

Dorset Cyclists' Network Annual General Meeting 2017

Chairman's Report

The Chairmanship

This is my final report as Chairman after 25 years. I gave notice of this 2 years ago and in subsequent newsletters, but the post has not been filled despite widespread advertising. As we now have fewer committee meetings, the role of chairman is less demanding. It has therefore been decided to recommend that we change the title of Chairman to County Coordinator, which more accurately describes its purpose. That will be a matter for this meeting later on, as it involves a change in the Constitution. It is my hope that this change will encourage someone to contact me to find out what is involved and potentially to take over.

The Secretary

Our Secretary Peter Henshaw will maintain contact with the Committee and see that proposals, especially those concerning expenditure, will be fully considered by the committee and that decisions are recorded for audit and other purposes.

In place of physical meetings, the committee now keeps in touch by e-mail and similar means in order to cut travel costs, with the exception of a single meeting prior to each AGM.

I have urged the Committee not to expect Peter to take on County responsibilities unless he is able to, and I have recommended that they continue to search for a member to fill the County Coordinator role.

Membership

Gerry Bannister has efficiently fulfilled the role he took up in March last year. His second report shows that we have 355 subscribing households, totalling 691 members.

Finance

Our finances are still in a very healthy state. We have been able to increase our maximum "Cash-back" offer from £6 to £10, for members who buy DCN garments from our advertisers, a cycle mirror or the book "How to be a Better Cyclist," with no limit as before on the number of items one member can claim for. The rationale for these reimbursements is that they are aimed at increasing cycling safety, and at advertising ourselves at a very cheap rate. We have also become a subscribing group member of the North Dorset Trailway, and decided that we can respond to calls for financial support from similar bodies, while avoiding paying for improvements that should come from a public authority budget. This decision is in line with our constitutional aim : "to promote cycling in any legal manner throughout Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth"

DCN Branches

Gillingham & Shaftesbury

There has been no progress on the proposal for a cycle trailway between the two towns, but local DCN members are still ready to assist whenever the county and local councils see their way to creating it.

Poole

Stewart Sinclair (Coordinator) and his team have made their mark through the Cycling Liaison Advisory Group and he reports that on the whole, there is good progress on cycling issues...

Wimborne and Ferndown

Ken Cook (Coordinator Ferndown for the past 12 years) is moving to Hampshire this month. Judy Windwood (Coordinator Wimborne) will become Coordinator for the whole of East Dorset, supported by a team of DCN members in local areas of the district.

A new edition of the East Dorset cycling map was issued in September, Improved signing of cycle routes in Wimborne is being sought.

Bournemouth

We have no Coordinator in this town, but DCN member John Hayter is happy to represent us on the Borough and Airport Cycling Forums. I proposed a meeting to Bournemouth DCN member discuss the Coordinator vacancy, but there was no response.

Christchurch & Highcliffe

John Simpson began as Coordinator in January and has already pursued issues with the council re overgrown foot/cyclepaths, potholes etc with some success. With the large area he has taken on, he needs support from local members and we will address this need in the coming months.

Blandford-Sturminster Newton

Dilys and other are working hard to achieve the Little Lane Link, a project that could provide an alternative route to the North Dorset Trailway to and from Okeford Fitzpaine and surrounding places. It depends on EU funding being obtained before Brexit.

Sherborne

The pavement on Sherborne Hill beside the busy, narrow A352, is used by cyclists but was seriously overgrown. When Sherborne members volunteered to clear it, DCC said that necessary safety precautions would cost £700, so they sent one man who did the job on his own! Moral : threaten to do some road work yourself and you may get DCC moving.

Other branches

Coordinators at, Weymouth & Portland, Blandford, Dorchester, Purbeck Coordinators continue actively to keep an eye on cycling issues but have no major ones to report.

Cycling issues

Roads and cycleways

Major road improvements were carried out last summer by Poole Borough on the A341 Gravel Hill between Dunyeats Road and Queen Anne Drive. The work was finished on schedule and it has been a great improvement for cyclists at last to be able to cycle legally on Gravel Hill. However, the link between Queen Anne Drive and Wimborne Town Centre still needs attention.

Overtaking too close

The government was reported last January to be interested in setting a minimum gap when motorists overtake cyclists. When West Midlands Police started a scheme of warning and if necessary, prosecuting motorists for this dangerous practice, I asked Dorset Police if they would do likewise. There was a positive response from Martyn Underhill, the Police and Crime Commissioner, and from our official police contact PC Heidi Moxam (Road Casualty Reduction Officer) who hoped that a "Close Pass operation" would begin in June 2017.

Cycling UK membership

Two incidents in the last year have shown the value of our membership of Cycling UK (formerly CTC) which gives us third party insurance for all DCN organised events including cycle rides. The insurance brokers they use were very helpful on both occasions and as DCN was not to blame in either case, they defended us and saved us a lot of worry. Individual members of DCN can also get Cycle UK membership at preferential means, which would be useful when they are cycling on their own. Details of this special offer have been publicised in recent newsletters and are on the website.

Annual Cycle Show

Each year we try and send two DCN members to the show, for them to report on it in the newsletter. Last time, Peter Henshaw and Anna Finch attended for us and gave their report in the January issue. Annabel Wilson and John Bullock of DCN Sherborne will attend for us this year.

Consultation

The arrangements in Bournemouth and Poole appear to be working satisfactorily, and there has been an improvement in our contact with the County Council. We await the possible restructuring of Dorset local authorities to assess whether these affects our own structure.

Website and newsletter

Phil Wilson does a good job maintaining our website in addition to his role as treasurer, while I continue to edit and publish the newsletter

Conclusion

I thank DCN Committee members, past and present for their support over the past 25 years, and the many members who have given me helpful and friendly support, advice and feedback over the years, which has made my chairmanship such a pleasant task. But it's time for someone younger with a fresh approach to take over. DCN will have to move with the times, and adapt to the social and political changes that will occur in the future.

Michael Evans

10 June 2017