

This year I am presenting this report not as Chairman of DCN, a post from which I retired at the last AGM, and which no longer exists under that name. The committee agreed that the title was misleading, and the role is now called County Coordinator as this better reflects its purpose, which is to coordinate cycling issues between different groups where necessary, and to support them in any possible way to achieve DCN's overall objectives. Unfortunately no one has come forward to fill that role yet, so meanwhile Peter Henshaw has kept in touch with local groups and circulated matters of common interest when necessary.

So on the occasion of this 26<sup>th</sup> AGM, I am Chairman just of this meeting. After 25 years as DCN Chairman, I am rather pleased to have a more time for other leisure activities and new voluntary occupations, but I'm still riding my bike a lot for pleasure and utility journeys. That is possible for me at the age of 83 as it's a new electric-assisted machine, and we shall hear about that kind of bike for Peter at the end of this meeting.

This report cannot be as full as those I have given over past years, but here are a few significant events over the past 12 months. The details have been covered in our newsletters if you want to know more.

Ken Cook, the founder of Ferndown DCN, moved to Hampshire last autumn after 10 years as its Coordinator, during which he worked enthusiastically to get improvements for cyclists and organised regular rides which were very popular. The rides are still being run, but the campaign role has been take over by merging Ferndown and Wimborne into an East Dorset Branch with Judy Windwood as overall Coordinator, assisted by various individual members, notably Geoff Symonds who coordinates regular cycle rides for Ferndown.

Peter, our Secretary, had a nasty accident shortly after last year's AGM and was in hospital for a while and out of action for some weeks, but he has recovered well and it's pleasing to know he made a full recovery and is back on his bike.

In Okeford Fitzpaine, after much campaigning and many meetings, Dilys and Jeremy Gartside succeeded in getting funding for Little Lane to be upgraded for cyclists as a useful and almost traffic-free link to the North Dorset Trailway. It was opened last January.

John Thraves retired from leading local rides after 15 years. He has done a lot to encourage cycling in Purbeck, which is especially praiseworthy considering the tragedy of losing a leg a few years ago. A tribute to John's work was included in the January newsletter.

In Poole, Stewart Sinclair has been very active, (despite also having had a painful accident,) regularly attending and contributing to the Poole Quays Forum and the Cycling Liaison Action Group (CLAG). Stewart gave detailed reports of developments in the September and January newsletters.

We have no Coordinator for Bournemouth, but the former holder of that post attends the Cycling Forum and the Airport Cycling Forum and keeps us advised of developments. The May 2018 newsletter has more information. At present we await confirmation of the proposal to merge Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch into a single unitary authority, after which the structure of DCN will need to be re-examined.

In Wimborne, Judy Windwood has come up against more instances of lack of consultation from the County Council. A quiet one-way street intended to be part of a safe cycle route was banned to cyclists when a No Entry except buses went up, The Council later admitted it was an error (which DCN could have prevented had we been consulted) but the sign has still not been amended nearly a year later. Sections of National Cycle Route 25 between Wimborne and Blandford are in a bad state of repair with many potholes and rough patches. DCN has attempted for years to get the surfaces repaired, but nothing has been done and the road is getting worse.

Cycling issues in Weymouth & Portland continue to present dilemmas. Though there are now more safe cycle routes than a few years ago, there has been difficulty over the significant of regulation for cycling on the promenade. I have not yet heard whether or how this has been resolved, but Ken Reed always has his ears to the ground and will continue to do his best for cyclists, and if there is anything to report it will be included in the next newsletter in September.

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Our Secretary Peter Henshaw is also Coordinator for Sherborne, where he has succeeded in getting additional cycle parking stands and other improvements. Peter has made it known that he would like to stand down as Secretary if another member would come forward to replace him. Apart from organising the AGM. There are no other meetings, and only an occasional need for administrative correspondence. If a replacement is found, Peter will remain on the committee and take over from me as Editor of the DCN Newsletter.

Dorset Police ran an awareness campaign last year to encourage vehicle drivers to leave a wide space when overtaking cyclists. They told us in October that in their view it had been successful, with a number of drivers accepting advice as an alternative to prosecution. I have experienced a definite improvement when cars have overtaken me. I can't say the same for most other fast and sporty cyclists; many of them overtake me far too close and without warning. As I get older and possibly start to wobble, they could come off their bikes as well as me!

In our September newsletter I gave information about our use of members' data, which was very timely as last month, the law was strengthened to give all of us more control over what organisations do with our personal information. No doubt like me you have received messages from other bodies to which you subscribe or maybe never heard of till now, asking you to confirm that they can continue to hold your data. It's a chance to get rid of some you don't want by just not replying, but if you want to keep the benefits of DCN membership, and haven't yet replied to the Membership Secretary, please do so or you may never hear from us again. Gerry has written to all members and has mentioned the new regulation in his report to this meeting, though he cannot be here today. If you have any queries about it, he's the man to contact when he gets back from holiday.

I think all members would like me to express thanks on their behalf to all the committee for their work, especially our Membership Secretary Gerry Bannister and our Treasurer and Webmaster Phil Wilson, who keep on top of the constant paper work so well.

Michael Evans  
8 June 2018