

## Meeting with Brent's cycling officer

At Brent Cyclists' May meeting we had the benefit of the company of Brent's senior sustainable transport officer Mike Evans. Mike has been successful in bidding for £294,500 from the Mayor of London's "Biking Boroughs" fund. This is to be spent over 4 years, so it's a far lower level of funding for cycling than we had under the LCN+ scheme, but then it has little to do with road schemes anyway. Those are supposedly funded within the Brent Local Implementation Plan (LIP). The list of LIP schemes for 2011–12 (you can find it at <http://tinyurl.com/4y2fe3v>) is very short on detail, and we know that some have already been designed and even put out to consultation. Mike is trying to work with us on the ones that haven't yet reached such a late stage that it's difficult to influence them, in the hope that we can suggest how "quick wins" for cyclists can be incorporated. Unfortunately, so far it has been difficult to identify just which ones are at such an early stage. We're also aware that budgets for these schemes are already set, so we're not talking about achieving anything of massive significance, but it's still a welcome initiative.

The Biking Borough cash will be used in part to run a series of events with partners in the educational, public, business and voluntary sectors. Brent Cyclists have been helping to identify partner organisations. The events will include cycle marking projects and safety events, and possibly rides. Part of the money may also be spent on interventions around Kensal Rise (designated a "Cycling Hub" in the Biking Borough plan) that Mike is hoping we can help to identify. The interventions might be gap openings, cycle contraflows, dropped kerbs, and improved surfaces and signage, and also extra cycle parking. The funds likely to be spent on these improvements are in the £1,000s range, which doesn't pay for much when it comes to highway alterations. Mike is also suggesting that a local bicycle freight distribution scheme trial might be part of the "cycle hub", and, if the plans for a London-wide bicycle recycling project take off, that could be incorporated in the Brent plan. Even so, we do find it hard to see how such measures are going to raise cycling levels from 1% of all trips in Brent to the Mayor's (modest) target of 4.3%, especially once we look away from the Kilburn and Queens Park areas, in such easy commuting range of central London, and out beyond the North Circular. Overall, the Biking Boroughs funding for Outer London, spread over four years and a massive territory, seems a pitifully small amount for the challenge it's supposed to be meeting.

## Changes to roads in Wembley

We have been consulted already on changes to roads in Wembley styled as "Olympic 2012 interventions" that will be funded under the 2011–12 LIP. These affect High Road, Bridge Road, South Way, Empire Way and Wembley Hill Road. Mostly the changes, which will cost £585,000, the highest budget scheme in the LIP, will have little effect on cycling, coming in the category of "streetscape improvements" for pedestrians, but the changes to Wembley Hill Road and Empire Way will be significant, involving the removal of the cyclist-unfriendly triangular giratory system and its replacement with a much smaller roundabout. Brent Cyclists have welcomed this but suggested a signalised intersection in preference to a roundabout.

We have also suggested the linking of North End Road with Bridge Road for cycling purposes. This would greatly improve the usefulness of the Brent River cycle path from Stonebridge Park, by linking it through Fourth Way and North End Road to Wembley Park. Currently there is a 2m height difference between North End Road and Bridge Road, with nuisance Z-shaped ramps and guardrailing for a cyclist to negotiate going that way, or even longer and more convoluted ramps if he or she chooses to go down from North End Road to Olympic Way, and under Bridge Road to get to the north side. As the picture shows, there is space at the end of North End Road for a better solution.



*The cyclist-impeding end of North End Road looking toward Bridge Road, Wembley Park*

## New Brent Cyclists Committee

Following the May meeting, there are some changes to Brent cyclists committee. Ben Tansley, the treasurer, becomes co-ordinator once more, the main contact person between the group, LCC, Brent Council and other bodies. Ben works for Cycle Training UK, London's leading provider, and has long experience in the LCC, from working as fundraiser to helping to re-launch Brent cyclists in 2006 and being trapped there ever since.

We welcome also Charlie Fernandez, who has joined the committee as rides co-ordinator. Charlie has for some time been leading short rides for Brent Mind (mental health charity) on Wednesdays at 12 midday from Roundwood Park café. The remainder of the committee is, as before, Ian Saville, chairman, and David Arditti, secretary and newsletter editor.

## Summer activities

On 12 June Brent Cyclists will be riding to the **Greenacre Bicycle Rally** in Finchley, the largest cycling event in the Borough of Barnet. The rally is in two stages. The first stage, at 12 noon, is a ride round Finchley, Friern Barnet and Whetstone, started by the Mayor of Barnet, length 3.5 miles, with music and decorated bikes. The second stage, after lunch, is a green ride that follows the scenic route along Dollis Brook to Barnet for 5.5 miles for the finish at the Barnet Countryside Centre, where there will be an environment fair plus refreshments. We will run rides to the rally from Kingsbury and Gladstone Park and bring riders back after tea. The organisers of the rally want participants to register either in advance on-line at: <http://greenacrebicyclerally.blogspot.com> or when they get there. There will also be a Dr Bike.

Don't miss also that old favourite, the ride through the Hertfordshire Chilterns, starting using the Thameslink train, from your local station, on 10 July.

Brent cyclists will be taking part in two community festivals this year, the **Gladstonbury Festival** on Sunday 19 June, and the **Queensbury Eco-Cultural Festival** on Sunday 3 July. At these we will have our stall, where we hand out publicity and maps, give cycling advice and recruit for LCC. If you would be able to help us at either event, contact Ben Tansley, details below. Harrow Cyclists will be running their first stall at a community festival, the **Under One Sky Festival** at Kodak Sports Ground on Sunday 26 June. Please contact Helen Levy by email: [helenonbike@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:helenonbike@yahoo.co.uk) to volunteer your time for this one.

Looking further ahead, over the weekend of the late August bank holiday, 27–29 August, David Arditti will be organising a 3-day ride again, which this time may go to The Netherlands. If you are interested in going, contact him now (details at the end).

## Forthcoming events

**Tuesday 7 June: Brent Cyclists social** 7.00pm Lounge Bar of The Crown, 142–152 Cricklewood Broadway NW2

**Wednesday 8 June: Harrow Cyclists meeting** 7.30 pm Beacon Centre, Scott Crescent, Rayners Lane HA2 0TY, followed by a social at 9:00 at the Village Inn, Rayners Lane

**Sunday 12 June: Ride to the Greenacre Bicycle Rally** Meet 10:30am Gladstone Park railway bridge (foot of Parkside) or 10:30am Kingsbury Station. 10 miles there & back plus extra ride options at the rally.

**Sunday 19 June: Gladstonebury Festival** 12–5pm Gladstone Park NW2. Brent cyclists will have a stall.

**Sunday 26 June: Under One Sky Festival** 12–8pm Kodak Sports Ground, Zoom Leisure, Harrow View, HA2 6QQ. Harrow Cyclists will have a stall.

**Sunday 3 July: Queensbury Eco-cultural Festival** 12–5pm, Eton Grove Park, NW9. Brent Cyclists will have a stall.

**Wenesday 6 July: Brent Cyclists meeting** 7.00pm Samaritans Centre, 1 Leopold Road NW10 9LN

**Sunday 10 July: Hertfordshire Ride** Take 10:44 am train from West Hampstead Thameslink (or 10:47 Cricklewood, 10:50 Hendon, 10:54 Mill Hill Broadway) to arrive in Harpenden 11:14. About 24 miles round villages and woods.

**Wednesday 13 July: Harrow Cyclists meeting** 7.30 pm Beacon Centre, Scott Crescent, Rayners Lane HA2 0TY, followed by a social at 9:00 at the Village Inn, Rayners Lane

**Tuesday 2 August: Brent Cyclists social** 7.00pm Lounge Bar of The Crown, 142–152 Cricklewood Broadway NW2



*Eleven riders (plus leader) took part in the Brent & Harrow Cyclists ride to Windsor in May*

### Brent and Harrow Cyclists Contacts

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