

Dorset Cyclists' Network Chairman's report 2014

Introduction

This year we have welcomed new members to the posts of Membership Secretary, Treasurer and Coordinators for Blandford (with Sturminster Newton,) Dorchester and Wimborne. I sincerely thank our outgoing Treasurer Michael Woodhall who over the past 6 years, with a full business life, has overseen the process of making DCN a company limited by guarantee and kept a careful eye on our finances and budgets.

Finance

DCN still has a healthy balance, enabling us to use funds to encourage members to enhance cycling safety by offering cash back on purchases of bells, mirrors, reflective clothing and the cycling skills book "How to be a Better Cyclist." Our income is boosted by the generosity of many members who voluntarily pay more than the basic annual subscription., and by the low fees we charge for advertising in the newsletter and on the website.

Membership

The new Membership Secretary has been checking and updating the membership database, which needed weeding and verifying whether failures to renew were intentional or not. The number of subscriptions is 335 representing a total of 625 cyclists. 120 subscribers download their newsletter from the web site, saving a great deal of time for the membership secretary in stuffing envelopes. 50 newsletters are delivered by hand by DCN volunteers. The annual saving on postage and stationery is around £275. About 270 subscriptions are paid by standing order which also saves much time for the treasurer. During the year the committee decided to try and encourage more members to subscribe this way by raising the fee to £7 p.a. for payment by cheque or cash from 1 October 2014.. We also changed the timing of the membership year so that fees payable by 1 October now cover the following calendar year from 1 January to 31 December.

Also during the year, thanks to adequate funds, we have been able to have DCN membership cards professionally printed, and to produce a circular car sticker to promote DCN , which will be distributed free in September 2104, and is designed to replace the car tax disc which from 1 October 2014 no longer needs to be displayed.

County Committee changes

Membership Secretary: Dave Busler took over from the late Peter Watkins, in October 2013.

Treasurer: Phil Wilson took over from Michael Woodhall on 1 April 2014

Blandford & Sturminster Newton: Dilys Gartside moved to Dorset from Southampton where she had worked for their cycling campaign.

Wimborne : Judy Windwood took over in February 2014.

Developments in various branches

Dorchester: After an absence on other business for 2 years, we are happy that Roland Tarr has resumed as Coordinator as well as having been elected Chairman of Wessex CTC.

Ferndown: Last year DCN Ferndown contributed to the Town Council traffic and transport discussion but recently these have been confined to the problem of HGVs in the town. However DCC have confirmed that DCN proposals are still "on the table" and it is hoped they can eventually be implemented.

Sherborne: Cycle parking has been installed in the town, and ASLs on the A30 repainted. Midweek social rides now in their third year.

Sturminster Newton. Since Dilys took over as Coordinator in January 2014, Sturminster Newton Council Amenities committee responded positively to her view that the town lacked cycle parking in the town. She held a meeting for local cyclists on 20 May discuss developing a local branch, has run Bikeability courses at local primary schools, and given adult cycling skills training under the scheme introduced by DCC at her suggestion.

Weymouth & Portland: Thanks to suggestions by Ken and Anne, there have been several improvements to cycle facilities, including the link to Budmouth College, improvements to Portland Beach Road, completion of the route from the town centre to Southill and its extension to Manor Roundabout, and a secure bike store on Westham Bridge (which was proposed by CTC and DCN.) According to DCC figures there has been a 68% increase in cycling in Weymouth and Portland between 2006 and 2012

Wimborne: Judy's previous in forward planning at East Dorset is proving useful. She is following up the bike parking and signing proposals for Wimborne.

Campaigning

We are currently focusing on the difficulty we still experience at times through lack of consultation before DCC schemes are planned and implemented. The committee is engaged in talks with DCC officers yet again on this issue.

Conclusion

I can report once more that we have a strong committee, reinforced by the filling of key vacancies, and supported by an appreciative membership which is evidenced by the feedback to our newsletter and website, plus the additional voluntary donations many members add spontaneously to their renewal subscriptions. An increase in our advertising revenue shows also that more local cycle-related businesses also appreciate how we can support them.

Our link with the Dorset Wildlife Trust continues, and we expect soon to discuss with them how we can further our mutual interests.

By the next AGM I will have reached my 80th birthday, and it's time for DCN to start considering the future of the Chairmanship. I hope that someone will be found to bring new vision and ideas to promote cycling in Dorset.

Michael Evans