



Kingston Station Frustration



The GoCycle 'Station Plaza' works has been criticised by local cyclists who are justifiably frustrated that millions is being spent and huge disruption being caused during construction for no or very little benefit of bike users. The stated aims of the scheme according to Kingston Council (RBK) are:

- Enhance the *arrival experience* to the town centre.
- Upgrade the public space
- Offer better *connectivity* and provision for those on foot
- Transform cycling facilities

Clearly the previous administration has diverted funds intended for cycling into this 'regeneration scheme' by literally paving the way for developers to come to this part of Kingston. In discussions with the council officers and councillors KCC objected to the large amount of money being spent on a scheme that did not clearly improve the cycling experience. What we

have seen so far is serious disruption to the pedestrian and cycle (Toucan) crossing while the road was narrowed and Portuguese granite blocks were laid. Apparently this is to make drivers feel they should go slower. At the same time the speed limit hasn't even been reduced to 20 mph. Surely it makes sense to reduce the limit while this work is ongoing and for it to be permanently lowered at this high-risk crossing?

Worryingly, we have heard complaints from residents that the block paving, which is similar to that used in the market place, gives the false impression that the road is actually a pedestrian area. Furthermore the variation in the coloured blocks acts as camouflage to white road markings, making it more difficult to see the stop line and crossing markers. People have expressed concerns to RBK on Twitter that the kerb height is too low and would not contain an inattentive driver and that the station forecourt

Station Frustration continued.....

could be a terrorist target now that the brick barriers and planters have been removed.

The granite paving in the Ancient Market Place has been dug up in a number of places and replaced with tarmac. Although this is presumably meant to be a temporary measure, there has been no sign of any of the utility companies returning to restore the granite blocks – which have disappeared. It seems likely that the council does not have anyone chasing the utility companies to come back and finish the jobs. We fear that this patching pattern will be repeated at the station plaza and elsewhere on the GoCycle network where this blockwork is being installed.

Part of the design for the 'station plaza' was to install a metal lattice sculptural 'wayfinding feature'. Now that the control of the council is with the Lib-Dems rather than the Conservatives we expect that there will be some stock-taking and revisions to the GoCycle (mini-Holland)) schemes to ensure that there is a re-focussing of efforts and funding to ensure that proper cycling facilities are built. We know that Councillor Hilary Gander, who is a member of KCC and now has responsibility for transport and the environment, is keen to ensure that sharing of facilities with pedestrians is kept to an absolute minimum.

Beware: Long Vehicle

KCC has bought an inexpensive, (£100), bike trailer to demonstrate just what can be achieved with a handy tag-along. We will use it for taking materials to festivals and stalls but also try to use it for everyday shopping trips or fetching and carrying jobs that are too big for panniers. The trailer is a Raleigh (Avenir) Mule. We will Tweet about it using #BikeTrailer.

New Malden to Raynes Park steams ahead!

The new route between New Malden and Raynes Park has now received planning consent from both Kingston Council and Merton Council. We understand that following many representations the route will be designed and built as two separate paths with one for cyclists and the other for pedestrians – sensibly following the format of the route along The Cut to the west of New Malden Station. The paths are to be constructed above of Thames Water pipes; the constraint on construction now appears to be chiefly the further time that is needed for the water company to complete renewal and repairs to their pipes. Hopefully work can start on the GoCycle route this year.

Chessington and Hook

Chessington and Hook does not get a look-in with the ~£30m of mini-Holland / GoCycle funding, with no schemes proposed. KCC is very aware that the south of the borough is being neglected as far as cycling is concerned. Safe routes to schools, shops, stations and workplaces are needed. We have had representations from cyclists concerned about Bridge Road and the Leatherhead Road and are working with them to lobby the council and in the case of the A243 Leatherhead Road, TfL. Funding for schemes in this area could come from TfL's 'Liveable Neighbourhoods' budget and applied in a cost effective way – perhaps in contrast to some of the excess seen at the Station Plaza. Do you have strong views about cycling in the south of the borough? What would you think the area needs to get more people cycling?

Campaign Meetings:

KCC campaign meetings happen on the second Tuesday each month i.e. 12th June, 11th July, 14th Aug etc. at 8pm. The **August** meeting is our **Annual Meeting** at which we elect campaign officers. Our venue is the Kingston Environment Centre 1 Kingston Road, New Malden (by the Fountain roundabout). Meetings are open to all members and supporters of KCC/LCC. Call Jon on 07984 757761 if you want to check arrangements.

Rides: We have a new calendar of rides!

Please go to our website to find the dates for the coming year. As well as the Sunday rides we have some Wednesday evening events too.

Keep up to date!

There's simply too much news to include in this short newsletter. To keep in touch with cycle route proposals and changes please follow us on Twitter and Facebook @KingstonCycling or check our website at www.kingstoncycling.org.uk