

POTHOLE

The newsletter of the Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign
Spring 2004

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www.gmcc.org.uk

Transport Czar elected President of Greater Manchester Cyclists

Greater Manchester cycle campaigners have secured the services of an internationally renowned transport expert as their Honorary President.

David Begg, chair of the government's Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) was appointed a non-executive member of the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority in 2003. Also he sits on the board of Transport for London, the Strategic Rail Authority and is Professor of Transport Policy at Aberdeen University. In February he agreed to become President of the Greater Manchester Cycle Campaign.

Professor Begg began cycling at eight years old, catching a lift on his big brother's bike, "Now I commute daily on a Ridgeback Genesi to my office at Westminster.

However we moved recently to St James's and I have still to decide how best to negotiate Trafalgar Square - inside the Congestion Charging Zone."

Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott persuaded David Begg to join the CfIT in 1999, "He was impressed with my work as lead transport politician in Edinburgh. There we re-allocated road space away from cars to cyclists, pedestrians and buses.

Critics said that Edinburgh was too wet, hilly and windy for cycling. They were wrong. In five years there was a 40% increase in bike use. Bike lanes on the main routes and advanced stop lines proved to be particularly popular."

In London cycling has increased by 30% since the introduction of congestion charging in February 2003. Nationally, road pricing is the inevitable way forward asserts Professor Begg, "Without it we



would have to build five times the amount of roads the government is planning or increase fuel duty five fold. Neither policy is feasible nor desirable." But he is doubtful congestion charging would work in central Manchester at present. "The city boundary is too tight. Cars would go to the Trafford Centre. We need to co-ordinate across the Greater Manchester area and deliver on public transport improvements first."

Northerners will be pleased to hear his view that, "Outside of London, Greater Manchester has the best integrated transport in the UK. Mancunians should learn from London how important it is to restrain private motorists. In the capital the car share of the transport market is declining while cycling, walking and bus use are all rising. Here in Manchester despite the carrot of major improvements in public transport car use and congestion continues to increase. It is essential to also use the stick of high parking charges and congestion charging. We will not achieve our objectives with only the carrot."

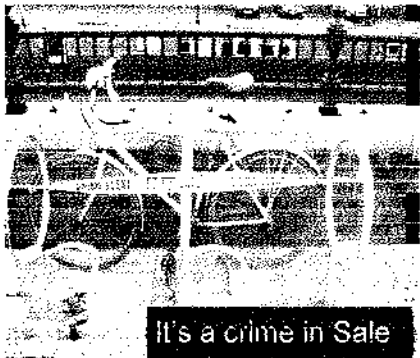
GMCC Secretary Dick Venes is delighted that David Begg has joined the cycle campaign, "Our new President was greeted by local cyclists when he arrived from Glasgow at Piccadilly Station on 15 March. Then we escorted him

to the GMPTA," added Mr Venes.

Begg's vision for UK transport is that we adopt European best practice and put people before vehicles in our cities, "My nightmare is that we go down the American route: where the car comes first, people don't know their neighbours, only the poor travel by public transport and even in cities you have to drive five miles to buy a pint of milk, pedestrians are an oddity and cyclists a rarity."

Alien (Bike Racks) spotted in Sale

Alix Otten reports... After reading in Pothole about new cycle parking at Sale Town Hall I decided to investigate. All I could find was some strange circular sculptures and a row of old fashioned butterfly clamps, which are useless for most kinds of bike. They are under cover



It's a crime in Sale

but not secure - in a dark corner in fact where no bike thief would be noticed. What a shame Trafford Council has not made use of the Greater Manchester cycle parking standards and put in some parking that would be secure and safe enough for a modern cycle.

I asked at the information desk about the better quality provision for employees and nobody had heard of them. I asked my own employer, Trafford Talkshop, and they only knew of the public racks. I met an employee who informed me he has stopped cycling to work because the parking is not adequate. He did not think the circular racks were under CCTV surveillance. I have experienced more theft and vandalism to my bike in Sale than in any other part of Greater Manchester and find it really regrettable that more thought has not gone into this. I would appreciate information on how to access the staff cycle parking, whether the outdoor parking is covered by any kind of security, and how soon more adequate public parking could be expected.

Paul Barrett, Travel Co-ordinator, Trafford MBC responds.....

I understand your frustration with the inadequate facilities at Sale. Trust me, most people are frustrated - including me. The reason for the poor facilities is that the local authority likes to keep costs down and this affected the cycling provisions when the new building was erected. Hopefully this will change in the summer, when car-parking charges are introduced for all council workers. The charges will form a Green Transport Fund, which will be re-distributed for alternative means. When progress is made, I will let you know.

Thanks for your honesty Paul. Hope you do not find it too lonely since Dave Simper pedalled off to Blackpool. We assume that cost-conscious Trafford are saving even more money by failing to fill his post? Editors

Newsflash

Simper's shoes have been filled by Alistair McMurray - a Davyhulme resident and irregular cyclist.

but not in Stretford



On your bikes, UNISON

On learning that the only reason (according to Trade Union Unison) that many people currently work for Trafford Council is free parking (MEN, Feb 20) Vincent Walsh wrote to Council leader David Acton via the letter pages.....

Dear David

Congratulations on introducing staff car park charges. In following the courageous lead of Ken Livingstone you have recognised that incentives and penalties - carrots and sticks - are required to break the love affair between the British commuter and the car.

Unison should oppose the misguided and failed policy of providing ever-greater swathes of tarmac to meet the insatiable desire for employee car parks. The union would do better for its members' health and welfare by supporting secure covered workplace cycle parking. (The Warwick Road entrance to Trafford Town Hall is a good example. Sale Waterside is a poor one.) The union should insist its members receive the full 20 pence per mile tax-free allowance for business travel by bike.

The Bridgewater Canal is an excellent route linking several council offices. The Council and Unison should lobby Peel Holdings to upgrade the tow-path and officially allow cycling.

If there is a mass exodus of disgruntled car commuters from Trafford can I offer my humble services - and trusty bike - to the beleaguered Council. Vincent

P.S. Urmston Biker celebrates 101st birthday
"Cycling is the recipe for a long life," claims Margaret Bacon 101, now resident at Handsworth Methodist Home, Bowdon.

Safe Routes to Schools Champion faces Sack

A Trafford school awarded a Cycling Projects Fund grant to build a bike shed is now faced with losing the key member of staff who helped win the money.

Woodheys School in Sale was the only primary school in Greater Manchester to receive a CPF grant (Whalley Range High School was the only successful secondary).

Freda Eyden has been Environmental Projects Co-ordinator at the school since 1995.

Also a governor, Freda lives locally and walks to work, "Bikes used to be chained to the front railings so I applied for the grant. We matched the £2,752 award with our own fundraising."

Even in early February there were four bikes – plus one scooter – in the shed. Five-year-old twins Joshua and Jessica ride to school accompanied by their Mum. "In the summer term the shed will be full. It complements the Cycle Proficiency training the Y6 pupils receive before they leave us for secondary school," added Freda. The position of the shed is not ideal – it is open to the prevailing (wet) westerly winds. Sadly the contractors did not fit Sheffield stands but wheel grabbers.

Woodheys is only one of four in Trafford to be granted Eco School status. It received a Green Flag Award in 2001. Despite this success Head Teacher Laura Daniels is struggling to find the cash to pay Freda and other support staff. Frustrated with Trafford Council she has lobbied MP Graham Brady and appeared on the front page of the Sale and Altrincham Messenger.



Are you a parent, teacher or school governor ?

The DfT sponsored Cycling Projects Fund is finished but other schools interested in supporting sustainable transport with bike parking and lockers can benefit from the **Travelling to School** initiative launched by the Department for Education and Science. Grants will be available to all maintained schools (and Voluntary Aided but not independent schools) with an authorised travel plan in place. Each school will receive £3,750 (primary), £5,000 (secondary) plus £5 per pupil.

BUT HURRY local education authorities must return the claim form to DfES by 30 April for grants to be included in schools' budgets in June.

For information contact:
Hugh Jackson 01325 391249
Email: school.travel@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Don't turn young cyclists into young offenders

On 23 April Parliament will debate a Private Members Bill tabled by Eric Martlew (Labour MP for Carlisle) which will make it an offence for under-16s to cycle unless wearing a helmet. The law would apply almost anywhere and could criminalise virtually anyone who allowed them to cycle: parents, guardians, teachers, youth activity providers, cycle shop staff and 16 year old friends.

The Bill is opposed by the CTC, Sustrans, National Cycling Strategy Board, British Cycling, Association of Cycle Traders, the British Medical Association and the Royal College of General Practitioners. All believe that helmet compulsion would be enormously damaging to the future of cycling. At a time of acute concern about Britain's obesity epidemic, the last thing we should be doing is legislating children and young teenagers into car-dependant sedentary life styles.

Five reasons why helmet-wearing must not be forced on young cyclists:

- 1) *Cycling is healthy and should be encouraged*
- 2) *Cycling gets safer the more people do it*
- 3) *Imposing helmet-wearing stops people cycling*
- 4) *The safety case for imposing helmet wearing is far from clear*
- 5) *Laws must be reasonable and enforceable*

Please write to your MP at House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA to assure he/she will not support the Protective Headgear for Young Cyclists Bill.

More information at
www.ctc.org.uk
www.cyclehelmets.org

Write today, Write now...

Manchester Council shamed for blocking bike lanes - during council meeting

According to the Council website, "Manchester encourages cycling as an environmentally friendly mode of transport and offers a network of cycle routes." For this network to be effective, it is crucial that they are kept clear at all times and not used as parking spaces.

Therefore why do elected members use the few existing cycle lanes around the Town Hall as supplementary parking during Council meetings? Which of the following modes of transport were used by councillors attending today's meeting:

- a) Public transport
- b) Foot c) Bicycle ?

Vincent Walsh asked the above question in the Town Hall on 3 March at Public Question Time preceding a full council meeting.

Val Stevens, Executive Member for Planning & Environment rose to reply, defending the Council's Green Travel Planning.

My supplementary question followed, "Do council officers receive the full 20 per mile tax-free allowance for business bike use." Val hopes to include this in their new proposals. Leader and Crumpsall cyclist Richard Leese, plays the role of David Dimbleby. "If you want to make a speech, get elected," was his riposte to my observation, "I am dismayed that

less than a third of the elected members bothered to attend Question Time - and none declared their cycling credentials."

The whole experience had Kafkaesque overtones that would have delighted conspiracy theorists. Town Hall staff misdirected us to the gallery - where we were kept waiting outside the (wrong) door for 20 minutes. As a questioner I should have been led to the main floor and given a microphone. Outside the chamber Sophie Evans' bike lane on Lloyd Street was blocked by an unidentified councillor's car. Having failed to get satisfaction inside she took



pleasure in ticketing the windscreen (see below). The next council meeting is post-election on Mid-Summers Eve, 23 June. Anybody want to try again? **Questions must be submitted seven days in advance to r.fielding@notes.manchester.gov.uk 0161 234 3042**

Saddle Bag

Anyone for Smoke-Free Dublin?

Come and Share the Craic at the **Cycle Campaigning Conference** in the Irish capital **Saturday 1 May 2004**

Friday night Critical Mass
Great (Danish) Speakers
Samba Dancing on Saturday
Sunday Guided Rides around city

Travel options: Sea Cat from Liverpool / Fly from Manchester
Accommodation: Irish comrades

Register with CTC 0870 8730060 by Friday 16 April

Fee: £21.50 / £13.50

More info: 0161 248 9150

My Law for Today

In January Radio 4 invited listeners to submit a new law to be taken up by a MP lucky in the ballot for Private Members Bills

Your editor emailed the following.....
The national decline in cycling is a major threat to public health. All children must be offered accredited, on-road cycle training before they leave primary school. When they arrive at secondary school, pupils must be provided with adequate secure sheltered cycle parking.

But the winner was:
All citizens should have the right to use force to defend their property (the Tony Martin law)

NOTICE OF INCONSIDERATE PARKING

You are parked illegally in a cycle lane

The **Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign** is lobbying for better cycle facilities so that more people can use their bikes to commute, shop and exercise - reducing congestion and pollution.

Parking in bike lanes endangers cyclists by forcing them to pull out into the traffic stream.

The person leaving this notice reserves the right to report your registration number to the authorities.

Bike Week 2004

12 - 20 June

Find out more...

www.bikeweek.org.uk

Manchester's Mark gives way to Mark and takes his Paint Pot to Bolton

Manchester cyclists are losing one Mark and gaining another as Edwards gives way to Stephenson in the role of de facto Cycle Officer.



Edwards came from Bury in 2002 to succeed Steve Essex and is moving on to a more senior traffic engineer ("don't call me a cycle officer") position in Bolton.

Will Bolton be blessed with pedestrians painted on every patch of pavement shared with cyclists? The question is prompted by the 3 km artwork that is the Altrincham Road Cycle Way. This jewel in the crown of Manchester Cycle Strategy lies on the Trafford border. An ambitious plan to take bikes off the busy A560 between Princess Parkway and Shaftesbury Avenue has been marred by poor design and shoddy contractors. Excessive use of track markings force cyclists to give way to walkers and motorists at too frequent intervals. Most absurd is the preference given to motorists leaving the Park Medical Centre – shamed by its absence of cycle parking. Mark E is always willing to

debate and defend his paint :

“Give ways are sited with regard to safety issues for pedestrians or at side road crossings where there is potential conflict. Changing side road priorities requires compliance on all parties. I make a judgment on what is practical but you are quite right that in hierarchy and PR terms it is the wrong way around.

“We need to educate cyclists as to what the signs mean. Pedestrians can be a law unto themselves. The onus is on cyclists to make pedestrians aware of their presence (sounds like a case for distributing large Chinese bells to cyclists), pedestrians have right of way over what is still a footway.”

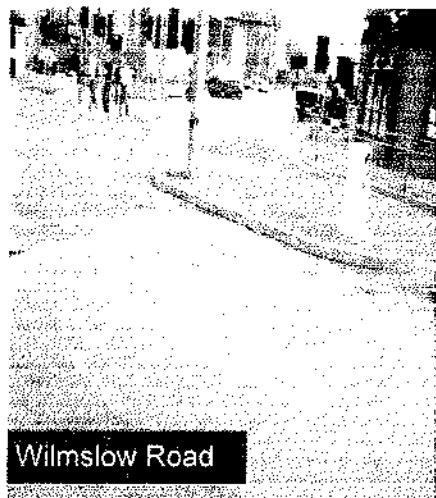
Mark is stating the law as it stands and implying the Council must reduce risks from litigious pedestrians. Should there not be a wider debate about shared use of off-road space? Our European neighbours whether in medieval Italian towns or modern Dutch cities have substantial car-free areas where walkers and cyclists happily co-exist.

Kerbs along the route have not been correctly dropped, making for a very rough ride. One bus shelter close to Moor Road has been provided with a ludicrous by-pass around a hedge. This dangerous blind spot could have been prevented by moving the shelter nearer the roadside. “Too expensive,” claims Mark. The Council revenue budget is inadequate only allowing weekly sweeping of the track where glass builds up daily. “I doubt the new COPECAT (Concise Pedestrian & Cycle Audit) - in effect from April 2004 - would have made any difference to the scheme as the underlying design and reasons were solid,” he asserted.

An opportunity was lost at the eastern end of the cycle track. The official route ends at the Princess Parkway roundabout, cutting back sharply into the muddy wood, following the edge of the park northwards to Wythenshawe Road. Far better would be to tarmac the edge of the carriageway for about 50 metres until the slip road joins a bike track along the side of Princess Parkway - tyre prints indicate it is the route of choice by cyclists. Why did the City Council not collaborate with the Highway Agency who owns the Trunk road?

Now that the speed limit on the A560 has dropped from 40 to 30 mph cyclists may be inclined to risk the occasional pothole rather than the constant risk of broken glass and undropped kerbs. If Manchester Council has so much spare paint it would be better used on the faded cycle lanes and ASLs of Wilmslow Road between Palatine and Wilbraham Road. And while there, please install a new ASL at Palatine Road pinch point and some Sheffield Stands at Withington Library to replace those wretched wheel grabbers.

Farewell and Good Luck Mark. We will miss your combative spirit – and those flamboyant ties.



The case for discrete Cycling Officer time at the local authority level is the key to delivering the aims of the National Cycling Strategy in 2012 and beyond. *Paul Brufell reports from Oldham*

When I joined Oldham MBC in August 2002 as a transportation officer I anticipated cycling would play only a small role in my overall job. Fortunately my arrival coincided with the adoption of the Oldham Cycling Strategy.

Within a couple of weeks I was spending most of my time dealing with cycling. My manager began to appreciate the real possibility of delivering significant benefits for cyclists.

I now spend 75 per cent of my time dealing with cycling - more in one year than in my five years at St. Helens Council. I have been able to take forward a number of issues that has given cycling in Oldham significant momentum. However, it will be four years before every aspect of the Oldham Cycling Strategy has been initiated, 15 years before many are complete - such as the Oldham Cycle Network and Cycling Projects at Schools.

From my experience in three authorities it is clear that providing sufficient staff resources dedicated to cycling at the local level is the key to achieving the aims of the National Cycling Strategy. I would have great difficulty in taking forward the Oldham Cycling Strategy if I was spending less of my time dealing with cycling. I can understand the

frustration of officers in councils that have very limited time to spend on cycling issues. They are faced with an almost impossible task. The National Cycling Strategy Board must address this predicament faced by many local authorities. One remedy is to provide councils with four year Bursaries, similar to the Travel Plan Bursary Posts. This would enable authorities to kick-start their cycling strategies.

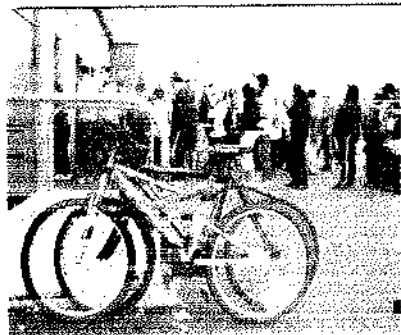
2) *Work with planners, the PTE and highway designers to produce schemes that are more cycle-friendly and designs that can incorporate cycling schemes.* This would help reduce the level of capital expenditure for schemes because funding would not be required later to address design flaws that created problems for cyclists. Incorporating cycle schemes within the original design is cheaper than altering the scheme and.....
3) *Compose funding bids.*



Having worked in St. Helens for five years, where I experienced little political support or interest for cycling, I have been surprised at the level of commitment to cycling in Oldham. The Oldham Cycling Forum is chaired by a councillor and the Leader of the Council takes a keen interest. At a recent Overview & Scrutiny Committee

With sufficient time the Cycling Officer can address the problem of inadequate funding for cycling infrastructure in three ways:
1) *Prepare a cycle network master plan.* This enables sections to be incorporated within developments, regeneration projects and other schemes. Without a network master plan, funding opportunities are lost.

meeting there was unanimous praise and support for developing and maintaining the £12 Million Oldham Cycle Network. With this level of political and public support I am confident I will continue to commit significant time to the Oldham Cycling Strategy.
Paul Brufell
Oldham Council Cycling Officer



Around the Grounds - JJB Stadium, Wigan Athletic

Wigan Athletic moved from Springfield Road in 2000 but clearly left the bike racks behind. Now they ground share with Wigan Warriors. Neither club do much to encourage cycling. A pity because the stadium is circled by bike lanes and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal provides traffic-free access. A steward invited us to chain our bikes to the wire fence and she would keep an eye on them. Instead we found some empty bars (left). Ten minutes into the match a tannoy announced, "Two red and blue bikes are blocking the exit from Gate C - please remove them." *Final Score: Wigan 1 Ipswich Town 0*

'Tis the season to be signing Queenie.....Salford lagging

Route 6 of the Sustrans-promoted National Cycle Network runs from Windsor in Berkshire to Keswick in the Lake District via Manchester and Preston. The complete route is due to open in Summer 2005 but the section between Agecroft and Bury was first signed in late 2002.



Rob Trueblood is a volunteer ranger with Sustrans. He

suggested that a trip to inspect the signs was due. In what is becoming a regular festive season event, Rob and Cos Harnasz were joined by Chris Wilkinson and Rob Sawyer from Bury MBC on a cold but sunny 29 December.

We were pleasantly surprised to find that all the signs erected the previous year were still in place. The ones that had been attacked had put up a stubborn resistance. We replaced one or two of the plastic off road signs, re-orientated the odd road sign and added a few adhesive ones to remove doubt. Suggestions were made about better locations for others.

The system for signing the National Cycle Network is described in Sustrans' Information Sheet FF26. On-road sections are signed by the Local Highway Authority in accordance with the Department for Transport's Traffic Signs Regulations and

General Directions. Off-road sections are waymarked by Sustrans-designed signs. Replacement off-road signs are supplied free of charge by Sustrans.

Despite the occasional mud, we had an enjoyable trip meeting walkers, cyclists, mounted police officers and landowners along the way. All were perplexed by the sight of four fluorescent men with hammers stuffed down their Christmas stockings. Next year we will invite Her Majesty.

Chris Wilkinson, Bury MBC



The Manchester Cycleway – Fallowfield Loop

Plans for an extension to the Fallowfield Loop in Chorlton are well under way. This will circumvent the present impasse at the St Werburgh's Road access (see Pothole Summer 2003) by continuing under the road bridge along an existing footpath to connect with Wilbraham Road opposite Safeways store.

At the eastern section, work will take place within the next months on upgrading the path on the former Stockport Branch Canal link from Debdale Water Park towards Openshaw. However, the high cost of upgrading the stretch of towpath along the Ashton Canal end has delayed this work.

When will there be a grand opening? Manchester City Council prefer all works connected with the Loop to be done, dusted, signed sealed and delivered before an official opening takes place. Because of the unique nature of the Loop – Britain's Longest Urban Greenway – such an event could happen outside National Bike Week (12-20 June). Shirley Acreman, Sustrans' Marketing Director, told the *Friends of the Fallowfield Loop* January meeting that Sustrans would help with publicity. Given enough notice a Sustrans' patron such as Jon Snow, Jeremy Paxman or Bill Oddie could be invited.

Meanwhile, a big social ride - designed to showcase and connect cycle routes as well as exploring some hidden countryside is taking place on Sunday 16 May. Organised in conjunction with the Mersey Valley Ranger Service the route will follow the Trans-Pennine Trail to Stockport, stopping in Reddish Vale for lunch, returning along the Fallowfield Loop. Meet at Chorlton Water Park (Maitland Avenue entrance) 10am for a 10.30am start. Total length is a leisurely 20 miles. Further details from the Sale Water Park Visitor Centre (0161 905 1100) or the Friends of the Fallowfield Loop (see back page).

CONTACTS

Bike Shops offering Discounts to GMCC Members

Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign
meets on second Monday
each month at 7 30 pm
Friends Meeting House,
Manchester followed by Real Ale
at City Arms, Kennedy Street

Friends of the Fallowfield Loop
0161 224 3843, 0161 283 7548
have a new Web Site.....
**www.cycle-routes.org/
fallowfieldloopline**

Cycling Projects
0161 745 9099
www.cycling.org.uk

Trans Pennine Trail Office
01226 772574
www.transpenninetrail.org.uk

Cyclists Touring Club
0870 873 0060
www.ctc.org.uk

A1 Cycle Spares 0161 998 2882
414-416 Palatine Road, Northenden, Manchester
A6 Cycle Warehouse, - 0161 248 5400
752-762 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester
Altrincham Bike Shack—929 9355
10 Oakfield Trading Estate, Oakfield Rd, Altrincham
Bardsleys Cycles – 0161 432 4936
482 Manchester Road Stockport
Bicycle Doctor – 0161 224 130368-
70 Dickenson Road Rusholme Manchester
Bikehouse – 0161 443 1235
177 School Lane Didsbury Manchester
Eddie McGrath Cycles, - 0161 748 2733
31 Station Road, Urmston, Trafford
Hirts Cycles – 0161 794 2000
60-62 Chorley Road Swinton Manchester
Ken Foster's Cycle Logic – 0161 881 7160
374-6 Barlow Moor Road Chorlton Manchester
Lebram – 0161 928 6600
197 Manchester Road, Broadheath Altrincham
Lebram – 0161 969 1818
172-4 Northenden Road Sale Moor
NW Mountain Bike Centre – 0161 428 3311
249 Stockport Road Cheadle
Skidmores Cycles – 0161 624 5912
37 Union St Oldham
Withington Cycles – 0161 445 3492
26 Burton Rd Withington Manchester

Local Authority	Contact	Phone	Email	Current Cycle Forum: Date & Venue
BOLTON	Kevin Toye	01204 336115	kevin.toye @bolton.gov.uk	12 May, 5 30 pm Artillery Suite, Town Hall
BURY	Chris Wilkinson	0161 253 5269	chris.wilkinson @bury.gov.uk	27 May, 7p m Bury Town Hall
MANCHESTER	Mark Stephenson	0161 455 2225	m.stephenson1@notes. manchester.gov.uk	23 June, 5 30 pm Manchester Town Hall
OLDHAM	Paul Brufell	0161 911 4360	paul.brufell @oldham.gov.uk	6 May, 6 pm Oldham Civic Centre
ROCHDALE	Dan Griffiths	01706 864374	dan.griffiths @rochdale.gov.uk	
SALFORD	Darren Findley	0161 793 3849	darren.findley @salford.gov.uk	8 June, 7 pm Swinton Civic Centre
STOCKPORT	Don Naylor	0161 474 4593	don.naylor @stockport.gov.uk	13 May, 6 pm Stockport Town Hall
TAMESIDE	Ian Butterworth	0161 342 3951	ian.butterworth @ tameside.gov.uk	19 April, 6 pm Tameside Town Hall
TRAFFORD	Paul Barrett	0161 912 4399	paul.barrett @trafford.gov.uk	Staff in transit
WIGAN	Damian Garner	01942 404 061	d.garner@wiganmbc. gov.uk	In abeyance