

## St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

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June 13th 2016

Dear Mark,

### **Cycle Quietway - follow up to StQW/SHRA meeting at St Helens Church hall**

Thanks again to you and Marina for coming to last Thursday night's meeting. As you saw, some 60 of our members attended (the total membership of the Forum/St Helens Residents Association is over 400) along with 3 of the 4 ward councillors.

I hope that your team and Cllr Coleridge will prove willing to accept that there needs to be some more dialogue before a final route for the St Helens/Dalgarno section of the cycleway is decided.

As expected, discussion focused on the proposals for how the cycleway should cross North Pole Road. As you said at the meeting, North Pole Road is a section of the local road network recognised as a major pinch-point for east/west traffic in North Kensington. The level of frustration expressed by residents at the meeting reflects many years in which we have seen queues and congestion worsen. We now face a continuing stream of developments along Wood Lane and Scrubs Lane, some under construction with more to follow including 7,000 new homes on the Cargiant site at Old Oak Park.

Many people feel that efforts to shift people from using cars to using bikes, via interventions such as a Quietway, will have only a minimal impact. We see a lack of willingness from TfL and the OPDC to come up with any significant proposals to relieve congestion on Wood Lane/Scrubs Lane, within even the 20-30 year horizon of the OPDC Local Plan. Hence our continued efforts to convince TfL of the merits of an extra Overground Station at Westway Circus, in addition to that planned for Hythe Road.

Set against this background, the views expressed at the meeting on the current Quietway proposal were not positive. There is support for a Quietway with junctions that will work successfully, but concern over the viability and safety of the set of proposals presented in the consultation and as explained by you and Marina at the meeting.

The points that we would ask you to consider are as follows:

a) North Pole Road experiences worsening daily congestion as the single western exit route from the Borough between the Harrow Road and Holland Park. This often starts in mid afternoon. You mentioned that TfL do not view it as a delay point for buses, which we residents find very hard to believe as they are frequently queuing for 15-20 minutes, along with other traffic, before finally exiting onto Wood Lane.

b) the proposal that the Cycle Quietway should cross North Pole Road between Bracewell Road and Latimer Road worries people greatly. As cited at the meeting, impatient drivers behave badly at peak times in North Pole Road, often driving fast westwards on the wrong side of the road in an attempt to turn north into Scrubs Lane before the lights change.

c) vehicles use Bracewell Road southbound as a rat run and then try to force their way onto North Pole Road.

d) vehicles do the same in trying to exit Latimer Road to join the westward queue in North Pole.

e) hence, there is traffic queuing from four separate routes all of which are routinely backed up from mid afternoon (Barlby Road, St Quintin Avenue, Latimer and Bracewell).

f) the SCOOT system for controlling the traffic lights at North Pole/Scrubs Lane no doubt attempts to manage competing queues. But the experience for North Kensington residents is that once queues build up only a small handful of cars manage to exit left onto Wood Lane at each phase of the lights.

g) combined with this congestion, school pupils from Burlington Danes Academy congregate outside the fast food and convenience shops, crowding the pavements and the entry/exit to Bracewell Road.

h) at less congested times of day, vehicles (including construction lorries) are routinely parked on the single line on the north side of North Pole Road. Making this a double yellow line might help, but any enforcement activity is a rare sight at present.

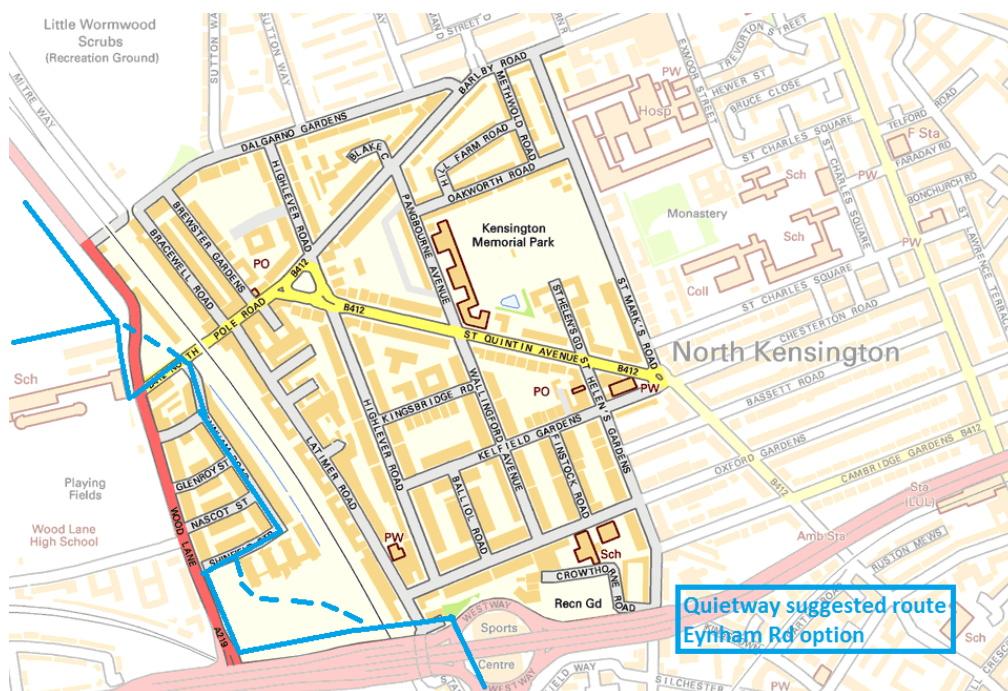
Hence we would ask that all possible alternatives for a Quietway route in this area are considered, and if rejected, the reasons explained. The currently proposed solution of build-outs and 'Tiger' crossings is viewed with great misgivings as to whether it will prove workable in practice. As part of a 'Quietway' this particular section of North Pole Road is as frenetic as anywhere in London, with vehicles attempting a range of unorthodox manoeuvres. Sightlines for cyclists are not great.

### Possible alternatives

We would welcome your team having some thoughts on the following suggestions, the first being longer-term and the second an immediate option:

#### Using Eynham Road

Were the Latimer Road/Imperial West underpass already in place, an obvious option would be for north south cycle traffic to be routed via Westway Sports Centre via the underpass and through the public part of the Imperial West site to Eynham Road — a quiet street where vehicles cannot enter from North Pole Road. A newly installed shared surface and dropped kerb allows cyclists to join North Pole traffic at this point, and we would like to point out that some improvements are necessary here. There may be an option of a cycle crossing to a dedicated route across the green space on the northern side (see broken line on maps below) if this did not worsen vehicle delays at the junction with Wood Lane. Eynham Road is already a popular north south cycle route for those wanting to avoid Wood Lane. If the Westway section of the Cycle Superhighway goes ahead, it will become ever more popular. The map below shows this suggested option, which would obviously need discussing with LBHF and with residents in W12.



I recently asked Imperial College for a meeting to discuss why progress on the underpass is so slow. This took place last month, with LBHF planning officer Michelle Bradshaw and Mark Lockhart from the Westway Trust (who own/lease the site at 301 Latimer where the underpass is to be built). All delays are attributed to Network Rail but I suspect that the much extended timetable also suits Imperial's construction programme, with the underpass not opening until 2109.

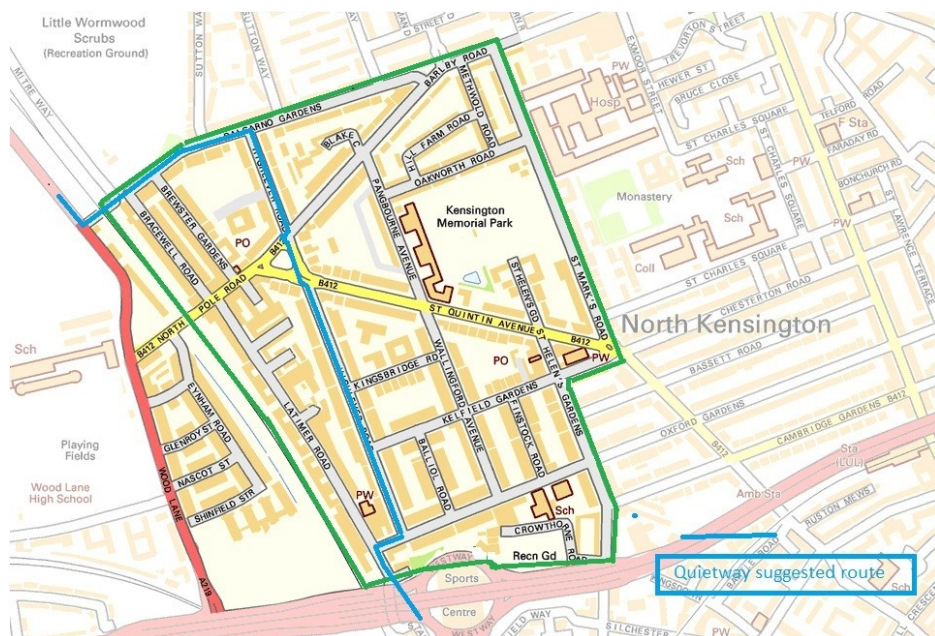
If you recall, a planning application on the underpass went to RBKC PAC in 2014, and things seem to have been going backwards rather than forwards since then. Any influence that RBKC can bring to bear would be welcome, since this supposedly prioritised piece of pedestrian/cycle connectivity between LBHF and RBKC is taking forever to put in place. By giving local residents much better access to the Central Line, it would probably have as much impact in reducing North Pole Road traffic problems as will a Cycle Quietway.

### Using Highlever Road

This second option was that suggested by Sir Stephen Waley Cohen at Thursday's meeting. This would use Highlever Road instead of Latimer Road as the north south route. The challenge would be to design a set of junctions that would give cyclists a safe passage along the eastern side of the St Quintin Ave/ Highlever/St Quintin Gardens 'triangle'.

While northbound cyclists would be travelling against the traffic at this point, it looks possible to achieve a fully segregated two way cycle track on the short stretch along the western edge of the eastern border of the 'triangle'. This might involve the loss of the three resident parking spaces on the triangle, or could perhaps be a shared pedestrian/cycle surface as few people walk on this stretch of pavement (most using the opposite eastern side of the road at this location, which gives access to the zebra crossings).

Use of the eastern side of Highlever Road at this point could also be considered, which reduces the number of crossings but has less good sightlines for cyclists



There are already zebra crossings at the northern and southern end of the Highlever section of the 'triangle'. Adding 'Tiger' crossings for cyclists, with some repositioning, would not seem more complex or costly than the current proposals at Bracewell Road and Latimer Road.

The case for this option, it seems to us, is threefold

- while there are two or more road crossings for cyclists to navigate rather than one at North Pole Road, both of these have significantly less vehicles passing than the currently proposed crossing point, where four streams of traffic have merged (or are merging) into one.

- sightlines for cyclists are much better than in North Pole Road, where visibility is often obstructed by parked vans and large delivery vehicles. Cyclists can see traffic in all directions, across the low wall and flower beds of the 'triangle' gyratory.
- Highlever Road is some 3m wider than Bracewell Road, and is not a rat run even at peak times. It is more of a 'Quietway' street than Latimer Road, the latter being a street on which commercial traffic moves at high speed. (This is evidenced by the large number of driving instructors, and cycle instructors, who use Highlever Road for training learners).

We appreciate that the consultation period for the Quietway has now closed, but you mentioned in your presentation that various alternative plans for this section have been around for many months. The meeting on Thursday was shown one option and it does not seem unreasonable for local people, all too familiar with the realities of traffic in the area, to have the chance to suggest ideas that might lead to an optimal solution.

As you saw from the meeting, there will be many residents who will otherwise feel that this single option has been imposed upon the neighbourhood, despite serious misgivings from local people as to its viability and its safety.

Yours sincerely

Henry Peterson  
Chair StQW Neighbourhood Forum  
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Cc Cllr Tim Coleridge, Cabinet Member,  
Cllr Pat Healy, Cllr Robert Thompson, Cllr Mo Bakhtiar, Cllr Eve Allison  
Mark Lockhart, Westway Trust  
Tony Curzon, Smita Dave, Brickfields Association of Residents