

National Cycle Route 403 Cross Council Working Group

The Working Group was established last year to “preserve and enhance the 403 Sustrans Cycle Route between Chippenham and Avebury as a multi-user route for active travel and leisure, well-being and commuting purposes, and to promote its use to, and care by, the local community.”

The Group now comprises representatives from Calne Town Council, Calne Without Parish Council, Bremhill Parish Council, Cherhill Parish Council, Chippenham Town Council, Wiltshire Council’s Rights of Way Team, Sustrans, Sustainable Calne and the Chippenham Cycle Network Development Group. Cllrs Price and Barnes represent Calne Without Parish Council on the Working Group.

Progress to date includes:

- The route between Chippenham and Avebury has been cycled by members of the group. Issues relating to route alignment, width, surfacing and signage have been recorded and mapped.
- Locations needing replacement and supplementary signage have been identified in detail. Additional signs have been provided by Sustrans and installed by the Group.
- The Group has been liaising with Sustrans on the diversion of a section of the route to the east of Yatesbury, where the existing surface along the margin of a field is poor and suffers from obstruction by the adjacent hedgerow. An alternative route along a byway has been identified. This proposed diversion has been agreed by Sustrans and we are waiting for route to be formally revised. In the meantime, new signage is being procured.
- The section between Calne and Black Dog halt has been inspected for barriers to wheelchair or mobility scooter users. Wiltshire Council have filled in a cattle grid at the exit from Castlefields Park, which represents a significant barrier. Additional work to assess accessibility restrictions along the Calne to Chippenham section has been undertaken and work is in progress to resolve these.
- The Group has worked with Wiltshire Council’s Rights of Way team to improve the track surface at some of the muddiest sections of the route, near Black Dog Halt and the Hazeland overbridge.
- Two benches provided by Sustainable Calne have been installed along the old railway line.



Mud-scraping on the disused railway line near Black Dog Halt.

Current areas of focus include:

- Improvements to the section to the east of Calne between Low Lane and the Compton Bassett Road. This passes through land owned by Valencia Waste Management and Hills.
- Further improvements to surfacing along the railway line between Chippenham and Calne.

- Engagement with Wiltshire Council to ensure that the leases along the railway line between Chippenham and Calne are renewed next year, preferably with longer leases. (A feasibility study undertaken by Sustrans for Wiltshire Council has concluded that there are no alternatives to the current alignment.)
- Further work to improve accessibility along the route.
- Provision of information boards at key points to create greater awareness of the route.

Cllr John Barnes
6th June 2023