

THE BONTNEWYDD BYPASS – THE GOAT ROUNDABOUT - A CYCLING OR WALKING DEATH ZONE

Plans were released last year for the design of the Bontnewydd bypass and in consequence, along with others, Caernarfon & Dwyfor group of Ramblers Cymru looked at its impact on the Lon Eifion Cycleway, which is now very much a shared use route. People out for a walk, with or without a dog, pushing children in buggies, joggers, youngsters on bikes, families picking blackberries, all mixing with cyclists from near and far, some riding Lon Eifion as part of Route 8, the cycle trail from Cardiff to Holyhead. The tarmac surface of the route is also ideal for the less able, who perhaps more than most value traffic free zones. Lon Eifion meets the bypass at the start of the new trunk road, the Goat roundabout in Llanwnda, and it is here that the bypass designers appear to have been told that the safety of people was not a priority – vehicles, or cost, come first.

Currently three roads enter the roundabout, with users of Lon Eifion having to cross one, the A499 Pwllheli road. Whilst not ideal, it is the quieter of the three roads and crossing it was seen as a reasonable option when the Goat roundabout was built. The proposed Bontnewydd bypass would result in four roads entering the Goat roundabout, and the designer's 2015 solution for dealing with Lon Eifion was to route it the other way around the roundabout, so that it did not cross the new bypass. However, users of Lon Eifion would now have to cross two roads, one the much busier A487 Porthmadog trunk road, putting themselves in great danger. *Drivers who may have been travelling at 60mph on an open road, or who are accelerating out of the roundabout, would suddenly have to contend with adults and children trying to walk or cycle across the road in front of them.* Would a Welsh Government minister like to do that on foot or bike, we wondered?

After last year's campaign for a safe crossing, which culminated in Hywel Williams MP and Alun Ffred Jones AM issuing a shared press statement, it was thought that the Welsh Government would ensure that the plans were changed. Objectors had proposed putting a pedestrian/cycle bridge over the roundabout, as installed over roads elsewhere in Gwynedd. *The new bypass, a modern traffic improvement scheme, with protected crossings for otters and bats, would surely not force pedestrians and cyclists to cross two busy main roads.*

Sadly, after being told that the designers were in consultations with interested parties, but not knowing of anyone being consulted, it came as little surprise to discover that no attempt has been made to provide a safe crossing at the roundabout. Incidentally, we should not know this yet, having been told by the Public Liaison Officer for the scheme that we would have to wait for the exhibitions later in September to see if anything had changed. Some see a plot, as there would then be just three weeks to raise objections before the imposed deadline. Fortunately, one set of the documents sent to householders close to the route came our way.

Welsh Government statement: *'The existing Lon Eifion cycleway that currently crosses the A499 would be diverted around Goat Roundabout, crossing the proposed de trunked A487 and the exiting southern arm of the A487.'* (August 2016)

Exhibitions are being held at the Celtic Royal Hotel in Caernarfon on 20 & 21 September and the Meinfod Hotel in Bontnewydd on 22 & 23 September, an opportunity to have your say. We hope that you will share the concerns of all who objected last year and join us in objecting to the current proposals. All objections have to reach the Welsh Government by 13 October 2016, at Orders Branch (qA1198563), Transport, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ (Some people worry that objections are going to the department that is promoting the scheme, and might end up in a shredder, so they are keeping copies!).

If you represent a club or organisation we would be pleased to know if you are joining this campaign.

Dave Woods, Caernarfon & Dwyfor Group, Ramblers Cymru davewoods@toucansurf.com 9/9/16