

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Hamsterley Trailblazers held on Monday 8 April 2013 at 6.30pm in Hamsterley Village Hall.

PRESENT

Trustees

Neil Gander (Chairman)
Olly Graham (Vice Chair)
Emma Graham (Treasurer)
Vicky Chilcott (Secretary)

Committee Members

Marie Brown
Mat Clark
Gary Ewing
Kath Gander
David Holmes
Rob Myers
Shaun Rogers
Andrew Walker

Members

Paul Allison
Fiona Ewing
Kaye Graham
J Halcyon
Andrew Jobling
Phil Martin
Geoff Morson
Rob Myers
Dan Small
Paul Stockdale
Tom Stockdale
Tracy Stockdale
Alex Talks
Davinia Walker

In Attendance: Alex MacLennan, Neil Taylor and Mark Child (FC)

1. Welcome

Neil Gander welcomed everyone to Trailblazers Annual General Meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Were received from Paul Brabbins, Emma Clark, Sarah Cleall Harding, James Dods, Lisa Jobling, Mick Richardson and Lindsey Talks.

3. Annual Report

Neil, Olly and Vicky gave a Powerpoint Presentation outlining Trailblazer achievements over the last 12 months:

- **Trailbuilding** – had continued through the help of volunteers with the completion of a new section of Red Route linking the old Descend Hut with Blackling Hole plus maintenance work on numerous sections of trails. 175 people volunteered during the year with an average attendance of 16.37 people per session. Trailbuilding plans for 2013/14 included more much needed maintenance work, a new end section to Pikes Teeth and work on a new blue trail between Pike's Teeth and Metcalfe's House.
- **Trail Name** - As a lasting tribute to founder member Dave Church, who sadly died in December 2011, it was felt fitting to name the new section of red trail to Blackling Hole after him and members were invited to submit suggestions for consideration by the committee.
- **Youth Volunteers** – The year had seen the continuation of Trailblazer youth volunteers who had helped support trailbuilding sessions and learnt core biking skills. An average of 7 local young people had attended each session. We had also worked with New College Durham in holding 7 volunteer trailbuilding days with them during the year. Many thanks were extended to all who had made the youth volunteer programme possible.
- **Chrome Gnome Award** – went to Vicky Chilcott for her back office work over the year as Secretary. Congratulations and thanks!
- **Youth Coaching** – A £10,000 grant from SITA had been secured to continue the development of the youth section. Summer coaching sessions had been held on Tuesday evenings and in 2013 on the first Saturday of each month. Ages ranged from 4 to 12 years old and sessions were based around the development of core mtb skills using the British Cycling 'Go Ride' programme. This enabled several young riders to successfully take part in the final round of Dan Small's North East XC MTB Race series at Hamsterely.
- **Women's Rides** – evening rides for women were held once a fortnight from Easter to September 2012 and several day rides also took place at weekends.

- **Club Rides** – monthly club rides were held throughout the year with different members leading them. Wednesday night rides continued to be held weekly.
- **Hamsterley Racing Section** – To help support the more adventurous members, Dan Small had created a Racing Section and regular interval training coaching sessions were now being held on Tuesday nights with an average of 10 people attending per session.
- **Duck Race & BBQ** – Some 1000 ducks were thrown off Pooh Stick Bridge on 13 May 2012 raising £398 for Trailblazer funds plus £350 in prizes.
- **1-2-1 Race Weekend, 1 & 2 September 2012** – 52 riders from all over the country participated in the 3rd 1-2-1 Race at Hamsterley. After camping out in the forest on Friday night, riders took part in a 4 lap cross country race on the Saturday, then using the same bike they competed in a timed Downhill race on the Sunday. Orange Mountain Bikes again sponsored the race and Red Ape gave technical support.

3. Member Benefits

- Help create some of the best single track trails in the country
- Coaching sessions and club rides
- Reduced annual parking permit at Hamsterley (£35 instead of £40) or free annual Hamsterley permit for 3 trailbuilding sessions per annum or other voluntary help. Or free annual permit for Northern Forests for 5 trailbuilding sessions per annum (Hamsterley, Kielder, Whinlatter, Grizedale and Gisburn.)
- Discount on holidays, skills courses, weekend breaks, instructor courses, cycle shops
- Opportunity to be part of a social group of like-minded riders on organised rides and social activities.

4. Future Plans and Diary Dates 2013

- Continue to build the Red Route! Trailbuilding every 3rd Saturday 10am
- Club Rides every 2nd Sunday 10.30am start from WoodNWheels
- Night rides every Wednesday – 7pm outside the Information Centre with a pint at the Cross Keys Pub afterwards
- Female evening bike rides from Tuesday 16 April at 6.30pm and fortnightly until September 2013
- Race Coaching every Tuesday at 6pm
- Duck Race and BBQ – 12 May 2013 from 1.30pm
- Female Specific Coaching Sessions with Helen Gaskell – April 2013
- North East XC MTB Race Series 2013 – 1st race 20 April at Thorneyford Farm. Seven other rounds with two at Hamsterley on 24 May and 7 September.

- Reeth away ride on 9 June 2013, led by David Holmes
- Trailblazer 10th Anniversary Celebrations – Sunday 14 July – suggestions please!! (These included a BBQ, riding all the trails at Hamsterley, a music event, mtb film, picnic cinema and naming a permanent feature in the forest after Trailblazers.)
- Ted Liddle, IMBA to lead away ride on Sunday 8 September
- Glentress HTB Weekend Away – 27, 28 & 29 September 2013.

Particular thanks went to all the funding and other organisations with whom we had worked during the past year and who had continued to help raise the profile of Hamsterley including Groundwork, Dunhouse Quarry, County Durham Council, Forestry Commission, SITA, New College Durham, British Cycling, LocalGiving.com, A D Engineering, Teesdale Mountain Rescue, WoodNWheels, Orange Bikes and Red Ape.

Neil Gander proposed the Annual Report for 2012 be adopted, this was seconded by Gary Ewing and **AGREED** by members.

5. Annual Accounts 20 and Independent Examiners Report

Emma Johnston presented the Treasure's Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2012. Neil Gander proposed the accounts be adopted, this was seconded by Kathryn Gander and **AGREED** by members.

5. Election of Officers

The following appointments were made:

- Chair – Neil Gander (proposed by Olly Graham and seconded by Gary Ewing)
- Vice Chair – Olly Graham (proposed by Neil Gander and seconded by Vicky Chilcott)
- Secretary – Vicky Chilcott (proposed by Emma Graham and seconded by Neil Gander)
- Treasurer – Emma Johnston (Vicky Chilcott and seconded by Fiona Ewing)

6. Election of Committee Members

The following members were elected to the Committee: Mat Clark, James Dods, Gary Ewing, Kath Gander, David Holmes, Geoff Morson, Rob Myers, Shaun Rogers and Andrew Walker.

7. Report from Alex MacLennen, Forestry Commission

On behalf of the Forestry Commission Alex MacLennen asked to address the meeting and expressed appreciation for the achievements and commitment shown by Trailblazers over the last 10 years. Alex outlined the difficulties faced by Forestry Commission over the last 12 months including funding and staffing cuts plus closure of the forest shop. On the positive side, Alex said the forest classroom had recently been refurbished and plans were in hand to substantially improve the café. Alex said FC wished to work with Trailblazers on

a new blue grade trail as a priority and offered to support the 10th HTB anniversary celebrations.

8. Close of Meeting

Neil Gander thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.