

Improving walking, wheeling and cycling in Putney – 2023

Public meeting hosted by Fleur Anderson MP *Active Travel in Putney*



Photo of the public meeting on walking, cycling and wheeling in Putney, hosted by Fleur Anderson MP, on Monday 16th March 2023.

Overview

Fleur Anderson MP hosted a Public Meeting on Walking and Cycling in and around Putney High Street on Monday 16th March at the Platt Centre, Felsham Road. The meeting was attended by over 50 local residents who discussed ways in which walking, wheeling and cycling could be improved in Putney.

This follows from previous meetings about cycling in Putney and encouraging people who would cycle to make the change, and with wheelchair users about changes needed and with a group of local residents who have sight impairments about their experience on our streets.

This report will summarise the discussions held and the themes which emerged, identifying key areas for improvements and outline the next steps required to improve walking, wheeling and cycling in Putney. This report includes submissions from those who were not able to attend the meeting.

Fleur Anderson MP

Fleur Anderson MP opened the meeting with a summary of why she was hosting the event, stating that all residents want clean air, local shops including those on Putney High Street filled and busy, with safe cycle routes for children and adults across the constituency. Fleur noted that Putney had been awarded £1 million as part of a bid to improve the High Street which are for the library, Waterman's Green and the High Street junction outside St Mary's Church. Also, that the closure of Hammersmith Bridge since 2019 is a key issue influencing all the street use in Putney.

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Speaker summary and conclusions

Councillor Clare Fraser, Wandsworth Council Cabinet Member for Transport

Councillor Clare Fraser also spoke of the £1 million awarded to Putney High Street and spoke of the time pressures on spending the money granted. Clare noted that the Council is focussing on Putney High Street, looking at quiet routes for cyclists, including routes adjacent to the High Street. Clare also emphasised that ensuring that people feel safe to cycle is a key part of their strategy for active travel, and that proper infrastructure is key. Clare also gave a summary on the achievements of the Council since their election in May 2022. Part of this was the expansion of school streets, with a particular focus on primary schools. The Council has been working on installing more bike hangars, with 30 new hangars to be installed in Roehampton – with a particular focus on areas where there is transport poverty (a lack of links to the tube and rail network). These areas include Roehampton and West Hill in Putney, and Clare has been liaising with the Roehampton Partnership on how to make cycling safer and more accessible. Clare emphasised that the best ideas come from residents who live and walk the streets.

Councillor Jack Mayorcas, Wandsworth Council Active Travel Champion

Councillor Mayorcas said that the Council has set a cycling strategy which sets ambitious plans, setting difficult targets to ensure that they are accountable to residents. The Heath Streets Forum acts as a check and balance to ensure that the Council is working towards its stated goals. Councillor Mayorcas shared that the Council's goal is that any Year 6 child in the borough can cycle to school without encountering any road danger. Councillor Mayorcas emphasised that the Council has a huge focus on active travel for both the local economy, for health and for the environment. Councillor Mayorcas concluded that there is also a public information issues, in that some schemes are not well known about locally, citing the 4000 cargo bikes that can be rented from local stations for £3 per hour. Councillor Mayorcas noted that active travel maps are essential to highlight points of access but said that there is more that can be done to communicate everything available to residents.

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Themes

Attendees then divided into small groups to have in-depth discussions about local problems, identify areas for improvements and suggest the solutions and action they would like to see taken. The key themes which emerged from the groups' discussions were:

- **Enforcement**

The enforcement of speed limits, particularly in 20 mph zones, for both vehicles and cyclists were highlighted as a major concern. The need for enforcement was raised to ensure vehicles do not enter cycle boxes, cyclists do not run traffic lights and that all road traffic rules are followed – including on cycling on the river pathway.

- Many attendees notes that they feel a lack of officers, clear cycling signage and penalties for breaking road traffic laws deter people from cycling.

- **Infrastructure**

Attendees were clear in their demand for joined up thinking across boroughs to provide truly safe cycle lanes, crossings and walkways. Learning from best practice examples and expanding provision of bike hangars, safe crossings, pedestrian lighting, road markings were all raised. One of the biggest weaknesses is the lack of good cycle infrastructure on the main north/south arteries.

There was some debate as to which comes first: improved active travel infrastructure, which could include the closure of roads, or behaviour change and adoption of new modes of travel without being 'forced'. Some attendees suggested that roads must be closed to cars before people make the choice to reduce their vehicle use.

- **Education**

A key point raised by all groups was the need for culture change to promote active travel and lessen conflict between road users. Ideas suggested included public information campaigns educating residents on changes to highway code and the benefits of active travel, as well as local schemes such as cargo bike hire that residents may not be aware of. Celebrating successes such as school streets and spreading the word was also deemed important to changing attitudes.

Councillor Jack Mayorcas highlighted that many residents are not always aware of the active travel offer provided by the Council, including accessible cargo bike hire from many local stations.

Public awareness campaigns and clear signage were suggested as key to educating residents on active travel.

- **Hotspots**

There was much discussion of a range of locations with dangerous crossings or extreme congestion, including Roehampton Lane and Deodar Road. These are listed in the table below.

For cycling there are three main routes that are not safe: Roehampton Lane, Putney Hill and West Hill.

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- **Bold and ambitious targets**

The consensus at the public meeting was that attendees agreed with the Wandsworth Council target of all roads being safe for a year 6 child to cycle on, and asked for bold and ambitious targets, alongside spending and infrastructure commitments, to make this a reality.

Specific locations raised in discussions

<u>Location</u>	<u>Issue</u>
Hammersmith Bridge	There was much debate at the meeting regarding the closure of Hammersmith Bridge. Many attendees claimed that the closure of the bridge has resulted in unprecedented traffic levels through Putney, forcing active travellers off local roads. There was a request for the Hammersmith and Fulham traffic measures implemented on the other side of the river to be fully analysed. Fleur Anderson MP noted that she wanted the bridge reopened to vehicles without a toll to end congestion chaos and air pollution issues, but that cycling, wheeling and walking should be prioritised in the plans for the bridge.
Putney Bridge Road	The most frequently raised road as extremely poor for pedestrians and cyclists. Poor and dangerous junctions needing focus – also a site of extreme congestion. The end of the road nearest the High Street was cited as a particular issue. Residents have called for a pedestrian crossing to be installed outside of Hurlingham School – the Headmaster of Hurlingham School is also supportive of this.
Deodar Road	Raised by many attendees as extremely congested and used as a rat run. Attendees suggested a timed left-turn ban into Deodar Road, opposite the Alms Cottages between 7-10pm Mon-Fri at least, with the same ban at the other end of Deodar Road. A time restricted plan turning into Bective Place was suggested, 7-10 Mon-Fri.
Fawe Park Road to Woodlands Way and Keswick Road to Clockhouse Place	Traffic barriers here were cited as needing attention – attendees claim that they are not working effectively and are increasing conflict between road users.
Carlton Drive	The crossing at Carlton Drive was described as ‘too dangerous for pedestrians to use’.
Cycle lane on Putney Bridge	Too narrow, inadequate for cyclist use. There is a major bottleneck and reason people do not cycle.
Roads adjacent to Putney High Street	Attendees described vehicles congesting these roads when trying to avoid the High Street.
A3	Speeding on the A3 was cited as an issue.
West Hill	West Hill (TfL) is another major route that is inhospitable to all but the most confident cyclist, despite being home to a major secondary school. There is a cycle path on the pavement on the way up but nothing on the way down. Children at Ashcroft Academy want to cycle but need more safe cycling routes to the school.

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River pathway	Participants called for the river pathway to be better regulated for both cyclists and pedestrians.
Upper Richmond Road	Upper Richmond Road was noted for its stand-still traffic and the need for improved lighting for pedestrian safety.
Charlwood Road	Attendees requested an update on the outcomes of the LTN.
Roehampton Lane	<p>Roehampton Lane (TfL) is a wide thoroughfare dominated by motor traffic. Cycle lanes would link the thousands of people in the Alton Estate – earmarked for 30 new hangars - to Upper Richmond Road and to the train station at Barnes.</p> <p>Cited by attendees as one of the least safe crossings in the area. There were requests made for the bus lanes to be made 24/7, or for fully segregated cycle lanes to be implemented. It was noted by many that it was extremely dangerous to cross the end of Roehampton Lane at the junction with the Upper Richmond Road and South Circular – of particular concern given how many secondary school children must cross here.</p>
Gwendolen Avenue	Pedestrian crossing needed to convert the raised bump directly outside Noddys and Hurlingham nurseries as many school children and parents cross at this point, but cars rush by as there is no pedestrian crossing
Putney Hill	Putney Hill has an extremely poor cycle lane that is too narrow in sections. In some cases, this is because space is allocated to vehicles (e.g. an extra centre lane to facilitate vehicle right-turns) that could be freed up for cycling. Attendees requested for this to be fully segregated.
Junctions of Clarendon Drive, Erpingham Road, Dryburgh Road	Many school children use this junction, which is not adequately safe. Traffic coming down from Upper Richmond Road is a problem.
Lime Bikes	Limes Bikes are very welcomed by a growing number of people for the convenience and safety and are opening up cycling for many more people. However, when they are obstructively parked on pavements, they are a hazard for people with sight impairments and in wheelchairs.