

Minutes

Present: Peter Bate, Chris Stevenson, Peter Horry, Mike Hanson, Malcolm Oliver, Anna Lloyd and Esther Clarke

1. Welcome and introductions.

2. Chair's report (Peter Bate)

We once again had stalls at the Canal Festival (2016) and the May Fayre (2017) with good response from the public with the most common question as always being 'where can I ride with my kids'.

Funding is getting harder to find for projects for local authorities and organisations such as Sustrans. But for organisations like us the Tesco Bags of Help could be a good source of funds.

We have been focusing on the Green Wheel project with the target of getting an initial Inner Rim signed this year which we can improve and build on with spokes over the coming years as opportunities and funding allow. One thing that became clear when mapping the Inner Rim is that Linslade is not really suitable for cycling (using Bikeability Level 2 as a baseline for ability). It will be important to set up the Wheel without any gaps so a less than ideal route will be needed to start with to achieve this. This will highlight where improvements need to be targeted. Getting a Wheel set up and used will be important to show support for cycling and demand for improvements. the Biggleswade Wheel is proving popular. The Green Wheel will continue to be our main focus for the coming year.

3. Treasurer's report (Chris Stevenson)

We have £1,464.10p in the bank.

4. Reports from other members of the Committee including plans for the coming year

a. Membership (Peter Horry)

We reached 21 paid up members during the last year. Memberships are due for renewal on 1st July.

b. Rides (Peter Horry and Mike Hanson)

Cycle Sunday Rides: Anyone who took part in all the rides in 2016 would have cycled the equivalent of Land's End to John O'Groats! This would make a good press

release (ACTION: ESTHER). As riders get better and more experienced they tend to want longer rides so a variety of routes are needed. All the regulars are aware though that the 1st Sunday will be a shorter, easier ride for families, but every week the route is chosen according to who turns up. All rides are written up and go onto the website with a facebook post when this is done. Peter H has an archive of every ride. This should also be made available on the website at some point (ACTION: PETER H & ESTHER)

Regular Riders and Lumens Loonies: Regular Rider (Sunday mornings) have dropped off in terms of numbers recently but the Lumens (Thursday evening) rides are still going strong and some LBRCC members also take part. Some rides are also organised on Saturdays and many also take part in the Evans rides. New people don't tend to continue after one or two rides but the longer term riders are now riding further. The Lumens group are on a mission to find the best Cheesy Chips (currently between the 5 Bells and Totternhoe Cross Keys!). The Chiltern Brewery Rides were really good but have stopped. Could we organise something similar to replace them?

c. **Events (Peter Horry)**

May Day Fayre 2017: This went well again spoke to lots of people answering questions and talking about the Green Wheel. Lots of people asking about joining in rides but few actually converting this into coming to the group rides.

Canal Festival 29th July 2017: We have a stall booked again and the police will be joining us to do security marking. We need to get this and our cycle parking and DR Bike advertised on social media and in the programme (ACTION: PETER H & ESTHER)

d. **Campaigns (Esther)**

Green Wheel: We now have 43 responses to our Green Wheel consultation (36 online) with 13 more coming in since the article about it in the Bee Local magazine in May.

Letter Writing: Following a meeting with Steve Lakin at CBC it was suggested that regular letters to the LBO about transport issues and cycling which question or challenge our local authorities would be a useful campaigning tool and would raise the profile of cycling and the lack of adequate infrastructure and funding. We need to draw up an action plan for this and work with other organisations such as South Beds Friends of the Earth and LL Low Carbon Town. (ACTION: ESTHER)

e. Communications (Esther)

BikeBits newsletter: Four issues produced in past year one of which was a special edition for the Community Plan Consultation. We have 140 subscribers to this and an average of around 40% who open and read the newsletter.

Facebook Page: Just reached 100 Page Likes! Could set up a (parallel?) Facebook Group (closed?) to encourage more people to engage and post. (ACTION: ESTHER to look into this). Could try to link the Facebook feed into the Website (ACTION: MIKE to look into this).

Website: Since this was set up in 2013 we have had over 10, 470 visits to the home page. The most popular pages are:

Rides (3k)

Cycle Sunday Rides (2k)

Route ideas (2k)

Info and Advice menu (1.4k)

Campaigns (1.2)

How to maintain my bike (1k)

A special page set up for the General Election reporting candidates responses to a set of questions we sent them was visited 128 times.

f. Planning / developments (Malcolm)

Malcolm checks the weekly lists of planning applications and sends in responses as required on behalf on Buzzcycles. It is very frustrating because he gets no response back and it is impossible to tell if they have changed the conditions of the planning consent on the basis of any comments or not. It is becoming increasingly clear that CBC are routinely ignoring their own policies (Cycling Strategy) when approving planning applications. Malcolm has recently written to David Hale (Head of Planning) to ask to discuss this but has had no response. It is important that we engage with the Local Plan which has submitted proposed sites for residential and mixed use developments around the town all of which have potential to fit in with the Green Wheel but there is clearly a lack of support from CBC. How important is this work to Buzzcycles? Do we want to continue to respond to planning applications in this way? How can we get more information and support from CBC to make this more effective? It was agreed that this work is still vital and worthwhile and that we need to work with other organisations who also comment on planning applications (South Beds Friends of the Earth and LB Society) to work

out a joint plan of action to improve the situation with CBC and their tendency to ignore their own policies. It is clear there is also a staff shortage in CBC. We also need to talk to Andrew Selous about this. (ACTION: ESTHER & PETER to discuss with Victoria Harvey and take things forward perhaps organising a Liaison Meeting with David Hale and Andrew Selous and key Councillors). Planning application responses could also be copied to the relevant Ward Councillor (ACTION: MALCOLM).

5. Election of new Committee: All existing committee members agreed to stand in their posts again and all were elected on block unanimously.

- a. Chair: Peter Bate
- b. Secretary: Esther Clarke
- c. Treasurer: Chris Stevenson
- d. Rides: Peter Horry assisted by Mike Hanson
- e. Events: Peter Horry
- f. Planning & developments: Malcolm Oliver
- g. Communications: Esther Clarke

6. Membership Fees: It was agreed that there was no reason to increase the fees so they remain at £5 (£7 household/family)

7. Promoting Buzzcycles

Ideas to raise the profile of Leighton Buzzcycles and cycling matters include:

- Regular letters to the LBO will help with this and could also do more press releases
- Leighton Linslade Timebank: Peter Horry has been invited to do a Dr. Bike stall at a Timebank event at Astral Park on 2nd July and will be able to promote Buzzcycles then.
- Peter Horry is carrying out monthly bike maintenance at Greenleas School (Kestrel Way) and is able to welcome non-school people to this at the end of the school day. (ACTION: ESTHER to promote this from September)
- Could have a regular article in the Bee Local magazine giving bike maintenance tips (ACTION: ESTHER to contact editor and PETER H to prepare text on puncture repairs)
- Use Dorvics more: give them some membership leaflets
- Ask Andrew Selous for a photo of himself on his bike that we can use for publicity. (ACTION: ESTHER)
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8. Any other business

- a. **Dorvics discounts:** Buzzcycles members now get a 10% discount at Dorvics and also any bike that needs more help than Dr Bike can give it will also be entitled to a 10% discount. (ACTION: ESTHER to advertise this)
- b. **Sustrans NCN:** An audit has been carried out of the NCN to find cost savings with a view to selling off land. This could include closing parts of the NCN such as Bikeability Level 3 roads. It was suggested that part of the tow path (NCN6) could be got rid of but Peter B has argued against this.
- c. **Carlton Reid:** Author of Bike Boom recently ran a Kickstarter campaign to research and re-open the lost cycleways of the 1930s. There were three routes in Bedfordshire.
- d. **Rushmere Users Group:** There is a vacancy for a cycling rep. ACTION: MIKE to volunteer if the commitment is not too much. ESTHER to find out dates of meetings.
- e. **Rushmere route maintenance:** This is not happening – can we offer to help?
- f. **Cycling Maps:** We will soon need more cycle maps – there are no more available for Bikeability training. We need to discuss a new version with CBC with a view to perhaps producing them ourselves (ACTION: PETER B to ask Steve if CBC are planning to reproduce them). We would need to sort out mapping licence (perhaps could do this via Beds Rural Communities Charity? ACTION: ESTHER to send BRCC quote for the Green Wheel maps to Peter B?) Can we use the CBC artwork? We would want to loose the bus routes and have 5 or 6 leisure routes on the back instead as before. We would want to include the Green Wheel. THE NEW MAP WILL BE THE TOPIC FOR OUR NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING.
- g. **Ashwell Arms:** Esther suggested this pub (on Ashwell Street) as a possible suitable venue for future meetings.