

Minutes of a meeting of Hamsterley Trailblazers held on Monday 5 October 2009 at 6.30pm in the Cross Keys Pub, Hamsterley

Trustees Present: Andy Samanjoul (in the Chair)
Vicky Chilcott (Secretary)
Ollie Graham (Vice Chairman)
Bill Pike (Treasurer)

Members Present: Marie Brown
Mat Clark
Fiona Ewing
Gary Ewing
Andrew Frith
Kath Gander
Neil Gander
Chris Goldsworthy
David Nicholson

In attendance: Neil Taylor (FC)

Apologies for absence were received from Alison Park, Kaye Graham and Alex MacLennan.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2009 were approved as a correct record.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

- **See Saw** - Dave Nicholson offered to try and remove the bearing.
- **Cycle Clothing** – Andy said he would contact Peter Wilson and Dave N said he would look at new designs for pre-Xmas orders. (Logo needed – Andy would send to Dave.)
- **Trailblazer Mugs** - Chris would obtain remainder of order and send invoice to Bill (when received.)

3. Statement of Accounts and Membership The Statement of Accounts to the end of August 2009 was received and discussed together with club membership details for the same period. Noted trailer needed to be revalued in Accounts – AGREED to depreciate at 25% per annum to written down value of £1. (Action – Bill.)

AGREED – leave club membership fees for 2010/11 at 2009/10 levels ie £5 individual, £7.50 family. Neil to check on 2010 FC permit position for Trailblazer volunteers. Also AGREED – give members option of paying via Internet banking – Bill to provide account details so this can appear on membership application forms. AGREED – publicise British Cycling membership benefits to members. Andy to investigate CTC member benefits as possible alternative. AGREED – no point rejoining IMBA as no longer offered trailbuilding insurance. AGREED – Mat to prepare 2010/11 membership cards and anyone joining now would have membership valid until 31 March 2011.

4. Member Benefits and Feedback AGREED to produce list of Trailblazers Member benefits, including British Cycling/CTC benefits. Also AGREED – to carry out member survey to find out what members want to see from the club. (Post-meeting action – Mat volunteered to do this.)

5. Review of Constitution Bill outlined the current unincorporated status of Trailblazers and recent Charity Commission changes that would enable the club to become an Incorporated Body without needing to register accounts etc with Companies House. This would enable the club and its trustees/officers to enjoy the same protection available to limited companies, without the cost of audits and company house filing procedures. It was proposed by Bill, seconded by Vicky and AGREED that this recommendation be made to members at the 2010 AGM in April.

6. Coach and Leader Training Detailed discussion took place on the different coach and leader training course options currently available (paper prepared by Andy.) Noted, British Cycling offered coaching courses but no MTB Leader training (they recommended SMBLA course because they had had input into these.) SMBLA and CTC offered MTB Leader training, but no coaching courses. AGREED – Trailblazers needed a range of people trained in different areas to cover monthly and weekly club rides, Kids Go Ride and coaching sessions. AGREED – to set up sub-committee comprising Andy, Olly, Bill, Vicky, Marie and Neil Gander to produce recommendations for HTB training policy and funding applications.

7. Web Forum Detailed discussion took place on problems over recent use of web forum. Original Terms and Conditions of Use had been lost when website was hacked – these had been re-instated, but Committee had been asked by Moderators to re-examine and reaffirm T&Cs. AGREED – Vicky discuss suggested new stronger T&Cs with Craig, including proposal to restrict usage to signed up Trailblazer members with read only access to others. Also AGREED to appoint Andrew Frith as an additional moderator and to appoint Neil Gander and Gary Ewing as Committee Contact members for posting disputes/deletes/suspensions etc.

5. Complaints Bill gave a detailed report on his investigation into member complaints. On the subject of inappropriate use of forums – postings on the Trailblazers forum were found to have been correctly removed by moderators and steps were in hand to prevent a similar re-occurrence (see above.) Specified committee members would have over-sight of forum activity to support moderators. Postings on Facebook were noted to be outwith the control of Trailblazers. On the question of training – an audit trail of email and other correspondence clearly showed a safety issue was raised by members and the correct procedure was followed to address this and put appropriate training in place. Interested people were contacted, following open presentation and discussion of training at HTB meetings, including the AGM. On the subject of member behaviour, Bill was still investigating this matter and would report back in due course.

6. Trailbuilding An update was given on trailbuilding progress and it was noted work was about to start on the latest part of the Red trail (Section 7.) The contract had again been awarded to local contractor, Alan Patterson, with Pete Laing carrying out design work. The section fell into 2 parts of swoopy single track – from the Radio Mast down to 5 Lane Ends and from here, through some regenerative trees into more mature trees lower down. Factored into the tender was machine support for all trailbuilding sessions for 1 year. Any additional trailbuilding would require fresh funding.

An update on the overall Hamsterley Forest redevelopment scheme was given and it was noted that due to the current economic situation, ONE was not in a position to give any funding until 2014. Alex was trying to get ONE agreement that what had already been spent counted towards the larger scheme for match funding purposes.

Discussion took place on further trailbuilding funding and support including, in particular, a request that FC equipment be made available at trailbuilding sessions (eg tipper truck which at present Olly had to bring from Groundwork's offices at Crook, instead of using FC one on site.) Also, possible FC support for training on trailbuilding or first aid – especially if this could be arranged in-house with FC staff. Neil AGREED to discuss with Alex. Bill suggested looking at ways of raising revenue to fund more trailbuilding. Olly said the Future Jobs Fund for 18 – 20 year olds was a possibility to explore.

7. Section 13 Opening – 12 September 2009 It was noted Section 13 had been formally opened on Saturday 12 September. A BBQ had been held to mark the occasion and the route was used as part of the GMSR the following day.

8. 7th GMSR – 13 September 2009 Around 60 riders and walkers had taken part in the 7th GMSR on Sunday 13 September 2009 and it was hoped to raise £1500 for Macmillan Cancer Support when all funding was received. It was noted the date had clashed with a number of other cycling related events, including the Tour of Britain and this had affected entry numbers. Discussion took place on an approach by Durham County Council's 'Big Ride' to combine forces in 2010 to stage an off-road ride at Hamsterley and it was thought this might be an effective way of organising the charity ride next year. AGREED Olly discuss further with Ed Tutty, Durham 'Big Ride.'

9. Sunday Telegraph Article – 13 September 2009 Noted that Olly had recently taken a Sunday Telegraph journalist for cycle coaching and riding in the Forest and that this had been the subject of an excellent article about Hamsterley and Trailblazers in the Sunday Telegraph on 13 September.

10. Fundraising Various suggestions were discussed, in particular a suggestion by Dave Nicholson to organise a XC/Dowhill Camping Weekend at Hamsterley in 2010. AGREED – Dave put together detailed proposals and suggested date. Olly suggested a Duck Race at Hamsterley, possibly in the spring and it was AGREED proposals for this also be produced.

12. A & E Services – Bishop Auckland Fiona drew attention to cessation of full A & E Services at Bishop Auckland Hospital. This had now become a Walk In centre only (similar to services available at a GPs surgery.) The nearest A & E facilities were at Darlington or Durham Hospitals.
AGREED – Fiona send Vicky full details for block emailing to members.

11. Pie and Peas Supper – Neil and Kath Gander Neil and Kath offered to give a talk and film about their tandem ride from North Cape, Norway to Malta in conjunction with a Pie and Peas Supper and it was AGREED this be held at the Village Hall on 2 November, in place of the club social.

12. Halloween – Friday 30 October 2009 Volunteers were needed for the FC Halloween Event on Friday 30 October at 5pm. Vicky AGREED to email members.

13. Club Rides and 2010 Calendar of Events Dave Nicholson, Marie and Karen offered to lead the October club ride. Noted – the November Club Ride was an away ride, starting from Reeth market place. Mat requested that members be contacted to volunteer as leaders for the 2010 Club Rides and it was AGREED to discuss the 2010 Calendar of Events at the December meeting of Trailblazers.

14. Kiddy Track, Hamsterley Olly asked that consideration be given to making a kiddy friendly track at Hamsterley – AGREED consider at next meeting.

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting The next formal meeting would be held on Monday 7 December 2009 at 6.30pm, Cross Keys Pub, Hamsterley.