

## City Council – Public Meeting 17<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Under the chairmanship of Conservative Leader of Winchester City Council, Councillor George Beckett, the Friends of Hockley Viaduct and others were invited on November 17<sup>th</sup> to a meeting in Shawford Parish Hall to discuss plans for the restoration and re-use of the viaduct.



Joining Cllr. Beckett were the area representative for Sustrans, which hopes to incorporate the viaduct into their local Cycle Route 23, the Winchester City Council Officer dealing with the design and development aspect of all the work required, and a senior finance Officer from the City Council.

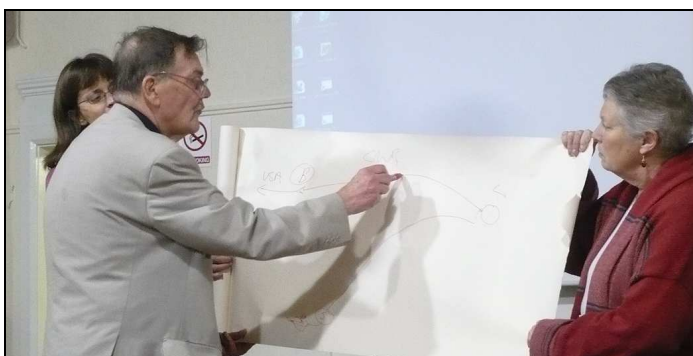
Apart from several members of the Friends, the audience included residents from both the Compton and Shawford parishes, in which the viaduct stands, and St Cross parish, whose boundary joins Compton and Shawford, as well as a local representative from The Ramblers, and a representative for the local cyclists group.

There were presentations from Sustrans, the Friends and the WCC Officer dealing with the design and development. The meeting was a pleasant and constructive occasion with many different viewpoints about how the viaduct should be treated. One thing that was obvious, however, was how much everyone there wants the viaduct to be restored and returned to a useful life.

There was lengthy discussion about who would be able to use the new pathway, how much needed to be done to enable this end, and what people hoped wouldn't be done, such as too much in the way of "street furniture" and bossy signs!

WCC is considering replacing the bridge over Five Bridges Road to continue the cycle/pedestrian path along the old railway trackbed, and has commissioned bat surveys in order to assess the situation. It is envisaged that the parapet wall on the city side of the viaduct will be lowered slightly to enable people to enjoy the fantastic view across the water meadows, down over St Cross towards the Cathedral. The other parapet wall will stay the same height in order to continue its protection of St Cross from the ever-increasing sound of the M3.

The City Council, under the leadership of George Beckett who represents Compton and Shawford parish, is keen to start the necessary work in 2012, and is also keen that it will be a link between the two city Park and Ride sites with a possible bike-rental scheme which will enable the public to leave their car in one car park and walk or cycle around the area, leaving the bike at either of the 2 car parks. The latter is not of course a part of the viaduct restoration scheme, but an item on the City Council's "wish list"!



*Chris Webb performs a "can you see what it is yet" with the history of the DNSR.*

The very good-natured and positive meeting took around one and a half hours, and refreshments were provided. All opinions were listened to with courtesy and interest, and all in all, the committee of the Friends of Hockley Viaduct felt grateful that our views have been listened to and are being seriously considered for the future of this essential structure in Winchester's history.