycling Forum

Monday 18th November 2024

Attendees

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Nigel Moor | Chair |
| Sarah Williams | Coordinator |
| Danielle Chick | Coordinator |
| Malcolm Taylor | Forum representative |
| Bill Olver | Forum representative |
| Cllr Gray | Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning |
| Cllr Willingham | Liberal Democrats |
| Cllr Cody | Green Party |
| Cllr Bloxsom | Labour Party |
| Cllr Turner | Green Party |
| Cllr Burton | FoDDC Green Party |
| Colin Chick | GCC Director of Environment, Economy & Infrastructure |
| Phillip Williams | Assistant Director of Traffic & Transport |
| Alex Haworth | GCC Major Projects Project Manager |
| Jason Humm | GCC Director for Traffic & Transport |
| Stephen Delacourt | Newent Cycling Group |
| Tish Rickard | Newent Cycling Group |
| David Ingleby | Gloucester City Council |
| Simon Maher | Stroud District Council |
| James Jackson | Atkins |
| John Franklin | Cheltenham & Tewkesbury Cycle Campaign/ Cycling Consultant |
| James Beecher | Access Bike |
| Anya Hyndside | FoDCAP |
| Mel Nichols | Paralympian and cycling advocate |
| Vaughan Webber | Horsley Cycling and Walking Project |
| Members of the public | |
| <u>Apologies</u> | |
| Alan Bullock | GCC Major Projects Team Leader |
| Robert Vestey | Gloucestershire Constabulary |
| Jonathan Smith | Gloucestershire Constabulary |
| Roger Smith | Forum Representative |

1 **Welcome & Introductions**
Nigel Moor welcomed attendees

2 **FODCAP**

Anya Hyndside introduced herself and her role at Forest of Dean Climate Action Partnership (FODCAP).

FODCAP is a partnership of various locations and organisations working on climate change initiatives, supporting one another and aiming to increase

diversity among those involved in tackling climate issues. FODCAP was established in 2019/2020 following the declaration of a climate emergency, but faced challenges maintaining momentum during COVID-19.

The group focuses on energy, transport, food and farming, and community, with a strong emphasis on involving young people. It aims to share knowledge, identify opportunities, and serve as a central hub for climate-related activities. Active transport was identified as a major challenge in the Forest of Dean, as it is across Gloucestershire. The importance of including young people's perspectives in discussions around cycling and transport was highlighted.

A Forest of Dean transport map is being developed to address active travel and public transport challenges by highlighting existing, often underused, infrastructure and identifying missing links. The map will be available online and updated annually from 2025. It will include routes and links to resources, with logos of participating organisations displayed. Features will include cycling routes, EV charging points, and accessible transport options.

Suggestions and Feedback:

- Cllr Cody suggested incorporating FixMyStreet into the map.
- Phillip Williams proposed marking quieter roads, similar to approaches taken by cycle campaigns like B-line.
- John Franklin suggested including road gradients and secure cycle parking on the map.
- Mel Nichols raised concerns about accessibility in the Forest and suggested both on-road and off-road routes be included.
- Layers for features like accessible toilets, graded routes, and facilities were suggested by Cllr Cody, but this may be considered for future versions. Anya Hyndside requested help to ensure accessibility is properly addressed.

The map will initially be produced as a PDF with links due to cost constraints, but future enhancements such as interactive layered maps may be explored if funding permits. Initial work was funded by FODCAP, with input from key stakeholders and additional support from philanthropic investors, Thirty Percy. Future funding is being sought from district councils.

3 Close Passes

Gloucestershire Constabulary were unable to attend the meeting, Road Safety Manager, Miguel-Angel Serrano Santos provided an update and explained issues.

Numerous reports of close passes have been submitted by cyclists, but recordings are often insufficient for prosecution or issuing warning letters. Undercover cyclists are now being used to catch close pass incidents, with letters being sent to offending drivers.

Close passes are exacerbated by higher speed limits. Lack of police enforcement against dangerous behaviours (e.g., mopeds on pavements) remains a concern. Public education on road safety and Highway Code updates is insufficient. Improved road design and a cultural shift are necessary to encourage cycling and reduce incidents.

Malcolm Taylor asked what makes the recordings insufficient. It was explained that recordings may fail to clearly capture both the driver and the close pass.

Cllr Willingham highlighted that close passes are not an offence, but dangerous driving is. Referred to Operation Snap, where incidents such as vehicles running red lights have resulted in prosecutions, but other issues remain unaddressed. Criticised the lack of aggressive enforcement from the police compared to other forces like the Met Police. Noted hidden costs of close passes, such as discouraging cycling and associated financial burdens (e.g., £20,000 for slight injuries, £200,000 for serious injuries, and £2 million for fatalities).

Phillip Williams pointed out a correlation between cyclists riding close to the kerb and closer passes by drivers, recommending prominent road positioning for safety. Emphasised the need for road designs that consider duty of care and the trade-offs between wide and narrow roads.

John Franklin mentioned that passing too close accounts for 23% of collisions and is a significant cause of aggression. Noted that reduced road widths are closely linked to close passes and aggressive behaviour.

Alex Haworth advised that GCC follow current guidance, avoiding intermediate cycleway widths and ensuring they are either distinctly wide or narrow to mitigate close passes.

Cllr Burton and Cllr Willingham noted a general lack of public awareness of changes to the Highway Code, such as giving way to pedestrians at side roads. They raised concerns about increased aggression and safety issues related to the Cycle Spine design, with instances of mopeds using pavements at high speeds and e-bikes exceeding legal limits.

Suggestions and Actions:

Nigel Moor suggested ensuring police attendance at the next meeting, either in person or virtually. Proposed inviting the police and crime commissioner to discuss enforcement and cultural issues surrounding cycling. Phillip Williams recommended combining education and enforcement to address road behaviour issues. Miguel-Angel Serrano Santos highlighted the importance of embedding cycling culture from a young age. Cllr Cody suggested lobbying the government for better public awareness through advertising and looking at examples from countries like Hungary. James Beecher suggested ThinkTravel reissue communication messages on social media regarding the highway code.

4 Reducing Speed Limits

Sarah Williams presented findings from the [20mph Research Study](#)

The study expresses some positive perceptions and findings about 20mph restrictions but caveats the proposals with a need to create streets with measures that make the look and feel of the area low speed. Some people expressed frustration at Parishes' applications for 20mph zones being refused. GCC officers clarified that without funding to create self-enforcing speeds, Gloucestershire Police will not enforce 20mph speeds. Without police support, a Traffic Regulation Order can be sought, however, even if this is approved, it leaves schemes open to failure and bad press, reducing their favourability and likelihood of implementation. GCC were asked to invite the Police Crime Commissioner to the next Forum in 2025 (dates to be agreed).

Cllr Willingham noted that most local roads are 30mph or 40mph, with only a short 20mph zone in some areas. He shared a personal example of a petition for a 20mph zone outside a school being refused and advocated for developments to include "home zones." He cited Bristol as an example where 20mph zones work effectively and stressed the need for slower speeds in specific areas.

Sarah Williams emphasised that creating a 20mph zone is not just about signage but about designing roads that naturally reduce speed, through measures such as narrower lanes or planting.

Cllr Cody highlighted the importance of police involvement in enforcing these zones and mentioned the "20's Plenty for Gloucestershire" meeting scheduled for 7 pm on 3rd December.

Malcolm Taylor expressed scepticism about whether driving at 30mph on a 30mph road is always necessary and stressed the need for enforcement.

James Beecher noted that most parishes in Gloucestershire are in favour of 20mph zones.

Miguel-Angel Serrano Santos supported reducing speeds everywhere and stressed the importance of designing roads to encourage active travel and changing mentalities to support cultural shifts in transport behaviour.

Cllr Gray stated that cultural change is key and that speed reductions benefit everyone, not just pedestrians and cyclists. Noted that a significant proportion of the population does not support reducing speeds and raised concerns about costs associated with implementing these changes.

James Beecher questioned why existing 30mph zones are not enforced and suggested that costs should be addressed through a council-wide policy.

Colin Chick highlighted political barriers to implementing speed reductions. Noted that despite advancements allowing cars to be controlled in certain zones since 2018, recent government decisions have reversed these requirements. Referred to the 1963 Traffic in Towns report, which emphasised streets as spaces for socialising. He cited examples like Hounslow, where serious traffic-calming

measures reduced collisions by a third, and Luton, where accidents increased in 20mph zones without physical measures.

Cllr Burton pointed out that changing attitudes to speed limits needs to be consistent across the board.

Phillip Williams discussed the role of the police as statutory consultees but criticised their limited understanding of road safety issues. He noted that Gloucestershire's traffic department lags behind in addressing these concerns. He added that technology might eventually support speed compliance, but currently, 20mph zones are unlikely to receive strong police support.

Anya Hyndside inquired about the advocacy strategy for promoting 20mph zones and their benefits.

5 Casualty Statistics

Sarah Williams provided a presentation on casualty statistics.

Data on fatalities over the past five years shows:

- 2 fatalities in Gloucester City.
- 2 fatalities in the Cotswolds.
- 2 fatalities in Tewkesbury.

Most collisions involving cyclists occurred during daylight hours.

Cllr Burton asked if helmet use was recorded in these reports. It was clarified that this information is not included.

Cllr Willingham inquired about serious and slight injuries, asking if there are any cluster sites involving cyclists. Sarah Williams offered to share an image from the transport monitoring team that provides detailed insights into schemes addressing such issues.

James Beecher asked whether serious and slight injuries also mainly occur during daylight hours. Phillip Williams cautioned that the dataset is small, making it easy to draw unreliable conclusions.

Phillip Williams highlighted distinctions between urban and rural areas, noting that the variability in daylight conditions can influence trends.

John Franklin referenced research from the Transport Research Laboratory, stating that most cyclists without lights are still visible to other road users.

Miguel-Angel Serrano Santos raised the question of whether cycling accidents are more common at night or during the day.

Phillip Williams emphasised the importance of wearing bright clothing or reflective gear to maximise visibility, advising cyclists to take proactive steps to ensure they are seen.

6 Date of next forum & AOB

Cllr Cody emphasised the need for a coordinated approach to the Cycle Spine, though this will not be discussed at the next meeting.

Colin Chick highlighted that a biodiversity report showed the hedgerow on the Cycle Spine was non-native and invasive. The replacement hedgerow will be native, with an additional 100 trees to be planted. Alex Haworth confirmed that hedgerow permissions were granted, and David reassured that the replacement will be an improvement.

John Franklin noted his belief that cycle counts on Cheltenham and Gloucester routes are not increasing as expected. GCC statistics do not reflect this.

Cllr Bloxsom requested a future agenda item on the cost benefit of consultation works and schemes delivered. Colin Chick raised that lots of infrastructure has been provided across the county due to money spent on necessary studies.

A suggestion was made to focus on diversity at future forums.

Cllr Willingham stated that Hayden Lane requires further attention and should be discussed during the roadworks update at the next meeting.

The Newent cycle loop map has been updated and will be released in January.

Themes for Next Forum:

- Joint approach for Cycle Spine.
- Updates on biodiversity and tree planting.
- Cost-benefit analysis of studies versus actual infrastructure.
- Cycle counts and route improvements.
- Haden Lane issues.

Date of Next Forum:

- TBC