

The King John Way – Long Distance Cycle Touring Route

Overview and Progress

The King John Way (KJW) has been designed to attract cycle tourists to Lincolnshire. The cycle tourism market is worth at least £500 million per year and Lincolnshire benefits from very little of this. Source https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2007\_CUK\_Economic-Benefits-Cycle-Tourism\_rpt.pdf

A large proportion of this income is enjoyed by such routes as The Cantii Way, in Kent, The Rebellion Way in Norfolk and The King Alfred Way in Wessex. These routes have been designed and promoted by Cycling UK, and can attract 50,000 visitors per year, each.

When approached regarding the KJW, CUK responded that they have no budget for this. Not willing to accept defeat, Roy decided to lead this project himself. The KJW is being designed to avoid the shortcomings he encountered while riding the Cantii Way.

Target Launch date

The plan to launch with a mass ride is on track for the early May Bank Holiday weekend 1st to 5th May 2025.

Why The King John Way?

Most will know that unpopular King John spent the final tumultuous days of his life in or close to our county. From losing his treasure in The Wash (believed to be present day Sutton Bridge) to allegedly being poisoned while staying at Swineshead Abbey, Lincolnshire wouldn't have been a county he would want to visit again. In the event, he didn't have to make that choice as he died soon after reaching Newark castle. Cause of death was noted as being the result of eating a 'surfeit of peaches.' Fortunately, while King John might not have been tempted to return, the region has a rich history that tourists from home and abroad can be encouraged to visit.

Accessibility and sustainability

The route has been designed with sustainable access in mind. Major rail stations can be accessed in several locations on the route. One major weakness is the restrictions placed on the number of cycles allowed on-board trains. This can vary from 0 to 4. This will place significant restrictions on tourists wishing to arrive/depart by rail. Roy has written to Gareth Davies MP requesting this be raised with the Transport Secretary, which he has confirmed as done.

Car parking

It is our aim to encourage local authorities and accommodation providers to offer free or reduced cost parking for the duration of a visit.

Route Design principles

To create a route that will provide a multi day tourist ride, including as many places of interest that will provide engagement for visitors. Roy is a qualified British Cycling Route designer so has applied as much rider safety and enrichment as possible.

The main route

The main route is 300 miles and uses existing unrestricted routes and the Sustrans NCN network. While there are off road sections, these will be 'non technical', so usable by most riding touring cycles. For those riding high end carbon frames with narrow tyres, an alternative road only route will be added. The support of Sustrans and several Lincolnshire based cyclists has been invaluable in curating the ideal route. Together we are The King John Way Group.

The route is currently being test ridden, with the Grantham to Woodhall Spa section completed. During this recce. We identified several sections that needed revision and the current route file includes these. We plan to ride the remainder of the route by the end of December 2024.

It is planned to include The Trent Vale Trail once the final off road section is completed.

Sub Routes

So that we can encourage as many visitors as possible, we are in the process of designing a number of sub routes. These will be themed and offer shorter day rides for those with limited time or energy. These will include:

The Templar Trail

The Tennyson Trail

Lincolnshire Wolds

Bomber County Trail

The Civil War Trail

The Wars of the Roses ride

The Vale of Belvoir

The Humber Bridge

Lincoln City

All routes will be accessed through a Ride With GPS link. This will enable visitors to download gpx or fit files as well as transfer the route on a paper map.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/49354342> This is the new link

Ride with GPS has generously donated free access to their 'Organizational' facility. This allows for much greater flexibility as well as the ability to add points of interest. Roy has made good progress adding these and will continue to do so as information is gained. If there is anything obviously missed, please advise. In particular:

* Climb locations and % incline
* Cafe stops where cyclists are supported with basic tools and pump
* Accommodation with secure overnight cycle storage and tools as above
* Visitor attractions
* Free parking facilities

Local Authority Support

Apart from one Grantham Town and SKDC Councillor, Tim Harrison, I have received no support from SKDC or LCC. While Cllr. Richard Davies expressed his interest, the officer he passed me on to was too busy with other projects to help.

For this reason, Roy took the decision to exclude local authorities unless they offered meaningful and unfettered support.

Accommodation

We are inviting accommodation providers to be included on the website, free of charge. The minimum criteria for inclusion is that they offer lockable, covered, overnight bike storage.

Camping

Official campsites will be listed

Funding

This project is being self funded in terms of time and effort by the KJW Group. Our desire is to make this a free resource for tourists and tourist providers alike. There is an option for a guide book to be published, but that is currently outside of the scope of this project.

Promotion

The route will be promoted through the 'Ride with Roy' YouTube channel, together with press releases to the cycling and local media. It is also hoped that prominent cycling YouTube creators, such as Richard Lake, The English Cyclist and Amy Cycling Adventures will promote and take part. These creators are long distance cyclists and it is hoped they will complete the route in one ride. Unfortunately Richard can't make it but has provided valuable advice and will check some of the route

Launch Event(s)

It is planned to hold an official launch event where as many cyclists as possible will ride all or part of the route. We could potentially have several start points, so we can include as many riders as possible and invite media from all areas. Towns wishing to host a start point will be required to make a meaningful effort to show support.

SKDC are interested in supporting a launch event, in Grantham, on 3rd May 2025. To accommodate as many cyclists as possible, and feature towns on the route, it is envisaged that multiple events will be encouraged, to start simultaneously. To ensure that the event provides value for money, SKDC require some idea of numbers. It would be useful if we could get some feedback on which clubs will be supporting us.

Website

With no funding or offers of support, Roy Redman is creating a website for the project. This is coming on well, with the tourist attractions currently being added. Help would be appreciated from anyone with web building expertise to check it over and add polish.

Web hosting has been offered, free of charge, by Cllr. Harrison on his 'Grantham Together' website.

Contact Details:

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Hello Ian,

You never know, you might still be needing those studded tyres!

I've sent all committee members the King John Way article so the likes of Ian, Terry and John can be well informed ahead of any discussion.

Also see attached minutes of our last meeting which has just been sent over by Jean.

Looking ahead, I've added the York Rally Festival to our Lincolnshire website. Having been a popular outing for a number of members over the years (several camping throughout), it hasn't seemed to attract to much interest since Covid-19. For a number of reasons. With increased support and range of activities, I'm hoping that a few of us from the Louth contingent will head across on the day. Trevor always does. I will of course bring this to the attention of Cycling UK Lincolnshire at the committee meeting.

Finally for now, when visiting my brother in Poole a week or so ago, the train passed through Guildford. Easy enough for me to get to although I'd need to get a bus to HQ itself. Whether I'll get round to visiting I'm not sure. I'd be interested to hear if at some stage you are to visit.

Kind Regards,

Tim.