

Minutes of a meeting of Hamsterley Trailblazers held on Monday 6 June 2005 at 6.30pm in the Forest Classroom

Present: Andy Samanjoul (in the chair)
Marie Brown
Michael Chilcott
Vicky Chilcott
Dave Church
Mat Clark
Mark Collinson
Peter Cook – Dale Bike Hire
Chris Dauber – Teesdale Marketing
Ollie Graham
Gerry Hehir
Robin Lofthouse
Alex Maclennon – FE
Bill Pike
Ivan Pratt
Mike Richardson
Tom Searle
Neil Taylor – FE
Sonny Wilkinson

Apologies for Absence: were received from Jamie Butcher, Jill Church, Stuart Ferguson, Neil Gander, Chris Goldsworth, Pete Oughton, Ian Robson and Norman Thompson

Welcome Members welcomed Alex Maclennon, Forest Enterprise's new Recreation, Communities and Tourism Manager to the meeting. Alex was replacing Bill Burlton who had retired. A welcome was also extended to Neil Taylor, the new Seasonal Recreational Ranger.

Members also welcomed Mark Collinson, Tom Searle and Sonny Wilkinson who had agreed to do a Trials Bike Demonstration for the Trailblazers stand at Halfords on Saturday 11 June, organised by Marie and Andy.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2005 were **AGREED** as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes

2.1 Charitable Status Bill and Ollie **AGREED** to investigate computer programmes to calculate Gift Aid.

2.2 Website The website was still awaiting further updating and Vicky **AGREED** to liaise with Dean over this.

2.3 Cycling For All Further information was still awaited

2.4 Parish Paths Funding Results of the funding bid still awaited

2.5 GMSR 15 May A third very successful event had been held with cyclists expressing much praise for the trails used. Sponsorship money was still being collected. Discussion took place on future events and it was proposed to bring the event nearer the Information Centre and explore the feasibility of starting it later in the day to attract more riders. Gerry said the Fell Runners could be available to help with marshalling. It was also suggested that banners and signs advertising the event be put up in the forest and on approach roads in the weeks leading up to the event. Schools and colleges should also be targetted.

2.6 Teesdale Family Fun Day 21 May Trailblazers had put up a stand at this event and Gerry said he had received good feedback from visitors. It was suggested that at future events, bikes be made available so that visitors could use them for skills purposes.

2.7 Gateway Website This matter remained outstanding

2.8 Disclaimer on Discussion Forum Jamie had prepared a disclaimer statement for discussion between himself and Marie.

3. Statement of Accounts and 05/06 Membership Dave presented the Statement of Accounts for the end of May 2005 together with latest membership details.

4. Phase I Progress Report Ollie reported that bridges were now being installed and Barclays and Living Spaces had requested a launch date of 15 July for the Grove Link Trail, to which they wished to invite South Durham's new MP. The Skills Loop would not be complete by then, but Alex said he could arrange for an FE work team to help for 10 days during late July, after the Chopwell Wood Festival. It was also **AGREED** to organise more volunteer trail building days over the summer period to finish off the work. A formal opening day for the Skills Area was projected for sometime in September. Mick asked for 5 weeks notice of this so he could organise bike press to be present.

5. Phase 2 Discussion took place on progressing Phase 2 and it was noted Ollie was attending a meeting with Sue Berresford and DEFRA on Thursday to discuss this. Publicity leaflets on the scheme were now available through Sue and Chris Dauber said he had been in contact with Alan Clarke from ONE. Chris had spoken to Praxis, the company who had prepared the Whinlatter Economic Impact Assessment and was exploring the possibility of having this transposed for use with Hamsterley data.

It was noted Dalby Forest had just received the go ahead for construction of mountain bike trails through £400K European and FE funding. Discussion took place on the development of a 3 Northern Cycle Centre Concept (similar to the 7 Stanes) based round Hamsterley, Whinlatter and Dalby and it was **AGREED** to contact Dalby and Whinlatter to explore this further.

It was noted Sustrans had recently been in touch with both Trailblazers and FE and a meeting had been arranged with Joanne Morrissey from Sustrans on 29 June at Hamsterley.

7. Raising Trailblazers Profile Marie drew attention to the open weekends being organised by Halfords and the possibility of using these to promote Trailblazers. Ideally a DVD should be shown featuring cycling within the Forest and it was **AGREED** to explore this further. It was **AGREED** a coherent marketing strategy be developed through the establishment of a Marketing Sub Committee. The following members **AGREED** to serve on the Sub Committee: Mick Richardson, Marie Brown and Dave Church. Alex MacClennon also offered to assist the Sub Committee. Mick said he was working on publicity material for the Information Board.

8. IMBA and Risk Assessments Discussion took place on IMBA Update No 15 concerning potential injuries to mountain bikers and the need to ensure Risk Assessments were carried out properly and that trails gave sufficient warning to cyclists of the dangers involved in the sport. Trailblazer member, Norman Thompson (who had a professional background in Health and Safety) had offered to take over health and safety aspects of Trailblazers, including Risk Assessments, following Simon Goodwin's departure and it was **AGREED** to accept this offer. It was further **AGREED** Norman liaise with Alex MacClennon on this matter.

8. Publicity Mick said 'Singletrack' had recently produced a good article on Hamsterley and 'Bike Magic' were similarly doing one. 'What Mountain Biking' had requested photos tomorrow for an article and this had been organised prior to the meeting. 'MBR' were waiting to hear when the Skills Loop was complete. Mick suggested a section appear on the website where people could post trail ideas, pictures and favourite rides and it was **AGREED** he contact Dean over this.

Gerry invited Trailblazers to organise skills sessions for children on 9, 11 and 12 August within the Forest and it was **AGREED** Dave and Ollie liaise over this matter.

10. Calendar of Events It was **AGREED**, wherever possible, that priority be given to trailbuiding sessions over the next few weeks and Andy **AGREED** to liaise with Ollie over suitable dates. A revised Calendar of Events would then be sent to Dean. It was **AGREED** the ride from Reeth this Sunday still go ahead.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting It was **AGREED** the next meeting be held on Monday 4 July 2005 at 6.30pm.

