**Draft/NEWHAM CYCLISTS ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

**Officers:**

Co-ordinator: Arnold Ridout

Deputy Co-ordinator: Kerena Fussell

Treasurer: Bill Bremner

Secretary: Kate Byrnes

Rides Co-ordinator Steve Smith

Infrastructure Representative: Olawale Ajibola

Deputy infrastructure Representative: Chris Kershaw

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park Representative: Jonathan Rothwell

**Summary of Year**

Our activities were inevitably curtailed by the Covid-19 crisis, but we have increased our local profile by contact with Councillors and the media.

The response from Newham Council to Covid -19 in promoting 7 low traffic neighbourhoods and planning a Romford Rd corridor represents a positive step change in attitude in favour of active travel through high quality schemes. However progress has been held back by residual political opposition to active travel and a strain on resources of the Council.

We have progressed partnership working as a practical way of extending our footprint across the borough and to increase our diversity.

Zoom meetings attracted greater participation than actual meetings – especially on cold winters evenings.

We have successfully migrated from Google Groups to Groups IO and this has proven to be a lively forum for the exchange of information and views.

Our finances remained sustainable thanks in particular to donations made a Fix Your Ride sessions.

Our membership has grown slightly to 163.

**Rides**

During the Covid-19 restrictions the emphasis has been on socially distanced local rides which could help those lacking confidence in riding their bikes.

* 28 June Newham Ride
* 12 July River Ride
* 26 July Newham parks Ride
* 27 September Discover Newham Ride
* 11 October Discover Newham Ride
* 25 October Discover Newham Ride
* 22 November Discover Newham Ride
* 17 December Christmas Lights Ride

**Activities and Partnerships**

We held Fix Your Ride sessions at Woodgrange Market when this was permissible – even in the cold winter months. The response to the winter sessions was patchy.

We complemented this by two ad hoc sessions; at Manor Park at the request of Councillor Dawood and a two day session as part of a Plaistow Cycle event.

We participated in a Cycle Caterpillar on August Bank Holiday.

In the autumn we resumed (albeit temporarily) our partnership with the charity Ambition, Aspire, Achieve, by fixing bikes and leading a ride for the children.

We continued regular liaison and participation in joint activities with Better Streets for Newham and the Newham Climate Collective.

We have liaised with GoParks, an organisation linked to the Council for the Preservation of Rural England London district to promote active travel to our local parks.

We adjusted our website to make it more useful for archive material, especially useful advice and ride routes.

We are grateful for the support of LCC HQ.

Plaistow Big Local and RADLAC have initiated contact with a view to partnership activities.

**Campaigning and infrastructure**

Generally the year was marked by much greater interaction with Councillors and the media than in previous years.

Rather than formal responses to consultations the year was dominated by infrastructure developments in response to Covid-19, other items mostly being put to one side. This required day to day monitoring and communication with the Council and reacting to events.

In response to the Covid-19 crisis Newham Council have started to implemented and continue to implement a series of low traffic neighbourhoods. This represents a step change in attitude. Planning has started for creating an initial corridor for the Romford Rd.

We wrote to Councillor Asser, lead Councillor on Highways and Sustainable Transport on 6 May and subsequently met with him to press for an urgent response to the Covid-19 crisis. Prior to a key cabinet meeting of 11 June we provided papers and briefing highlighting the lack of urgency and ambition in the Council’s plans and provided some practical ideas to improve active travel in the borough. We pointed to the lack of any initiative on the strategic Barking Rd, plus our traditional themes of 20mph limit, the need for enforcement, an end to pavement parking, and making bus lanes 24 hrs.

We liaised with Living Streets in their development of proposals for a walking and cycling route to Ilford.

 We provided Councillors and Council officers with detailed analysis (including a film) on how a Romford Road cycle corridor could be created within the current constraints – essentially by making existing cycle lanes and bus lanes 24 hours and removing the worst blockages. This remains a Council aspiration but progress on this has been disappointingly slow.

We had an introductory meeting with Councillor Jahan (Councillor Asser’s Deputy).

During the year the Council did progress a band of low traffic neighbourhoods across the north of the borough. We liaised closely in the design, monitored e.g. removal of bollards and installation of cameras, assisted in traffic counts and directing traffic during the opening phase and provided general support in the face of an antipathetic social media campaign.

Where comments from individuals only have been solicited for a number of schemes we have drawn this to the attention of members and ensured comments were made – on Commonplace regarding low traffic neighbourhoods, regarding Westfield Ave and in respect of Epping Forest’s meagre Strategy Plan.

We have pressed the developers of Plaistow Place and Newham Council to provide a ramp to the Greenway.

We have supported Stephen Timms MP who has made a submission to the Council to promote a Roding Greenway.

We encouraged members to support the introduction of a charge for first street parking permits as part of a much needed rebalancing between motor vehicles and active travel. This builds on the formal support we gave to permit charges in 2018.

Formal consultation Responses

* November: Objection to MSG Sphere – renewed
* We have formally supported any notices or consultation with regard to the 7 Low Traffic neighbourhoods (with suggestions).
* We have supported proposals for school streets when put out to formal consultation. (with suggestions).

**Looking Forward**

Partnerships help us increase our footprint and diversity.

The Ride calendar will with luck resume this year. In the meantime new partnerships give us the opportunity to extend the variety of rides.

On infrastructure we need to continue to follow the money as opportunities arise from

* Newham Council rebalancing its “Keep Newham Moving” resource from motor traffic to active travel.
* Government money to increase active travel in response to the Covid-19 crisis.
* Possible bids for transport infrastructure as part of the Government’s levelling up money.
* Extracting development money is becoming increasingly important.

Big ticket items will be: completion and extension of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, Romford Rd, Royal Docks corridor.

As active travel has become a disproportionately political issue in Newham we need to ensure our activities reach the correct political targets without compromising our charitable status.

Consultations increasingly require responses by individuals rather than organisations.

We should continue to adapt our website and communications to enable us to become more diverse, have a greater coverage of the borough and make readily available useful local cycling information including an initiative to film and map useful local routes.

**Financial Statement and Budget**



Arnold Ridout

Co-ordinator

20/4/2021