London Parks Cympodium 2016

‘Managing Cycle Growth in Green Spaces’

London Parks Cympodium
25th November 2016
INTRODUCTION

The first London Parks Cymposium (Cycle Symposium) was quietly successful in its aim to bring together parks professionals to consider the impacts of cycling within parks and the implications of the growth in cycling in London. It is envisaged that this event will be the first of many that will bring parks professionals together to discuss common issues faced by land managers.

London is experiencing a rapid growth in the number of cycle journeys being made and this is having an effect throughout the city, from the construction of the fully segregated Cycle Superhighways, Quietways and the successful introduction of the Cycle Hire Scheme (Boris Bikes), to an increase in the number of cyclists utilising previously infrequently used shared use paths. This has brought about a new set of challenges to parks professionals, who have the safety and comfort of all park users to consider.

Parks and other urban green spaces, including canal tow paths (blue / green spaces if you will), offer very attractive cycling conditions, where cyclists of all ages, ability and experience can get away from major roads and experience the relative calm of the wonderful green spaces that London can offer. The parks are wonderful places to learn to cycle, enjoy healthy exercise and get away from the hustle and bustle of one of the busiest cities in the world.

The challenge for parks professionals is how to safely accommodate increased cycling numbers, and the associated behaviours of different types of cyclists, into spaces that are increasingly under pressure from all directions. These include increased visitor numbers, decreased budgets and the need to generate income, as well as providing a variety of other ‘invisible’ services such as urban flood resilience, urban cooling and enhancing biodiversity. Whilst still providing a high level of service to all park and urban green space users.

The London Parks Cymposium and the London Parks Forum (formally the London Parks and Green Spaces Forum) provided a valuable forum for land managers and parks professionals to discuss common issues, and it was with their assistance that the Cymposium was organised. Issues that are particular to managing cycling in parks have not had a similar support network in the past. The primary aim of the Cymposium is to provide a forum for professionals to address, discuss and develop solutions to cycling specific issues in parks and urban green spaces.

We hope to see everyone again to continue the conversation...

The Royal Parks would like to thank Gordon Webster (Atkins), David Hall (Behaviour Change), Dick Vincent (Canal & River Trust) and Paul Lavelle (TfL) for their presentations and participation.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide parks professionals with a forum to candidly discuss issues surrounding cycling in urban green spaces
- Allow TRP to share experiences and procedures with other park professionals
- Provide a forum for professionals to share their experiences and procedures to help inform future TRP’s approach to Behavioural Change
- Raise the profile of TRP Cycling Policy
- Promote the TRP’s created TRP Walking and Cycling Technical Design Guide
- Investigate the potential to develop a London-wide strategy for dealing with cycle issues within urban green spaces
- Discuss and explore a range of potential actions to address issues surrounding continued growth in cycle numbers on urban green spaces, the identified work groups were: Behavioural Change Design Enforcement

The focus of the London Parks Cyposium 2016 was on how land managers respond to cycling and the management issues and challenges it can create (possible future events need not be focused on cycling issues but could be focused on other common issues.) TRP would like to see this event as the first of an ongoing annual discussion forum for parks professionals to meet and consider a range of management issues in a spirit of co-operation and mutual learning.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The day began with number of 20-30 minute talks, followed by 10 minute Q & A sessions. The topics were split into 3 separate Focus Groups to discuss specific issues in more detail. At the end of the day there was a summary of the observations and conclusions of the focus groups and some closing statements. The key elements of each session are listed below:

Presentations

TRP - Colin Buttery (Director of Parks and Deputy CEO) and Ruth Holmes (Cycle Programme Project Sponsor)

An introduction to the day and the specific issues and procedures associated with The Royal Parks

TRP have over 77 million visits per year across all of the Parks, making them busy public spaces that are enjoyed for a variety of different uses; cyclists make up approximately 6% of these. TRP have over 60 miles of park roads and paths that are free to be cycled on for leisure and recreational activities but there are conflicts between different user groups. Ruth gave an insight into the challenges faced by TRP and outlined some of the measures that have been taken to try to mitigate the severity of the conflicts.

Atkins - Gordon Webster (Transport Planner)

An introduction to the TRP Walking and Cycling Design Standards

Gordon spoke about a living document that TRP, in association with Atkins, have developed to share with other organisations and public space managers it attempts to fill in the gaps in other reference material, which tends to concentrate on highways based cycle interventions.

Gordon explained a clear methodology for assessing the suitability of park paths and roads to be used as cycle routes in green urban spaces. The document includes guidance on classifying the path typology, the design process, TRP construction guidelines and the monitoring procedures for any new routes which can be set against pre-agreed success criteria.

Behaviour Change.Org - David Hall (Executive Director)

An introduction to behaviour change theory and its applications

David introduced delegates to the behavioural change concepts of nudge effect, priming and social norms and how these affect people’s behaviour. He emphasised that when trying to change behaviours surrounding a certain issue it was beneficial not to make that issue ‘a thing’, and try to encourage what is perceived as normal and polite behaviours where possible.

David gave a description of a behavioural change campaign undertaken in association with The South Downs National Park, which created quite a stir in the national press. The campaign concentrated on the fact that most visitors behaved in a considerate and courteous manner, thereby creating a situation where the National Park were accused of wasting money on a problem that didn’t really exist. However he was keen to emphasise that the experience had been a positive that opened the issue up for a more honest and open public debate about behaviour in public spaces.

Canals and Rivers Trust - Dick Vincent (National Towpath Ranger)

Share The Space, Drop The Pace

‘Large numbers of cyclists are a nice problem to have but they do bring about a unique set of challenges’. Dick introduced delegates to the imaginative design and signage measures being taken by the Canals and Rivers Trust (CRT) to encourage considerate behaviour in the tight spaces around the waterways of London.

Dick gave delegates an insight in CRT’s ongoing behavioural change campaign ‘Share The Space, Drop The Pace’ which has been concentrating on the ‘Share The Space’ part of the programme up until now. He described this as the easier part of the campaign to deliver, as most people can see the reasonableness of the messaging. The ‘Drop The Pace’ element he envisaged would be a good deal more controversial and problematic to deliver due to the likely resistance of cyclists to slow down their speeds when they are using the towpaths as ‘safe’ transport conduits through the city.

He outlined the use of social media and other means of reaching out to users as well as the importance of using traditional methods, such as handing out credit card sized fold out maps that included the campaign messages on.

Transport for London - Paul Lavelle (Principal Technical Planner (Cycling), Strategy and Outcome Planning)

Designing for cycle / pedestrian interaction

Paul, co-author of the London Cycling Design Standards (2015), introduced delegates to the Mayor of London’s Healthy Streets initiative and how it is envisioned that TfL will respond to this shift in emphasis. He shared a number of TfL’s latest design initiatives for shared use areas; these being monitored for the levels of conflict between cyclists and other path users.

Paul gave delegates an insight into the types of research projects that help to inform the TfL’s Cycle Planners in their decision making process.

Recommendations from Focus Groups

Enforcement

• Develop a more consistent approach and convene a further joint discussion/working group, to consider effective ways forward.
• Develop more consistent bylaws across all parks and green spaces.
• Give clear indications to cyclists about the pace at which they should be travelling.
• Explore option NOT to enforce, adopting CRT’s approach of not having rules, removing any need to enforce and encouraging self-regulation by users.

Behaviour Change

• Set up a joint working group to develop and share consistent approaches to messaging for all users sharing space considerately.
• Work jointly to share the use of CRT’s ‘Share the space, drop your pace.’
• Work jointly to consider simple options for getting the message across e.g. CRT credit card sized map, postcards etc. to be distributed freely.
• Work jointly to make sure that organisations’ websites carry the same messages.
• Work jointly using Twitter and Instagram to promote positive messages emphasising how the majority of visitors behave well. Encourage staff, visitors and stakeholder groups to use #sharethepath to highlight positive interactions and experiences.

Design

• Make sure the TRP Walking & Cycle Design Guide is available to others.
• Share trials and approaches which work for others to consider, but equally share information about what has not worked to help prevent ‘reinventing the wheel’ scenarios.
• Carry out site visits to bring together parks and green spaces professionals to observe design approaches and share expertise to solve common problems.
• Develop a shared consistent approach to permanent signage across all parks and green spaces, i.e. signage that shows clearly pedestrian priority over cycling.
PRESENTATIONS + Q & As

COLIN BUTTERY  - TRP-Director of Parks and Deputy Chief Executive welcomed everyone to The Lookout in Hyde Park, explaining that the purpose of Cympodium was to get parks professionals talking about cycling, rather than cyclists.

RUTH HOLMES - TRP Cycle Programme Manager and Project Sponsor

CYCLING AND THE ROYAL PARKS

The presentation provided an insight into cycling in parks and green spaces and the challenges and opportunities this creates for landowners. It emphasised TRP’s desire to find the most effective ways of ensuring that cyclists and pedestrians all have access to parks and use them in harmony. The link to the presentation is https://www.royalparks.org.uk/.../data/assets/pdf_file/0005/856158/The-Royal-Parks-Walking-and-Cycling-Technical-Design-Guidance-2017.pdf and a narrative is included in Appendix A.

Q1 - What is the difference between members and users of cycle hire?

A1 - Some people get a key and are signed up as members; others use their debit/credit card and pay £2 on the day to use a bike for 30mins. More commuters are signed up and have keys. There are changes now that mean you can go as a casual user without having to pay the annual fee of £90.

Q2 – What’s worked in terms of getting feedback and getting messages across?

A2 – If 20% or more park users are likely to experience an impact, TRP undertake formal consultations, running workshops/focus groups, getting out into the parks to get feedback and attending various meetings. They also do more informal consultation including piggy backing onto events like Bike Week. As an example, cyclists were asked if they knew there is a 10mph recommended speed limit on cycle routes in the parks, feedback showed that almost 70% were not aware of this (there is no mph signage) TRP are now improving the way in which they inform cyclists about the recommended speed.

TRP also set up various reference groups including one for Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens to inform consultation on CSH. Participants at these include friends’ groups, cycle lobby groups, cycling officers from surrounding boroughs and TfL. TRP also undertake Equality Impact Assessments to seek the views of targeted groups, such as those with young children, people with disabilities and older people.

TRP has already learnt useful lessons about getting messages out e.g. Although the recent design changes to Mount Walk in Kensington Gardens took into account the reference group’s views, cyclists who use the path were unhappy as they had not been consulted. More information could have been provided on site. In future, TRP will make sure that information about planned changes are on the website and cyclists are kept informed through other channels as well and this approach is now in place on the development of Richmond Park’s Quietway.

Pedestrians and cyclists can have opposing positions, but the Parks infrastructure cannot be changed just to suit one or the other’s point of view, people have to share the space. TRP has to try and reach a balance between the interest groups.

Q3 - How much of a role does enforcement play?

A3 - When it is well targeted it works effectively, the police do organise targeting particular areas where there is a need. This has made a huge difference in Regents Park over last 7/8 years discouraging cycling on undesignated paths. Generally, the enforcement approach is to use it much more as an education tool, TRP know that people are breaking rules, but only prosecute those consistently doing so and the police use a ‘softly softly’ approach talking to people to explain the rules, though where this does not work they do issue fines.

GORDON WEBSTER - Atkins, Transport Planner

THE ROYAL PARKS WALKING & CYCLING DESIGN GUIDE

The presentation introduced the guide produced by Atkins in conjunction with TRP, it provides detailed evidence based information about approaches to designing infrastructure to improve access and use of the parks by both pedestrians and cyclists. TRP will be sharing an electronic version of this Walking & Cycling Design Guide with other green space managers. A narrative is included in Appendix A.

Q1 – Do the design standards consider the needs of cyclists with adapted bikes, which may be larger?

A1 – Yes, the designs do take into consideration the largest adapted bikes, in line with TRPs inclusive approach.

Q2 – Has there been any feedback from different user groups?

A2 – There has been plenty of feedback. Important to remember that TRP are predominately no cycling, previously Mount Walk did look like a cycle route. White lines on the paths across the pedestrian paths that join it and surface signs warning pedestrians to look both ways before crossing, all give the perception of a cycle ‘highway’. The design changes were made to remove the perception that cyclists had priority. Some cyclists were travelling along at speeds of 20 - 30mph. Cyclists don’t like the changes and some have been quite aggressive, but the aim is to try and reduce excessive speeds and emphasise sharing the space. Unfortunately, 20% of cyclists are going around the rumble strips by cycling on the grass on the path edges. However, the reference group feedback shows they feel more comfortable crossing Mount Walk.

Q3 – Are rumble strips designed to slow people down?

A3 – Psychologically yes. TfL, who provided funding stated there should be no vertical deflection, so two types of vibration/rumble strip have been used at intersections; a vibration/rumble strip using a band of 6 rows of cobble sets (smoother) and one which uses a line of cobbles with tarmac between repeating 5 times (less uniform height and rough textured). Feedback from cyclists shows they are less happy with the cobble tarmac repeat, as this is more uncomfortable to ride across. However it is clear that these strips are having a psychological impact and encouraging cyclists to slow their pace.
DAVID HALL - Behaviour Change, Executive Director

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE THEORY

The presentation gave an insight into behaviour change theory and illustrated this approach in practice with a case study of Behaviour Change’s campaign in the South Downs. The link to the presentation is (add hyperlink) which includes a link to the short film produced as part of the South Downs campaign. A narrative version of the presentation is included in Appendix A.

Q1 – Would it be right to think that the negative media response to the South Downs Share the Path campaign was expected, anticipating that this would raise awareness of it?

A1 – Wish that were true, in hindsight they should have had a response to challenge the media and explain the reasoning behind the campaign, however that initial negative publicity did give a further platform for the campaign and highlighted what it was aiming to do. Happily, it helped that South Downs did not take a defensive approach in face of the media response, which meant further discussion was generated.

Q2 – What was the outcome of the campaign?

A2 – South Downs only had money for 3 months of activity, after initial scepticism about how effective any campaign would be, they came to the conclusion that the campaign had to use approaches that could be used repeatedly over a longer period of time, i.e. postcards, the short film. However as neither South Downs or ‘Behaviour Change’ have the resources to monitor; it is unclear if there has been a reduction in issues and unfortunately although they would like to, it probably cannot be evaluated.

But so much is about perceived fear of negative interaction with other users, people change their behaviour because of that fear. It is no just about accidents, it is about how people feel. The main problem for the South Downs was that people felt less comfortable rather than that they are at real risk.

Q3 – How important is it to harmonise messaging/signage across parks?

A3 – Thinking about the basic rules of communication, it is important to understand that the official jargon does not work for the ‘normal person’. It is important to use simple, straightforward signage and language, which is consistent. It may not be realistic to take only one approach, since varying signage can help to make the difference between spaces clear e.g. parks signs versus highways signs, but the important thing is to engage on a human level using simple language.

In TRP standard highways signs do not work in areas with high levels of international visitors, unfamiliar with these signs. Hence the TRP ‘No cycling’ sign mimics the internationally recognised ‘No smoking’ sign with a diagonal red line across an image of a cycle.

Q4 – Do people jump to infrastructure engineering or structural solutions at the expense of behavioural, educational solutions?

A4 – Behavioural change is rarely the whole solution; it has to be backed up by design/infrastructure. Thinking in the round is key. Behavioural thinking + infrastructure as a joint view equals the best solution. For example, Behaviour Change’s recent campaign to encouraging people not to drop litter; it is clear that how many bins there are and where are they placed is important, but they found that certain types of bin, which people have to touch to get rid of litter actually make the problem worse. People do not want to use them and discard litter around them. It is important to put a human perspective on design/infrastructure.

DICKVINCENT - Canal & River Trust, National Towpath Ranger

SHARE THE SPACE, DROP THE PACE

The presentation looked at CRT’s campaigns and approaches to encourage all their users to behave considerately towards each other and respect the waterways environment. A narrative version can be found in Appendix A.

Q1 - There used to be a permit that cyclists needed to use towpaths!

A1 - This was dropped 5 years ago, no-one enforced it. Some people did seem to like it, but it was shelved as it offered no real benefit.

Q2 - Hat tipping zone promoting polite behaviour? How did that go?

A2 - It went well, it was a PR stunt along with ‘hat tipping’ element they also sprayed a poem on the ground to encourage reflection. There was a positive response from just about everyone, though it is unclear what effect the campaign had, it did get good media coverage.

Q3 - How are you going to approach pace, without making it a ‘thing’?

A3 – We don’t have an answer as yet, but it probably needs to be a ‘thing’ as there are still cyclists travelling too fast. They do not think a clear enough message is getting over that behaving aggressively toward each other is not a good idea, so are working on a robust approach to tackle this.

Q4 - It’s not easy as a cyclist to know what speed you are going at. Is there a more intuitive way than stating a mph speed limit?

A4 - Signage in Clissold Park Hackney states cycle at walking speed. In some places a slow jogging pace might be reasonable and understandable suggestion. It does depend on the type of space; parks are different from tow paths. Issue is probably about how to get message over, what is guidance versus rules.

Q5 - Have you been monitoring changing use of the tow paths?

A5 - CRT are monitoring as much as possible and now expanding the volunteer team to assist with counts and speed monitoring. In London tow paths are much busier; often too many pedestrians for cycling, numbers of pedestrian visitors have grown in line with the growth of cycling along them.

Q6 - The variation in use at different times of the day, have Cycle Superhighways reduced volume of commuter cyclists on the tow paths?

A6 - Many cyclists prefer using tow paths, they are beautiful routes: Regents Canal is very popular, much nicer to commute along every day than a road. Routes by the canal are perceived to be much safer than using the roads, cyclists are avoiding trucks etc... but by diverting onto tow paths are becoming the ‘trucks’ of the towpath, so many people are choosing not to walk on tow paths at peak commuter times. Canals are one of the earliest forms of transport network and worked; there are lessons that can be learnt from canals making other transport routes greener and more pleasant to use.
Q1 – What can we learn from the Netherlands? UK versus Continent - are there cultural differences in the approach to cycling?

A1 – Netherlands has a very complete cycling network; in UK, it is more fractured. In Netherlands cyclists are comfortable riding on urban routes; in UK, they tend to seek safer alternatives i.e. through Parks/ Canal towpaths. In the Netherlands cycling speeds tends to be lower; this probably reflects the wider cycling community, the aim is to get to that position here in the UK.

Q2 – Smiley face speed signs, could they be used for cyclists in parks?

A2 - TRP has just trialled such a sign on Broad Walk in Hyde Park over a 2-week period. Cyclists get 😊 if they are travelling under 10mph and 😞 if they are over 10mph. Initial analysis indicates that it has made no difference in speed. The sign might need to be tied in with a wider education initiative, possibly using it as a temporary solution in problem areas, to help build the message. Canal and River Trust feel the smiley sign plays to the competitive instinct, with some cyclists speeding to get the sad face to come up, because of this CRT decided against using this approach. Some others suggested having only the rewarding smiley face to promote a positive message.

In Portugal, cameras trigger a red light if people speed on the road; this seems to encourage people to slow down as they don’t want to have to stop. This seems to change behaviour and is proving an effective deterrent to speeding.

Q3 – How will cycling interventions in the boroughs be funded?

A3 – There will not be a specific fund for cycling intervention, but support will come under Healthy Streets. The focus will be on programmes that benefit cyclists and pedestrians.

Q4 – Are there any plans for funding to encourage cycling/cycling lessons?

A4 – TfL already funds Family Cycle Skills. There is perhaps work to be done in finding ideal locations + working with parks as partners.

Q5 – While the discussion about managing shared spaces is being held within the parks and green spaces sector, it does seem that the general public are unaware of the issues. CRT find that they have lots of requests for traditional interventions like chicanes, speed bumps etc. Are there ways in which we can bring people on the journey of understanding that these are not always the best solution?

A5– TfL has the same issues on highways and is working by engaging people at a very early stage and involving them in the design process. In order to reach the wider community TfL are using social media and the internet to present the positive things about shared spaces and trying to offer counter arguments or options like cycle training. There is benefit in encouraging the commonality of messages.

Q6 – Is it possible that we are approaching a point where complaints will reduce and cycling is becoming more normalised?

A6 – There is a hope that when you have a range of different people doing the same activity it moderates behaviour, at the moment commuter cyclists are behaving very differently to leisure cyclists, but as cycling numbers increase this may level off inconsiderate behaviour. With CSH fully in place, it is hoped that there will be a shift of commuter cyclists from the parks/tow paths onto the highway.
FOCUS GROUPS

The focus groups provided the opportunity to discuss points raised by the presentations, concentrating on 3 key themes; Behaviour Change, Enforcement and Design. Facilitators led group discussions and led the discussions using the following headings: ‘light bulb moments’, ‘joined up approaches’, ‘sharing best practise’ and ‘issues’. While each group’s approach to discussion varied, the summary of the key points raised are as follows.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
facilitated by David Hall

The main question opening discussion was ‘What do we actually want cyclists to do?’ The group agreed they wanted cyclists to follow the rules and everyone be responsible for their own behaviour and respect other users.

The group agreed ‘speed’ is the issue, but this has negative connotations. Talking about ‘pace’ might be more helpful, though hard to define everyone should be travelling at a pace appropriate for the conditions in the area. This applies to all park users understanding how their behaviour impacts on others.

Promoting the considerate behaviour of the majority of users and finding ways of enabling people to empathise and understand others viewpoints would be helpful.

Parks are ‘special places’, there are open to everyone free of charge. The group felt this was important to emphasise and encourage people to switch to a less aggressive, more reconciliatory mode of behaviour when entering and visiting parks.

The group acknowledged there are challenges in achieving this and that some people will always act contrarily to the norms of behaviour. They debated the value of using rules and codes of conduct, concluding that ideally the need was to get people to want to change their behaviour and comply with a code of conduct.

They explored how priming with visual or design cues might encourage a behaviour shift, for example TRP’s ‘Think Park’ campaign reminding visitors of the quality of the parks landscape, design and ‘special’ nature to engender more considerate behaviour.

They thought there was potential in creating a communication group – all using the same # to share positive messages and campaigns and encouraging park users to share their positive experiences and images on social media. The group also considered the option of identifying appropriate ‘messengers’ to communicate to different user groups, and getting the message to commuter cyclists through work places and cycle to work schemes.

Ultimately the group felt that the challenge was finding ways of discouraging aggressive ‘London’ behaviour. They felt that there was value in sharing approaches and working together as parks professionals to encourage positive messages on various platforms emphasising the special offer of parks and green spaces for all visitors.

ENFORCEMENT
facilitated by Erin Simpson (TRP Cycle Programme Engagement Officer)

The group first discussed who does and does not enforce. TRP has dedicated park police for each park who can issue Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND) for reckless cycling and cycling off route. (The police in TRP generally use discretion in tackling one off incidents, giving friendly warnings to cyclists breaking the rules). CRT do not use enforcement at all; others either do not enforce or are moving towards this approach.

Some borough parks managers have limited powers using bylaws, but these are lengthy to enforce and also different areas have their own bylaws, meaning offenders can evade sanctions.

The group queried whether rules create conflicts and so ‘make a rod for your own back’, e.g. Does putting up lots of signs with rules and regulations make people more determined to cycle in prohibited areas and at speed because they should not be there?

The group noted that in some cases cyclists are genuinely unaware of restrictions, with evidence to show that some websites give inaccurate information about routes. They acknowledged that desire lines for cyclists often conflict with restrictions in historic open spaces and that the increase in cycling puts pressure on areas like towpaths where there is limited space for shared use.

They also acknowledged that there can be mixed messages for cyclists where routes run through different types of space i.e. joining a pedestrian area, which moves into shared space and then on again into another pedestrian area.

In considering joined up approaches, the group thought it would be useful to share the CRT free licence ‘Share the space, drop your pace’ to set up a joint campaign to encourage sharing of information about accessible cycle routes. They also felt that there was value in more continuity of signs and terms, for example the adoption of the pedestrian priority sign (larger pedestrian figures over a smaller cycle) already used by some, which could help reinforce better public awareness.

Regarding bylaws, the group heard that there is a conversation happening now about whether there is a park bylaw that can be applied to all boroughs relating to cycling. They felt that involvement in that discussion by all landowners would be a useful way to move forward a joined-up approach to tackling enforcement where necessary.
DESIGN
facilitated by Ruth Holmes

The group discussed how infrastructure changes could reduce conflict between cyclists, and pedestrians and the importance of designing for a wide variety of users ensuring their comfort in parks. They particularly considered managing pinch points i.e. bridges, narrow paths etc. and how design could inform where people should/should not be and how it could indicate appropriate behaviour in a given place.

They felt that shared spaces work best when focused on the place rather than the movement through them e.g. Quietways which are not simply transport opportunities, but also about creating places that enhance wellbeing.

In discussing cycle speed mitigation, the group considered whether this could be tackled solely through design, the group decided that the key could be effective placemaking ensuring that infrastructure was well designed and part of an experience, rather than acting solely as an enforcement measure.

As well as looking at well-designed permanent features, the group felt that that temporary interventions could be effective e.g. chicanes that could be moved or using the ‘fourth plinth’ approach to introduce temporary art installations. These could introduce elements of surprise into the landscape encouraging people to stop or slow down to appreciate them. They felt these types of approaches may be more successful than permanent signs in encouraging people to slow their pace, particularly as some signs tend to lose their impact with time. They agreed that any signs used should be well designed, in keeping with a park aesthetic to avoid creating visual ‘clutter’. They should also be consistent and use clear images and language to be effective.

There should be joined up messaging around design approach, so that design cues on entering a park, green or civic space indicate expected behaviour from all users. The group acknowledged that subtle cues do not always work for some people with disabilities, particularly those with sight impairment. However, the group felt that creating a community of landowners using the same language, messages and design cues would be very positive.

They agreed the Symposium was a useful forum and could lead to further opportunities to share learning from trials, monitoring and case studies between different parks and green spaces, involving the London Cycling Campaign and other cycling organisations as appropriate.

There was agreement that the Walking & Cycling Design Guide will be a helpful tool, the group saw it as important that it is widely disseminated and considered whether regional, national or international organisations like Parks for London, The Parks Alliance and The World Parks Forum could help. They felt too often information is produced, but then is hard to access, so ideally the guide should be readily available online.

Lastly, the group would like to see more opportunities for site visits, to gain a better understanding of trial interventions; both those that worked, but also those that did not, but also to bring people together to look at particular issues, share knowledge and ideas to help solve problems.
CONCLUSIONS

The Cymposium was a productive forum, bringing together a diverse group of green space professionals to discuss the challenges of encouraging cyclists and pedestrians to amicably share parks and green spaces. It was a good opportunity to share experiences, discuss things that work, those that do not and consider future approaches. There was overwhelming agreement on the value of holding a similar event on an annual basis and a wish to see other parks and green spaces officers get involved in future.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

- As a starting point, research the needs of all audiences using consultation methods giving interest groups the opportunity to contribute their viewpoint and ideas. Face to face discussions in parks and green spaces, stakeholder groups also providing opportunities to respond to surveys via websites can all help engage a wider audience. By involving people in this way, they are more likely to have ‘buy in’ to any planned changes, it is also useful to bring different interest groups together to encourage people to appreciate others points of view. Most importantly avoid identifying one user group or other as the ‘problem’.

- Promote the positive behaviour of the majority of visitors, to emphasise that sharing the space and acting in a friendly and polite manner is the norm when visiting parks or green spaces. It is more effective to help people understand what behaviour norms are rather than telling them.

- The best solutions are achieved by giving equal consideration to behaviour change approaches and design/infrastructure considerations.

- Communicate messages in a clear manner and avoid jargon. Simple and inexpensive techniques can work well e.g. the spreading of positive messages using social media or well designed hand-outs such as maps or postcards.

ENFORCEMENT

- It is difficult to tackle reckless cycling and cycling off route in parks and green spaces that frequently have no methods of enforcement other than through bylaws, which can be a lengthy process.

- TRP have dedicated police officers who can issue PNDs, in cases of blatant or persistent transgression. TRP police in general speak to people to make them aware of the rules, though targeted action in areas where problems build up has proved a useful approach in getting people to change their behaviour.

- Clearer messaging about permitted cycle routes and pace needs to be incorporated into signage and information to encourage more self-regulation.

DESIGN

- There is a lot to learn from sharing design approaches that do and do not work. Trial interventions like temporary art installations or chicanes, which create ‘surprises’ could help encourage people to slow down and congregate. These temporary approaches might decrease the need for permanent signs, which tend to become overlooked with time.

- Signage needs to deliver messages that use clear language and/or images, avoiding jargon so that messages can be easily understood by everyone. It is important to keep permanent signage to a minimum to maintain the aesthetic impact of parks and green spaces. Ideally there should be more continuity in signage in place across all parks and open spaces.

- Design should reinforce the idea that parks and green spaces are ‘special’ to help influence behaviour change in visitors crossing over the threshold from the street into the park or green space.
RECOMMENDATIONS

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
• Set up a joint communication working group to develop and share consistent approaches to convey the message about all users sharing space considerately.
• Work jointly to share the use of CRT’s ‘Share the space, drop your pace.’
• Work jointly to consider simple options for getting the message over, e.g. CRT credit card sized map, postcards etc. to be distributed freely.
• Work jointly to make sure that organisations’ websites carry the same messages.
• Work jointly using Twitter and Instagram to promote positive messages emphasising how the majority of visitors behave. Encourage staff, visitors and stakeholder groups to use #sharethepath to highlight positive interactions and experiences.

ENFORCEMENT
• As powers to enforce vary considerably across parks and green spaces, to develop a more consistent approach. Convene a further joint discussion/working group, to consider effective ways forward.
• More consistent bylaws across all parks and green spaces would make it easier to prosecute persistent rule breaking, that conversation is already underway, but this should be advanced by bringing together local authority and agency representatives to properly consider how this might be achieved.
• Give clear indication to cyclists about the pace at which they should be travelling rather than using mph limit signs.
• Another option to be considered is NOT to enforce, adopting CRT’s approach of not having rules, removing any need to enforce and encouraging self-regulation by users.

DESIGN
• Ensure that the TRP Walking & Cycle Design Guide is available as guidance for other landowners and also promote widely to organisations and forums, with regional, national and international audiences.
• Share trials and approaches which work for others to consider, but equally share information about what has not worked to help prevent ‘reinventing the wheel’ scenarios. Disseminate information widely to expand the debate about how increasing cycling and pedestrians can interact positively in parks, green and open spaces.
• Carry out site visits to bring together parks and green spaces professionals to observe design approaches and share expertise to solve problems in common.
• Develop a shared consistent approach to permanent signage across all parks and green spaces, i.e. signage that shows clearly pedestrian priority over cycling.

Finally……
• Hold an annual seminar to bring together professionals and create a regular forum to discuss and share topical issues relevant to managing parks and green spaces.
CYCLING AND THE ROYAL PARKS
Ruth Holmes

The Mayor’s vision for cycling in 2013 tasked TfL to create Cycle Superhighways and Quietways, as part of the Central London Grid designed to form a ‘tube’ network pattern for cycling. TRP are participating in that process on the Grid board.

TRP has seen cycling dramatically increased within the parks. A study in 2009 looking at Rotten Row, 7 years later further evidence shows a 20% increase in the number of pedestrians and 50% increase in cyclists. In addition, monitoring the route around the front of Buckingham Palace and route from Victoria to Trafalgar Square over the last 2-3 years shows that the ratio between cyclists and motorists is now 50:50.

In April 2016, Government released its strategy on walking and cycling and to see cycle journeys double by 2026.

What’s good about parks for cycling in London?

One of the unique selling point of all parks is that they are great places to learn to cycle for people of all ages and abilities. A University College London animation of 5 million cycle hire journeys in London shows a concentration of journeys travelling round routes in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. Many people are using cycle hire bikes in the parks and instructors are using the bikes to teach cycle skills.

TfL research in 2013 showed 80% use of cycle hire bikes is casual. TRP makes a positive contribution to cycle hire in terms of income. The most popular docking stations are in the parks, as many journeys are circular the need to redistribute bikes is reduced. Redistribution is at 500 journeys as compared to 130 journeys elsewhere in London. A STRAVA heat map also shows hubs of activity at Regents Park and Richmond Park indicating cyclists riding in circuits.

How do they respond to cycling?

TRP’s response to cycling is based on evidence based decision making, use a systematic approach taking into consideration park management and community engagement.

TRP are trying to develop clear signage, taking into account enforcement either under Park Regulations or Department of Transport Act 1968.

What have TRP been doing? The cycle programme breaks down into 3 work streams; Delivery, Communications and Behavioural Change.

How to tackle behaviour and some of the issues coming up?

How to engage with audiences and communicate with them? Social media, posters, what kind of campaigns can be run?

What sort of market research to do to really understand people and their behaviour?

Some of the approaches TRP have used include ‘A’ frame boards with simple messages, the website, face to face work out in the park and surveys with tablets.

TRP objective - That people get on and have a brilliant experience; this is difficult if people feel threatened by other park users. Prioritising engaging with people with disabilities including considering their needs and understanding how design impacts on their experience, but also taking into consideration the needs of all other park users, including the sports cyclists.
The guide was developed with TRP to provide a design guidance tool within the parks. TRP have been collecting evidence over a number of years to build a consistent approach to help cyclists and pedestrians operate in harmony across the parks. In last 4-6 years, visitors to TRP have doubled to around 80 million people, even with that increase visitors still want to enjoy the same quality of experience and TRP wants to encourage the widest range of users. The guide takes an evidence based planning approach; collecting data to inform design decisions. It takes a landscape prominent approach to ensure the end product is of a high consistent quality. The guide’s main principles are to ensure an inclusive approach to create accessible spaces for a range of users, taking a tarmac neutral approach, not encroaching on soft landscape, ensuring that hard landscaping is offset elsewhere and that designs tie into surrounding environments and work with the wider streetscape. The evidence based planning approach came about reflecting how TRP already works identifying issues by combining design or behaviour change.

Key is the high-level identification of the issues to understand the types of paths:• The type of path i.e. path for pedestrians only, shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists or road for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists• The movement on the path i.e. low and high flows on each type of path during am and pm peak. (Recommendation for monitoring - Quick check 2 x 5 min counts at peak times 8 – 9am and 3 – 4pm can give you understanding of dynamic range of movement)• The character of the path i.e. informal – quieter paths, formal – established main paths and special – paths in formal gardens• Identify project type – based on the path type, decisions can be made about the materials and configuration to use.• Detailed assessment of the identified issues – supplement information about the path types with ad hoc observation and feedback from users• Design objectives and design development – using a planning checklist process taking into account all information gathered to determine course of action. Project types in break down into Tier 1 - small, through to Tier 3 - large. Larger projects need a more robust evidence base.

Case study - Mount Walk in Kensington Gardens, A shared use path with high cycle use and low to moderate pedestrian use. At 4m wide this satisfies a definition as a cycle route most of the time. However, it was getting close to being a major shared use path with much higher pedestrian use at weekends and feedback was showing that users felt less comfortable. A shared use study was undertaken in May 2015 to understand how Mount Walk was being used. It looked at cyclist and pedestrian flows through the day and week, measured pedestrian comfort, considered cycle speeds and close interactions between pedestrians and cyclists. The plotted evidence showed that path intersections were where most close interactions occurred. This information outlined the need to encourage lower cycle speeds and prioritise path intersections. All this informed the design changes.

Changes are now installed, introducing rumble strips and surface signage showing that pedestrians have priority at the path intersections.

Past implementation monitoring is important. A repeat study of Mount Walk in June 2016 showed a 70% reduction in cyclist travelling at 16mph and particularly 20mph plus during weekday peaks. There is evidence that cyclists are going slower and there are fewer close interactions at the junctions.

The hope is the guide will inform how to create a better environment within parks leading to a better experience for all users.

What do we mean by Behaviour Change?
The publication Nudge (Thaler and Sunstein, 2009) started to popularise the idea. It is based on academic work looking at how and why people behave and why they behave in certain ways. It centres round people’s “predictably irrational” behaviour; policies/interventions tend to be based around people behaving rationally. While most people do not behave rationally, that does not mean that that behaviour cannot be predicted, it means understanding ways in which people are irrational and working with it.

There are key questions to ask
• What exactly do you want people to do? e.g. Want people to not waste food - Food waste isn’t a behaviour it’s an unintended consequence. What is the behaviour that actually needs to change?
• Can you help people rather than telling them what to do? e.g. National Trust’s 50 things to do before you’re 11½ – gave people information about what they could do and where, rather than telling them, which does not work.
• Understand your audience – there is no replacement for research that gets under the skin, use smarter ways to do this rather than standard focus groups, which tend to be unreliable.
• Changing the language – jargon doesn’t work for real people, it is important to use straightforward language.
• Is there a way to show that the behaviour you are encouraging is normal?
• How can you be in the right place at the right time - e.g. campaign to get people out of cars onto buses by finding moments when taking the car had not been a good idea, i.e. traffic, parking wardens.
• Use partnerships to amplify your impact - Working with others has a powerful effect.

- Case study - South Downs Share the Path Campaign Behaviour Change undertook some basic background work to understand shared paths, this showed that cycling in parks and green spaces is at risk of becoming a ‘thing’, they found lots of evidence in the press/social media. The discussion about cycling is underway. People getting annoyed etc. and posting on Twitter and Instagram, but also positive tweets on #sharethepath. Globally there is lots of work going on around signage aimed at shared use; these vary from using human approaches through to overcomplicated ones.

South Downs National Park has 1000 miles of shared paths but they don’t own them and have a wide range of users. South Downs survey showed issues in common with parks such as cyclists coming up fast, uncontrolled dogs and inconsiderate walkers. They worked with stakeholders to understand the conflicting views of interest groups. Overall conflicts were rare and courteous and friendly interaction the norm. It is important not to focus on conflict as it increases the perception it’s a problem. Pointing the finger at individual user groups can be problematic and give the impression that a certain group are the problem legitimising the anger of other users; so, promote positive shared use, rather than highlighting or reinforcing the problem.

The normal behaviour in South Downs is being friendly and most people say ‘hello’, ‘excuse me’ and ‘thank you’. Behaviour Changes’ campaign aimed to encourage this social norm using simple ads, postcards, social media, people standing outside with signs and a short film.

During the campaign, it received negative reaction in the press; this highlights some of the challenges of the
approach in trying to deal with the issues without at the same time making the situation worse. However, after the initial negative article a national conversation developed, that discussion was ultimately positive as it helped raise awareness about how people should behave in the countryside. Partnerships with stakeholders helped getting small organisations to distribute the postcards and encouraging people to tweet etc.

Lessons - focussing on positive behaviour was key, feedback from public and user groups was supportive. Social norms are really powerful, but can be misunderstood if they encourage the idea that there isn’t a problem. Good conversation is now happening about sharing the path. Expect the unexpected if you try these types of things.

SHARE THE SPACE, DROP YOUR PACE
Dick Vincent

The Canal and River Trust (formerly British Waterways) manage around 2000 miles of canals and rivers nationally. Originally canals were built as work spaces and were closed to the public, post WW2 they fell out of use and became forgotten places. In the late 20th century there were efforts to reverse this, but the impetus really started to build around 2000 when appreciation of canals started to grow and the numbers of people enjoying them increased significantly.

This increase in popularity has meant more visitors/users, which in turns means more problems between different interest groups. CRT saw this as a wonderful problem to have, but needed to start considering how to tackle it. It was clear that ways of encouraging cyclists and other users to work together was needed, but due to the limiting nature of towpaths and the fact that the National Grid runs under many of them; solutions such as introducing infrastructure change such as speed bumps or chicane were not feasible. It was clear that behaviour change was the ‘only show in town’.

The first campaign ‘2 Tings’ ran for 5 years, encouraging cyclists to ring their bell twice. It worked up to a point, but pointed the finger at cyclists, upsetting the people they were trying to reach. The campaign raised discussion but did not encourage better behaviours. After consultation, they came up with the Better Towpaths for Everyone policy, endorsing a shared use approach. Consultation feedback indicated that people wanted better signs, better infrastructure and better behaviour.

They found that wayfinding to let people know about routes helped them make better choices. Playful signs worked This increase in popularity has meant more visitors/users, which in turns means more problems between different interest groups. CRT saw this as a wonderful problem to have, but needed to start considering how to tackle it. It was clear that ways of encouraging cyclists and other users to work together was needed, but due to the limiting nature of towpaths and the fact that the National Grid runs under many of them; solutions such as introducing infrastructure change such as speed bumps or chicane were not feasible. It was clear that behaviour change was the ‘only show in town’.

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#sharethepath
iv - MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE EVENT

How well did the event meet your expectations?

Everybody felt that event mainly met their expectations, for some it exceeded them. People thought it was good for exploring new ideas with a focused coverage of the important topics. They liked the presentations commenting that they were interesting, useful and informative. They also thought bringing together the range of organisations allowed some useful debate and potential for future joint working.

Will the Symposium support you in your future work?
Most people agreed it would do.

If we hold another event of a similar nature would you/your organisation like to attend?
Everyone said YES.

If we hold a future event of a similar nature what improvements would you suggest?
• Parks for London would be willing to collaborate to widen the audience & encourage sharing good practice.
• There was a suggestion to introduce workshops earlier in the day.
• It would be good to share more real life examples and include some site visits.
• It would be good if there was more input from borough councils.
• Visuals/screen was not clear enough.
• Stronger facilitation of workshops would be good. Perhaps incorporating a practice exercise – learn from theory, try implementing, discuss, go back to theory.
• Some people would like to have seen better time keeping and suggested the event may have benefited from another hour to extend to a full day.

Is this the first time you have taken part in a Royal Parks event?
76% of respondents were taking part for the first time.

Would you recommend a similar event to others?
Everyone would recommend involvement to others.

Are there other themes for a similar event that you would be interested in?
• Other cycling and public realm design related themes.
• Mainly any to do with current issues in and around open spaces.
• Sharing experience of public shared space for all users.
• Bringing the arts to public shared spaces as engagement tool.
• Licensing of personal trainers.
• Sports bookings.
• Cycling & walking & design place making.
• Accessibility cycling.
• Design best practice for shared spaces.
WHO WE ARE

The Royal Parks is a charity created in March 2017 to manage and fundraise for 5,000 acres of Royal parkland across London.

We look after eight of London’s largest open spaces: Hyde, The Green, Richmond, Greenwich, St James’s, Bushy and The Regent’s Parks, and Kensington Gardens.

We also manage other important open spaces in the capital including Grosvenor Square Gardens, Brompton Cemetery, Victoria Tower Gardens, Canning Green and Poet’s Corner.

In 2017, we took on the role of managing the parks from The Royal Parks Agency, a former executive agency of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

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