



Hitchin Town Talk – October 11th, 2022

Date: Tuesday, 11th October

Time: 6.30-7.15pm

Venue: Christchurch, Bedford Road

Themed Town Talk = **'Walking and cycling in Hitchin and North Hertfordshire'**

We invited people along to talk with our Senior NHC Transport Policy Officer, Edward Leigh, about walking and cycling in Hitchin and North Hertfordshire.

He is leading on a new consultation. This consultation is relevant to everyone who lives, works, or studies in North Herts, whether they walk, cycle, use a wheelchair or mobility scooter. It's about making pavements wider, junctions safer, adding more pedestrian crossings, and creating more segregated routes for cycling.

More information can be found here, [Have your say on walking and cycling routes | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/consultations/walking-and-cycling-routes)

We had a good turnout who are interested in getting their thoughts and ideas across to our local Councillors and our Senior NHC Transport Policy Officer.

Cllr Ian Albert addressed the members of the public and gave a brief introduction about the new consultation and mentioned that going forward there would be more themed Town Talks concentrating on various Hitchin matters.

Edward Leigh, NHC Senior NHC Transport Policy Officer, gave a brief introduction about the new consultation. He explained that this had the potential to help North Herts resident's walking and cycling routes and needs.

Pedestrians should be at the top of any future plans, followed by cyclists, then public transport users, then cars. He urged people to go along to the consultation web page and to drop a digital pin in an area where they wanted to make a comment/ suggestion.

The consultation closes on November 7th.

Edward then opened the floor to questions.

Questions from the public

Q1 = Member of the public highlighted areas in and around Westmill that needed addressing. Vegetation/trees that needed to be trimmed and routes that were blocked by fallen trees. How can these be dealt with more swiftly in order for existing paths and routes to remain clear and open.

A = Communication needed to be improved between the public, NHC and HCC.

Q2 = Are there time constraints on this consultation and potential funding since it is government money?

A = *Active Travel England* have 2 billion that is going to be dispersed. Once we have adopted a plan we can go for a slice of that funding. The quicker we can work with the results from the consultation the better. Realised that existing problems could be addressed now.

Q3 = A member of the St Ippolyts Group wants something to be done about the speeding along London Road. The traffic goes far too fast beside children, horses, and the school.

A = Please report this on the consultation. The more evidence the better. The more people that report this problem, the better.

Q4 = I can't read your plan and maps. I want to know about a route I'd personally choose when riding my bike. Could you provide separate/ different maps to show a complete system for each user.

A = At the moment these maps are hard to go down into any finer detail. We have to work with what we currently have.

Q5 = Will this consultation help to reduce traffic in Hitchin/ North Herts?

A = It's all about balance. We need to make walking and cycling more attractive and safer first. We also need to make it more attractive, so car users switch to cycling/ walking.

It was also highlighted about the ongoing problem with large vehicles using Grove Road, Woolgrove Road & Fishponds Road etc. These vehicles travel through Hitchin from the industrial area.

Cllr Ian Albert invited the members of the public to study the maps that Edward had brought in showing various areas and routes. The open Q & A session paused, but members of the public were still able to ask Edward individual questions about the various maps.

Town Talk was closed at 7.15pm

Date of next Town Talk: December 8th (TBC)