

FRIENDS OF HOCKLEY VIADUCT

NEWSLETTER 12

At last we patient *aficionados* have realised our dream – the Hockley Viaduct is now fully restored and has begun its new life as part of the National Cycle Route 23 between Reading and Sandown on the Isle of Wight. It is said that good things come to those who wait and this is certainly a good thing and we certainly have waited!

So now, except for the signage and some more benches, the huge undertaking has been achieved. The numbers of people using the Viaduct, at all hours I may say, shows just what a popular move this restoration has been and how grateful we all are for the commitment of so many to this end.

The official opening on February 26th was excellent and invited guests numbered well over 100. The World Champion cyclist Dani King, herself born and bred in Eastleigh, led over 50 cyclists on to the Viaduct to breast the red ribbon held by Mayor Frank Pearson and former Leader of the Council George Beckett. Dani was accompanied by several children from the Compton and the Highcliffe Primary Schools as well as older ones from Peter Symonds. Sustrans cyclists plus one or two brave City Councillors were pedalling bravely along behind! BBC TV South was there both at the pre-opening in the Guildhall and on the somewhat chilly Viaduct, and produced a good report for the evening's regional news. The City's project team had produced 6 excellent information panels for the Guildhall part of the event, and 4 speakers, including our Chairman Chris Webb, gave a short speech about their involvement. Elsewhere on the website is a [transcript of Chris' speech](#) as well as [pictures of the 6 panels](#) – well worth a look, particularly the one entitled "The Friends of Hockley Viaduct". Those guests who were not cycling from the Guildhall down to the Viaduct were ferried there by a King Alfred Buses double decker with Dave Shawyer, a loyal Friend of the Viaduct, as the conductor!

However, as we said at the start of this, our 12th Newsletter, the signage and remainder of the seating still need to be arranged. The FOHV Committee has been very much a part of the decision and design process. Since the City Council is keen for the public to be part of this process, the work is not expected to be in place until later this year. Watch either this space or the Viaduct itself for the latest developments!

Again we must offer our thanks to the City Council's Project Team, to Sustrans and their local representative Nick Farthing, and to former Conservative City Councillor George Beckett. All of these people have helped us with our vision and have given many hours of their time to achieving the goal – we hope they feel as proud of the job as we do.

Contact the Secretary and Treasurer Julia Sandison on 01962 867490 with any queries or for further information, or email her on julia@ntcom.co.uk

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