

Dorset Cyclists' Network Annual General Meeting 2016

Chairman's Report

The Chairmanship

As I announced at the 2015 AGM, the coming year will be my final one as Chairman after 25 years. The vacancy has been advertised in the DCN website and newsletter, and in the public press. So far no one has responded. In its next few meetings the Committee will need to decide how to fill the vacancy.

Membership

Becky Windwood, daughter of Judy (DCN Wimborne Coordinator) filled this role temporarily at a difficult time for DCN as it had been vacant for a year. In response to an appeal to members, Jill-Smith Buckland at first offered to take over but unexpected personal reasons made this impossible. Fortunately Gerry Bannister volunteered to fill the post in March this year. His first report shows that membership numbers have risen by about 3% since last year.

Finance – see separate report

DCN Branches

Gillingham & Shaftesbury

Last July, the Blackmore Vale magazine reported plans for a cycleway between these two towns. In January, Gillingham Town Council asked me if DCN wished to be involved in an initial meeting about it. Many years ago, I had contacted both towns asking if we could assist with cycling improvements in the area. The wheels of local government obviously revolve very slowly, but at last two of our local members, Colin Marsh and Colin Parks are involved in discussions on this potential project.

Poole

For most of the past year, we have had no Coordinator in this town. To try and restore DCN's link with the Borough Council, in February, DCN members in the town were invited to discuss the matter at a meeting with the Cycling Officer Tom Gaze. At a later meeting of Poole member, Stewart Sinclair accepted the post of Coordinator. He will be supported by a team of about six members who will cover various parts of the town, and liaise with the Council mainly through the Cycling Liaison Advisory Group.

Wimborne and Ferndown

We were recently informed by DCC that there is to be a reprint of East Dorset cycle maps and we await their production. This was apparently a last-minute decision by DCC when funding became available, and we were not given enough notice to be able to make a thorough check that the maps had been fully brought up to date.

Coordinator vacancies - Bournemouth

While we have no Coordinator in this town, John Hayter has continued to represent us on the Borough and Airport Cycling Forums. It is my intention to try and arrange a meeting of Bournemouth members in the next few months to discuss the vacancy, as we successfully did in Poole..

- Bridport

Aileen Shackell is not able to continue as Coordinator and we are trying to find a replacement. Aileen has agreed to try and arrange a meeting of local cyclists to discuss the situation.

- Ferndown

During the past year Ken Cook informed the Committee that he will be moving to Surrey soon, and he will try to find a replacement Coordinator.

- Christchurch. John Grantham stood down as Coordinator as from 15 June.

Cycling issues

Dogs on trailways and shared paths.

Weymouth & Portland District Council have voted to introduce a byelaw requiring dogs on the Rodwell Trail to be on leads. This follows a period of public consultation in which DCN, CTC and other bodies took part, but great credit goes to Ken Reed and Anne Neale of DCN and CTC whose perseverance at the final council meeting carried the day.

The problem of uncontrolled dogs on trailways exists elsewhere, notable in Baiter Park, Poole, and it is hoped that similar solutions might be found.

Roads and cycleways

A major event began recently in Poole Borough as preparations were made to close the A341 Gravel Hill between Dunyeats Road and Queen Anne Drive for several months to strengthen and widen the road. This is the main route from Poole to the A31 and Wimborne, and this section has been in need of a safe cycle route for years. We have been informed that cyclists and pedestrians will be able to use it during the road works while other traffic makes a long detour, and when the work is finished it will include a dedicated cycle path on the west side only. Poole Council have agreed to a DCN suggestion for signing the cycle route between Queen Anne Drive and Wimborne via Rempstone Road and the shared path on Oakley Hill.

Website and newsletter

Phil Wilson is now our webmaster, in addition to his role as treasurer. I edit and publish the newsletter, and am willing to do so for as long as I am able after I give up the chairmanship. The cost of these two communication channels is well supported by local businesses who advertise with DCN; they are mainly cycle shops, cafes and B&Bs who all support the cause of cycling.

Consultation

The comment about maps under "*Wimborne and Ferndown*" (above) highlighted the need for DCC to make and keep advance plans ready for future implementation when funds eventually became available. This would give time for fuller consultation with DCN and other interested parties. The Committee will consider whether to seek to persuade DCC to adopt this approach.

Conclusion

I would like to thank DCN Committee members again for their support over the past year. Particular thanks go to Phil Wilson and Gerry Bannister whose record keeping is essential to our smooth running, and to Peter Henshaw, the Vice-Chairman, who has kept things going when I was away. I am also grateful to the many members who during the year in one way and another have told me of their appreciation of the work done by DCN on behalf of cyclists. A number of members show this appreciation by adding voluntary donations to their annual subscriptions, for which we are very grateful.

Michael Evans
14 June 2016