

Minutes of a meeting of Hamsterley Trailblazers held on Monday 7 November 2005 at 6.30pm in the Forest Classroom

Present: Ollie Graham (in the chair)
Vicky Chilcott
Dave Church
Mat Clark
Peter Cook – Dale Bike Hire
Chris Goldsworthy
Craig Hunter (Descend)
Alex Maclennan (FC)
Ivan Pratt (Iron Horse)
Bill Pike
Martin Stout (Specialist Bikes)
Neil Taylor (FC)

Apologies for Absence were received from Marie Brown, Jamie Butcher, Kathryn and Neil Gander.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2005 were approved as a correct record.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

2.1 Vandalism Ollie said FC were looking for further information from the police on the person in question. A letter of apology had still not been received.

3. Statement of Accounts The Statement of Accounts for the end of October 2005 was presented together with latest membership details. It was noted the Registration Form had now been amended to include a Gift Aid section. Discussion took place on fund raising ideas including production and sale of bike specific tops, holding of events, a car boot sale for bike bits and it was agreed to investigate these further. Alex said that Singletrack were discussing holding an event at the Forest in 2006 which could be useful for fundraising.

4. Phase I An excellent Official Opening for Phase I had taken place on Monday 31 October with good TV, radio and press coverage. The Trailblazer's ride and BBQ on Sunday 6 November had been equally successful with around 40 cyclists on the ride and more people coming for the BBQ and Skills Loop session in the afternoon.

It was noted that after such a good initial 'outing' and all the recent rain, there was the need to check the new trails and identify areas of weakness needing attention, particularly where machinery had been used at the last minute eg fixing the see-saw. The fire road up to the Skills Area also needed urgent attention. Alex said he would arrange necessary materials from FC and he would also arrange for repairs to the Fire Road. It was agreed to organise a volunteer trailbuilding session as soon as possible to carry out the snagging work.

5. Phase 2 Alex outlined FC plans for Hamsterley, Kielder and Chopwell and said an FC Project Team had been meeting to discuss Hamsterley, including provision of a new Visitor Centre. Alex stressed FC were committed to Phase 2 cycle trails at Hamsterley and a Visitor Centre but that FC did not, themselves, have funding for such developments. FC was, however, able to provide funding in kind and was happy to work with Trailblazers, TDC and TML on funding bids for the project. Alex said FC hoped to go for outline planning permission for the Visitor Centre in March 2006. Alex said that FC had been working with Descend and that a Big Lottery bid was being made for the Downhill course and a Community Room (that could form part of the new Visitor Centre development.)

6. Bike Count Bill said that for future funding bids to be successful it would be necessary to demonstrate increased usage by cyclists as a result of Phase 1 trail development. Discussion took place on organising another visitor survey in conjunction with FC and it was agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting.

7. Ripon Motor Rally Neil asked Vicky to email Robin with the email addresses of Trailblazers acting as marshalls.

8. Website and Wiggle Link It was noted a link had been made from the Trailblazer website to the on-line bike store, Wiggle. Trailblazers would receive 10% of the purchase price of goods purchased from Wiggle by anyone accessing the Wiggle website via Trailblazers. Vicky said she would email members to ask them to access Wiggle in this way.

9. Child Protection Policy Bill drew attention to the need to produce a child protection policy prior to developing a teaching and coaching role with children. Bill said he would draw up a draft policy for discussion at the next meeting.

10. Bike Bowes Bill said Durham County Council were producing a leaflet on a mountain bike ride through Bowes and were looking for people to test ride it. If Trailblazers could do this, our logo would be printed on the route. Ollie, Mat, Chris and Dave agreed to ride and comment on it.

9. Calendar of Events

- Sunday 4 December 10.30am – ride from Hamsterley Car Park
- Sunday 18 December 10.30am– ride with Swaledale Outdoor Centre from Hamsterley Forest Car Park
- Thursday 22 December – 7.30pm, Cross Keys, Hamsterley, Fell Runners Christmas party – Trailblazers invited – book in advance. Night ride beforehand? (See www.durhamfellrunners.org.uk)
- Wednesday 28 December 3pm - Night Ride from Hamsterley Car Park followed by a food and drink at Vicky's house ('bring a bottle..')
- Sunday 8 January – 10.30am Hamsterley Car Park - New Year Ride to Eggleston – with lunch at the Moorcock Inn.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting It was agreed the next meeting be held on Monday 5 December 2005 at 6.30pm

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