

NEWHAM CYCLISTS ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Headlines

- *A busy, varied and interesting rides programme.*
- *A campaigning award.*
- *A busy year on infrastructure including some important consultation responses on Stratford Waterfront, Barking Rd/Greengate St, Quietway 6*
- *Developing partnerships.*
- *Sustainable finances*

Looking ahead:

- *How do we communicate with our members?*
- *How can we maximise the impact of our consultation responses?*
- *Ensuring that Newham's Liveable Neighbourhood scheme around Freemason's Rd maintains the quality of the bid,*
- *Promotion of other Liveable Neighbourhoods and other emerging schemes such as the Romford Rd Corridor.*
- *Ensuring delivery of Newham LIP and Cycle Strategy*
- *Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and Westfield*

Our Officers and relations with the London Cycling Campaign

During the year the Officers have been:

- Joint Co-ordinators: Arnold Ridout and Kerena Fussell
- Treasurer: Bill Bremner
- Local Infrastructure Lead: Olawale Ajibola
- Rides Co-ordinator: Steve Smith

We fully participated in LCC activities, for example providing a feeder ride for nearly 100 to the Freecycle event in Central London, attendance at LCC Local Group and infrastructure events, and helping (with Waltham Forest) to revive the Redbridge Group.

Whilst our membership is not particularly great (compared to, say, Hackney) it is gradually increasing and we benefit from a high level of participation and over the course of the year. We are now one of the more active LCC Borough Groups.

Communications

We have communicated to members via monthly meetings, our website, social media, a Yahoo Group which has been running for many years and a borough insert into the LCC magazine which is sent to all LCC members resident in Newham.

As we have become more active we have been considering how we can communicate more effectively – especially as the borough insert is due to end soon.

One possibility is to make greater use of the facility of LCC to mail out to all members and supporters registered with it. This has greater coverage and less data protection issues than using a local mail out facility.

Our communication with local Councillors has progressed with resulting greater engagement from a number of Councillors sympathetic to cycling. We have even discovered some regular cyclists amongst those we have contacted.

Rides

Newham cyclist now have a comprehensive range of rides to suit all group members. As well as working with local community groups to organise rides to meet specific needs, such as Ambition, Aspire and Achieve and Bike from Boleyn we had a minimum of one group ride a month through the year. Ride reports, route maps and photos for all group rides are posted on the website to provide information, entertainment and encourage participation

Some of the highlights of the year, and changes to the programme are outlined below

The brewery ride, already oversubscribed, added a new south London route to include the famous “Bermondsey Mile” and a ride on the scenic cable car across the Thames. We have proved that beer and bikes are a winning combination, when mixed in the right quantities

The Newham and River rides have evolved to explore different features of the local environment as new parts of the waterways have opened up to cycling and ride leaders have discovered different points of interest, such as the small monument at the point where the Princess Alice sank. New construction development along the river provides constantly changing vistas for these local rides

The Kent, Hertfordshire and Essex rides provide the opportunity for longer rides and are increasingly popular. A short train ride gives access the countryside within easy reach of our well connected borough. Cycling for pleasure in a non-urban environment can also be social, healthy and fun

Promoting diversity with Women’s Institute Suffragette and “Call the Midwife” rides are another way we are continuing to innovate and ensure our ride programme are both inclusive and fascinating.

Accounts and Budget

To follow

Fix Your Ride

Our “Fix Your Ride” stall in Forest Gate took place on the second Saturday of the month from March to October. After our appearance at the Forest Gate Festival we had to decamp to the Community Garden in Forest Gate due to the refurbishment of the Woodgrange Market site. Despite this move away from the site of the main market our stall still thrived with many users who provided substantial donations to the group. We have now started back with the refurbished Market site.

Partnerships

We continued our partnership with the charity **Ambition, Aspire Achieve**, which runs a children’s cycle club on Saturday mornings from the Arc in the Park Canning Town. We aim to help by attending on a Saturday morning periodically to fix and check the bikes they have (or bring) and the following Saturday going out for a ride. Over the course of the year we ran a 5 such rounds of stall-rides.

This year:

- the fixing of the bikes suitable for disabled children proved particularly challenging;
- we have sorted and cannibalised a number of bikes to leave a core of serviceable bikes;
- we extended the ride from the Greenway and Three Mills into the Olympic Park, much to the delight of the children who relish the greater challenge of a slightly longer ride – but which has noticeably developed riding skills; and
- took a group of AAA children on the Bike from Boleyn Ride on 20 October.

This activity helps us increase our profile in the south of the Borough.

We marshalled **Bike from Boleyn** rides on 29 April and 20 October; and our table won the quiz night fund raiser for the Christmas tree by the Boleyn statue – despite not getting the best score on the cycling questions! The ride of 29 April included a large contingent of parents and children from Central Park School and that of 20 October included a contingent from the AAA children’s cycle club. Bike from Boleyn is a high profile political event attended by MP’s and Councillors.

On the infrastructure side we liaised closely with **Living Streets** which resulted in a meeting with the Rokshana Fiaz before the mayoral election and letter of [28 October](#) regarding Newham Council’s Parking Permit Policy (see below).

We are developing a partnership with **Clapton FC** who used to play in Forest Gate but are currently in exile at Walthamstow. They are keen to retain the link with Forest Gate by organising a cycle ride to the match – due on 27 April.

We continue to work alongside **Forest Gate WI** to encourage more of their members to get on their bikes. Sadly our first planned ride of this year had to be cancelled due to gale force winds, but we have more planned and are also encouraging the ladies to join some of our Newham Rides too. We would like to develop this partnership further and include other WI groups in the borough - such as the East Edge Sisters in East Ham.

Stratford Town Centre

This merits separate consideration because it is a key infrastructure change and has been so successful. The work replacing a gyratory with two way traffic and good cycle facilities continued throughout the year and was monitored by ourselves in close conjunction with TfL in the person of Michael Barratt OBE their Development Impact Assessment Officer. We undertook formal audit rides on audit ride 4 June and 6 September and have been in constant and fruitful contact with Newham Council's Project Manager Paul Gannon, to who great tribute must be paid.

And, of course, we won the LCC Campaigning award for our work on this project.



We are planning an event during Bike Week in June in partnership with the local business improvement organisation [Stratford Original](#) to celebrate the completed Stratford improvements and help maximise its (already increasing) use by cyclists.

Liveable Neighbourhoods

Newham was successful in the face of stiff competition in securing development funding to progress a liveable neighbourhood scheme (which Newham Council call "Safe and Healthy Neighbourhood") for the Freemasons Road area. This is a notable achievement and we are pleased that Paul Gannon, fresh from his success in delivering the Stratford town centre improvements is to be the lead official. We look forward to working closely with him, local councillors and LCC HQ to develop high quality plans that will attract the further funding necessary to deliver the project.

Other LV projects put forward by Newham Council, especially in the Stratford/ Leyton/Forest Gate areas were not successful in this particular exercise but were recognised as being worthwhile and good quality and there are potential alternative means to progress these.

Local Implementation Plan

Like all other Councils Newham must bid for money from TfL transport projects that support the Mayor of London's transport policies. They cover the period of 3 years from March 2019.

The current bid by Newham was late due to changes at the political level. The good news is that it is a huge improvement on previous bids. It has to be because TfL are now scrutinising and monitoring boroughs far more seriously. The current LIP shifts the emphasis from minor tinkering (drop curbs and contraflows) to schemes with big impact and preparation for Liveable Neighbourhoods

However the current LIP still lacks ambition that is proportionate for a borough which has been recognised one of the highest in London for unfulfilled potential for cycling.

Key deficiencies:

- Complacency in overstating the benefit actions to date e.g. the Crossrail environmental changes which brought no improvement in cycling infrastructure at considerable expense; and reliance on the successor to "Keep Newham Moving" programme which was almost exclusively focussed on resurfacing (which brings minimal, and sometime no, advantage to cycling) ;
- Lack of ambition in leveraging development money;
- Refusal to buy in to the Mayor of London's Zero casualty vision;
- Prevarication of borough wide 20mph;
- Refusal to establish even medium term targets for sustainable transport and rolling it up with public transport;

Other Campaigning

The raft of **formal responses to consultations**, led by Olawale, are listed in the chart below.

Those worthy of particular mention are:

- Stratford Waterfront – the major QEOP development which is poor in terms of cycling. We co-ordinated and led the response for LCC;
- Greengate St – a disappointing old style plan on a key cycling route, which we brought to the attention of local councillors.

Our overall approach is to advocate;

- prioritisation of sustainable transport;
- ensure there is good quality and safe cycle provision, especially where traffic levels are above 2000 per day, as representing good practice and good value for money;
- ensure that the plan promotes the TfL and local cycling visions/strategies/planning requirements;

- 20mph;
- “Copenhagen” style pavements on side routes.

Going forward we need to consider how we involve more of us in the formulation of responses and give them greater impact, including by encouraging individual responses in addition to the response from Newham Cyclists. With a greater appetite from Newham Council to leverage development money for cycle infrastructure we need to keep a close eye on planning applications.

We have had regular **catch up meetings** with Newham Council’s Sustainable Transport Officer reviewing cycle provision and progress in the borough. Again tribute is due to Richard Wadey. The outcomes are now posted on our website. This is the [latest](#).

Jonathan Rothwell participated in an eye opening audit ride of **Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park** on 18 July and has been attending the meetings of the QEOP Sustainable and Active Transport Group of the London Legacy Development Corporation which is the planning authority for the QEOP and Westfield areas. The LLDC have a poor track record on sustainable transport and still have a blind spot. This is a matter which is likely to feature heavily in the near future, particularly as it has recently been [announced](#) that £25m is to be spent on walking and cycling.

We wrote a [letter](#) to Newham Councillors currently sitting on the LLDC Planning Committee on 4 January which we published on our website and was picked up unsolicited by the Newham Recorder although in the event they did not run a story.

The letter on **parking permits** written in co-operation with Newham Living Streets was sent just before a critical Council vote which in the event just kept open the possibility of a change in the current, virtually unique, policy of giving the first parking permit per household free. (in contrast to the policy on secure cycle parking).

An audit ride was undertaken with Newham Council officials and the LCC Campaigns Manager on the critical (and disappointing) **Leyton Road junction of Quietway 6** on 18 July. It remains unsatisfactory. We are looking at how this might be improved retrospectively.

One of our evening rides was around Manor Park to view the rat running on each side of high Street North. To the west the one way streets have been altered (but more needs to be done) and to the east a restricted traffic zone has been consulted on – although nothing has been heard since January.

We attended all the forums initiated by Newham Council on “**Our Streets, Transport and Parking**” inauspiciously renamed from “Our Streets and Places” following the appointment of Councillor Zulfikar Ali as Cabinet Member for Highways and Sustainable Transport. He is a recent former president of the British Parking Association. Councillor Ali has not yet agreed to any of our offers to meet. However some of the meetings and the results of the polls taken as part of the consultation show that the tide is turning in Newham towards acceptance of sustainable transport.

After the opening of the **Greenway** 24 hours in January we did an [audit ride](#) on 21 January attended a number of (freezing cold) evening litter picks with Richard Wadey. Whilst there are still issues of anti-social behaviour on the Greenway the upgraded facility (of which there is still more to come) is already achieving its objective of increased cycle usage.

Consultation Responses

Month	Matter	Comment
April	High Street North Traffic Calming Scheme	Support if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copenhagen pavements. • 20mph.
August	Leyton Ladder (Major Rd/Leyton Rd) (consequential traffic orders)	Reiterated opposition to the scheme, supported parking restrictions and advocated 20mph.
October	Freemasons Rd Liveable Neighbourhood	Support for concept in general consultation
November	Newham and Waltham Forest Liveable neighbourhood	Support and supplied details of potential “cells” and set out aspirations for the project.
December	Litchfield Ave contraflow	Stressed danger in contraflow from current parking arrangements contraflow, the need to avoid pedestrian conflicts by separate paths. Suggested broader Liveable neighbourhood treatment in the area.
December	Aldworth Road	
December	Bridge Terrace	
December	Elizabeth Rd	Support whilst advocating 20mph and tighter parking restrictions where there are visibility problems. Also suggest a “quietway” type link to Upton park and East ham
December	Dean St	
December	Capel Rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 mph
January	Stratford Waterfront	Major scheme where NC objections were picked up by LCC. Objections to this scheme as it does the minimum (or less) to promote cycling within the scheme and more broadly. On occasions it fails to meet draft London Design Standards, and promotes pedestrian/cycle conflicts.

		Backed up by letter re QEOP to relevant Newham Councillors
January	Olympic Ave crossing	Demand cycle crossing be included. 20 mph
January	High Street North Eastside	Raises questions on proposal to cut rat running and urges more extensive treatment of manor park – extending to west side of High St North.
February	Green St pedestrian crossing	General support for better crossing but <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 mph for Green St • Copenhagen pavements • Pedestrian zones
February	Greengate St/Barking Rd	An “old school” Scheme inadequate for junction of two cycling corridors and does not meet Newham’s Cycle Strategy goals in respect of this junction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copenhagen pavements • 20 mph • Formal crossing needed Followed up with local Councillors and Cabinet Members
February	Letts Rd 2 way cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better signage • Copenhagen pavements • 20 mph
March	Romford Rd bus Priority Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus lanes should be 24 hr • Bus lanes should be “effective width” • No parking in bus lanes. • Cycle lanes should be minimum recommended width. • Cycle lanes should be mandatory unless this is impossible; • 20mph.