

## **Dorset Cyclists' Network**

### **Chairman's report 2015 (Draft – to be completed by 20 June 2015)**

#### **Past year's campaigning activity**

This year your committee have been hard at work watching for opportunities to improve cycling conditions.

John Grantham (Christchurch) has been inspired with ideas for putting the Dorset Health & Wellbeing Fund to good use, and representing DCN on the Dorset Local Access Forum.

Judy Windwood (Wimborne) has achieved significant increases in cycle parking facilities and has surveyed their usage to see if more are needed.

Dilys Gartside (Blandford & Sturminster Newton) is Bikeability Instructor for mid-Dorset and has had a busy time training children and adults. She hopes that her approaches to Sturminster Newton Town Council will result in cycle parking being provided as there is none at present. This Spring, Dilys launched '*Simply FABULOUS*' cycle rides for 'budding' and 'blossoming' cyclists respectively and she is also active on the North Dorset Trailway committee.

Ken Reed (acting Coordinator for Weymouth & Portland) has seen much of his campaigning rewarded in the improved conditions around Weymouth, but is continuing to press for a contraflow facility at Westham Road and improvements near Wey Valley School.

Peter Henshaw and Anna Finch (Sherborne) have seen their suggestion for a 20 mph limit in the town centre accepted by the town council, and await approval by County. They are also seeking more cycle parking in the town.

John Thraves (Purbeck) continues to encourage cycling with regular summer rides, and promotes cycling for the disabled. He played a supportive role in the installation of shared paths on the A351 route, but hopes that greater use will be made of them by cyclists.

Ken Cook (Ferndown) operates a busy schedule of highly popular cycle rides, occasionally involving overnight stays outside the county. Unfortunately he finds the town council unhelpful on major campaigning issues.

#### **Changes in personnel**

John Hayter is standing down this year as Coordinator for Bournemouth but will continue as our representative on the cycling forums for Bournemouth and the Airport.

Dave Busler is standing down as Membership Secretary. This has prompted us to consider making the role less complex by splitting the tasks of registering new members, dealing with renewals, maintaining the database, issuing membership cards, and distributing newsletters. The database will be maintained temporarily by Becky Windwood (daughter of our Wimborne Coordinator.)

#### **Finance**

Phil Wilson's first report, presented with the help of our accountants Marshall Beaven shows that we are still managing our funds well. They will be used for enhancing the individual safety of our members and for supporting cycling infrastructure schemes where the use of our money can be justified.

#### **Membership**

Dave Busler gives his last report today as Membership Secretary.

A small change to the membership subscription rate was announced in January 2015 after the committee had considered the extra cost of printing and posting paper newsletters, and the extra work involved in processing subscriptions paid by cheque and cash compared with that for standing orders. This caused a small amount of controversy but the response from the vast majority of members was supportive.

#### **Newsletter and website**

In addition to e-mail, these are our main channels of communication with members and the general public. Feedback from members shows that these are thought to be useful and informative. Our Facebook page is well frequented and is a useful means of reporting events and announcing information between newsletters.

#### **Conclusion**

From modest beginnings in 1992, when I founded the campaign as "Cycling in Wimborne", I believe we have made a difference to the cycling scene and this past year has been no exception. Local authorities recognise DCN as a constructive helper and critic, and we have also played an important part in increasing the numbers of people who cycle. From the start I was keen that the network branches should act independently and adopt a "bottom-up" approach", listening to and assessing members' needs and suggestions before lobbying councils on particular issues, and I am happy that DCN still operates on the same principle. I think we have a membership of high quality cyclists, who have respect for all road users and I very much hope this will continue.

In last year's report I said it was time for DCN to start considering the future of the Chairmanship. Having now reached the age of 80, I thought it only sensible recently to tell the committee that I will definitely stand down as Chairman at the 2017 AGM, after 25 years in the post.

I hope that that all members will now think seriously about finding someone to take over, and give him or her time to work alongside me in preparation.

*Michael Evans*