

**Minutes of a meeting of Hamsterley Trailblazers held at 6.30pm on Monday 1 November 2010 at the Cross Keys, Hamsterley.**

**Trustees Present:** Vicky Chilcott (Secretary)  
Olly Graham (Vice Chairman)

**Members Present:** James Dods  
Gary Ewing  
Bill Pike

**In Attendance:** Neil Taylor (FC)

**Apolgies for absence** were received from Mat Clark, Neil & Kath Gander, Lisa Jobling.

**1. Minutes of Last Meeting** The minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2010 were approved as a correct record.

**2. Statement of Accounts and Membership** In the absence of Mat, it was AGREED to postpone discussion on this item.

**3. 1-2-1 Race Series, Hamsterley – 24 & 25 September** This weekend proved a fantastic success with 107 riders from all over the country entering (riders came from as far away as Fort William, Northamptonshire, Leicester, Selby, Leeds and Cumbria as well as lots from the North East of England.) The weekend started with a Friday night camp out in the Forest then Cross Country Racing on the Saturday, followed by Downhill racing on the Sunday. The key to the weekend was that riders had to use the same bike for both races. The atmosphere over the weekend had a real buzz to it and everyone commenting on the character and challenge of this new form of racing.

The unique format of the event caught the attention of Orange Bikes who offered to sponsor it, giving away two bike frames to the overall winner. Other sponsors were O'Neal (who provided prizes of helmets and t-shirts) and Red Ape, who gave technical support and were on hand all weekend for any bike related problems.

Trailblazer members came out in force to help with the event and also to ride in it – some even managing to do both. Running costs were just being finalised, but the event did run at a profit and the final figure would be given to members as soon as possible.

It was AGREED to extend a formal vote of thanks to Dave for organising the event and to everyone who helped make it the success it was. It was understood Dave had offered to organise another 1-2-1 Race in 2011.

Orange also subsequently donated a green Orange Crush bike frame to Trailblazers to raffle in aid of Club funds. (Retail value £300 - £400.) It was AGREED to organise a raffle as soon as possible that could be drawn on 18 December after Trailbuilding.

**4. Forestry Commission – Event Charging** A meeting had been held on 26 October 2010 between Trailblazer trustees (Andy, Olly and Mat) and Alex MacLennan, FC Recreational Manager, to discuss future event charging by FC. It was noted that FC and British Cycling had signed an agreement that required charging for events on FC land. The charges depended on local circumstances. After extensive discussion it had been AGREED that Trailblazer events be treated under the ‘Local’ charging category with a one-off charge of £50 being applicable plus £1 per rider – or a maximum of £200 for 150 riders per event. In addition, FC would levy a percentage charge (probably 10%) on any commercial takings eg catering or bike sales – or alternatively, would negotiate a one-off charge. Whilst FC would normally charge for camping, it was AGREED no FC charge would be applied to Trailblazers for this who would subsequently be free to keep any funds raised for this.

**5. FC Support to Trailblazer Volunteers** Discussion had also taken place at the meeting on 26 October between Trailblazer trustees and Alex MacLennan on future FC support to Trailblazer Volunteers. Alex offered the following concessions to members helping out at 3 or more trailbuilding or other events per annum:

- Free FC Discovery Pass (giving free parking at Hamsterley, plus discounts in the Forest Shop, Café, Bowes Museum, Kilhope, Sedgefield Racecourse and Go Ape.)
- Trailbuilding Permit to give free parking at other North East Forests.
- 20% off Christmas Trees purchased at Hamsterley.
- Free attendance for families at two FC evens per annum.

It was also noted that FC were hoping to introduce a national Discovery Pass option that covered parking at any FC owned UK Forest – if this was introduced volunteers would be entitled to one of these for free.

The above offers were welcomed, especially the possibility of a national Discover Pass.

**6. FC Privatisation** It was noted the Government were shortly issuing a consultation document on the future of FC owned land and it was understood this contained the possibility of selling off some forests. The contents of the document were awaited with extreme interest, including the possibility of any community purchase or transfer.

**7. Calendar of Events 2011** The following events were suggested for 2011:

- **New Year’s Ride – Monday 3 January:** Meet outside WoodNWheels at 10.30am for ride in or around Forest, then lunch at 1.30pm at Cross Keys Pub. (Book in advance.)
- **Coaching Sessions – Spring:** Olly to suggest suitable dates.
- **AGM – 4 April:** Book Village Hall and discuss format at next meeting.
- **Duck Race & BBQ – Saturday 16 April**
- **1-2-1 Race Series – 3 September 2011** – Dave Nicholson offered to organise.

- **Female Ride Sessions** – Evenings from April plus monthly day winter rides – dates to be organised. (Vicky and Kaye)
- **Club Long Distance Away Ride** – Lisa Jobling had offered to look at organising another Away Ride, probably sometime in May 2011 – suggestions received included Hadrians Way or the Way of the Roses.
- **Race Night** – Lisa Jobling suggested a Club Race Night and it was agreed Lisa be asked to explore this further, possibly at a Darlington pub.
- **Monthly Club Rides** – on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month – noted 2011 ride leaders needed.
- **Monthly Trailbuilding Sessions** – on 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month
- **Weekly Night Rides** – 7pm Wednesday, meeting at Information Centre followed by a drink at the Cross Keys Pub, Hamsterley.
- **Trailblazer Meetings** – Bi-monthly formal meetings - 6.30pm, Cross Keys Pub, Hamsterley.

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**8. Trailbuilding** Oly reported the section up to the rooty climb on the Black Route was now finished and work was continuing from the bottom of Transmission out to the grass field by the Nest. Approximately £8,000 was left for work on this section.

The possibility of organising a Trailbuilding Donation system was discussed eg Glentress parking machines also had a button for donations where you could donate £1. Neil Taylor pointed that this would mean changing all the machines to multi button ones, which would be problematic and expensive. Oly suggested putting a collection box or bucket for trailbuilding donations in WoodNWheels and the shop/café etc and it was AGREED this suggestions be explored.

**9. Trail Names** FC had asked Trailblazers for suggestions on overall Trail names for the Red and Black Routes. Various suggestions had been received, but many members commented that whilst there was only one Red and one Black route, they felt they would prefer them left as just the 'Red Trail' and the 'Black Trail.' (Although it was AGREED the Blue 'Grove Link' should stay as 'Grove Link' for the time being.) It was AGREED to advise FC of this preference, but also to put forward the following suggestions, if FC still felt it necessary to give overall names to the Red or Black Trails:

- 'Nightjar' for the Red (after the nightjars in the moorland section of the Forest that the red trail went through.)
- 'Redgroove' (for the Red – loose pun on the Grove)
- 'Wall Street' for the Black (would also be good as a section name)
- 'Root Canal' for the Black (would also be good as a section name)
- 'The Hangover' for the Black (would also be good as a section name)
- 'Black Magic' for the Black
- 'Dark Art' for the Black

It was noted this viewpoint would obviously change if Hamsterley was lucky enough to get more than one Red or Black Trail.

**10. 2011 Membership Fees** Discussion took place on membership fees for 2011 and it was noted these had remained at £5 and £7.50 for a number of years. It was AGREED these be increased to £7.50 for an individual and £10 for family membership with effect from April 2011.

**11. British Cycling Club Mark** It was noted the Club really needed to obtain the British Cycling Club Mark in order to access future funding streams and it was AGREED to explore this further. Neil Gander offered to take over British Cycling liaison and emails from Vicky.

**12. NatWest Community Fund Awards** It was noted Trailblazers had been successful if being nominated to receive a NatWest Community Fund Award of either £3,000 or £1,000. The amount depended on the number of votes the club received when voting opened to the public in early November. Results would be published in December 2010.

**13. Bowes 12K Cycle Race – Saturday 11 September** 4 members of Trailblazers entered this race and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

**14. Durham Big Ride – Sunday 12 September** Several members took part in the Durham Big Ride, including some who received free places as a result of volunteering work at the Dirty Big Ride in Hamsterley earlier in the year.

**15. FC Halloween Event – Sunday 31 October** Approximately 12 Trailblazer members helped out at another successful FC Halloween Event on 31 October. Neil thanked all concerned.

**16. Tourism Strategy** Neil Gander drew attention to the County Durham Tourism Strategy and the need to continue to press for an extension of access arrangements, including those for cyclists. AGREED – Neil to action on behalf of Trailblazers.

**17. Date and Time of Next Meeting** It was AGREED the next formal meeting be held at 6.30pm on Monday 7 February, 2011 at the Cross Keys Pub, Hamsterley.