

Minutes of a meeting of Hamsterley Trailblazers held on Monday 5 December 2011 at 7pm in the Cross Keys Pub, Hamsterley

Trustees Present: Neil Gander (Chairman)
Olly Graham (Vice Chair)
Vicky Chilcott (Secretary)
Mat Clarke (Assis Treasurer)

Members Present: James Dods
Fiona Ewing
Gary Ewing
Kathryn Gander
Kaye Graham
David Holmes
Rob Myers
Bill Pike
Shaun Rogers
Martin Stout
Andrew Walker

In attendance: Alex MacLennan (FC)
Neil Taylor (FC)

Apologies for absence were received from Paul Burgess, Theresa Cole, Lisa Jobling, Emma Johnston

Congratulations were extended to Trailblazer members Helen and Steven Lund on the birth of their daughter and to Theresa Cole and Paul Burgess on the birth of their son.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2011 were approved as a correct record.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

- **CTC Affiliation** Neil Gander said Trailblazers was now affiliated to the CTC and along with the benefit of being associated with a campaigning organisation, members could benefit from a reduction in CTC membership fee (down to £15.) CTC membership gave valuable personal liability cover and a number of other benefits. It was AGREED to block email all members to advise them. **(Action: Vicky)**
- **SOC Donation** It was reported Swaledale Outdoor Club had actually donated £200, not £100 as previously thought, to Trailblazers. A letter of thanks had been sent to them.
- **Single Speed UK Championship** It was reported Hamsterley had not been selected for this competition for 2012 but it was hoped to be more successful in 2013.

- **Website** Efforts were continuing to find someone to take over the website. Olly offered to try CVS in Darlington or Groundwork (although this may involve payment.) Kathryn offered to approach some colleges. It was also felt the forum should be moved to a Hamsterley Trailblazers Facebook page. **(Action: Olly & Kathryn)**
- **Route Maps and Signage** Neil Taylor said he hoped initial signage problems had now been sorted out. Shortcut routes to Transmission, Section 13 and returns to the Visitor Centre were still needed. It was also AGREED to explore online websites that people could upload routes to, without infringing mapping copyrights. **(Action: Olly, Neil Gander & Neil Taylor.)**
- **British Cycling Funding** Neil said there was no further news on this yet. It was AGREED to put in a bid for funding a section of trail and re-vamping of Skills Loop. Olly would send costings to Neil for submission. **(Action: Olly & Neil Gander)**

3. Statement of Accounts and Membership A written report from Emma Johnston on the statement of accounts at 5 December was received. It was noted HSBC offered a Client Account option that could be added onto the club bank account for members to pay direct into and it was AGREED this account be opened and publicised to members as soon as possible. **(Action: Emma & Vicky)**

4. MBR Trail of the Year Nomination It was noted the lower section to Transmission (Accelerator) had been nominated for Best Shot Glass of Singletrack in December MBR and had received the runner up award. It was also noted a 3 page article on Hamsterley had appeared in the November issue of MBR with Olly being named a 'Local Hero.' Congratulations were extended to all who had been involved in trailbuilding.

5. Forestry Commission Changes Alex summarised forthcoming changes in the Forestry Commission England that included:

- 25% overall staffing reduction
- FC to become an 'enabling' rather than a 'doing' organisation
- Hamsterley to merge with the Lakes from 3.1.12
- Closure of grant office at Hamsterley (to be administered from York)
- Closure of forest shops, including Hamsterley, between October and December 2012 (possibly transferring to private sector)

At Hamsterley, Neil Taylor and Darren Best would be full time recreational rangers covering Hamsterley and Chopwell. A pick-up for trailbuilding would also be provided. It was hoped to carry out Phase 2 of the car parking project shortly and to drop the powerline so that Go Ape could, in due course, develop a base at Hamsterley when this could be prioritised by them. Alex said it was intended to develop relationships with Groundwork to develop educational aspects of forests and woodlands and source grants that FC could not access. The report from the Independent Panel was not expected until June 2012.

Alex also thanked Trailblazer volunteers for their help at the Halloween Hauntings (it was noted this would be the last one organised by FC) and for all the work put into Hamsterley and trailbuilding in particular.

6. Trailbuilding Mat reported on trailbuilding and it was noted Nitrous was nearly finished (about 2 – 3 days of outstanding work.) An offer of free stone had been received from a Trailblazer member and this was gratefully acknowledged. It was noted maintenance work was required in various places and this should be prioritised along with extending Nitrous to the fire road and work on the black route where it joined the tarmac road. Discussion took place on recognising the achievement of the youngsters involved in trailbuilding and it was AGREED a special award be made to them at the AGM. Alex also offered to organise a winter 'soup and sandwich' lunch courtesy of FC for trailbuilders and this was offer was gratefully accepted.

(Action: Alex/Neil Taylor – hot lunch; youth recognition at AGM – Olly, Neil Gander, Vicky)

7. Trailblazer Mugs, T Shirts & Hoodies Mat reminded members that he still had mugs available for sale at £5 each. Alex offered to put them into the FC shop over the Christmas selling period and this was AGREED. Olly said he would check with Emma as to what funding the club had received from Spokeshirts for T shirt and hoody sales. Discussion also took place on the need to have new club cycle shirts, although the up front costs of this had caused difficulties in the past. Members were asked to look into ways of minimising these for discussion at a future meeting. **(Action: mugs – Mat & Alex; Spokeshirts – Emma; new club cycle shirts – interested members.)**

8. Youth Section Detailed discussion took place on the formation of a youth coaching section and it was noted the club had been successful in obtaining funding to run British Coaching Level 2 coach training courses for 6 or 7 members. Members who had volunteered for coach training were Paul Burgess, Mark Coward, Duncan Colclough, James Dods, Jason Mitson and Shaun Rogers. It was hoped British Cycling could run the course as early as possible in 2012 and Olly was liaising with them on this. It was noted obtaining the British Cycling Clubmark qualification required completion of various paperwork, changes to the club constitution and appointment of a number of posts including Child Protection Officer, Coach Leader and Youth Leader. Olly AGREED to complete the paperwork and liaise with Bill over changes to the constitution. Vicky would email members with details of posts needed. It was hoped youth sessions could start monthly from Easter with 2 volunteers per session. It was AGREED the club constitution be changed to include a youth membership section. A nominal advance charge would be made for the cycling sessions to encourage continued take up. **(Action: Paperwork & BC liaison – Olly; Constitution – Olly & Bill: Appointment of statutory posts – Olly & Vicky.)**

9. Membership Fees 2012/13 These were AGREED to remain at £7.50 per individual; £10 per family or £5 per junior member. After discussion it was AGREED membership should run from date of joining, rather than a set time each year (to minimise problems caused by people paying via Paypal at different times of the year.) It was hoped that membership renewal would

be simplified through the introduction of online banking and creation of a client account. **(Action: Emma, Mat & Vicky)**

10. Charitable Incorporated Organisation The draft constitution for changing the club to a CIO had been previously circulated to all members and Bill Pike went through the main changes and their effect. These included appointment of trustees on a rolling 3 year basis, with one-third retiring each year together with officers being appointed by trustees rather than the membership. Full membership rights would be given to anyone over the age of 16 and a liability level set (suggested at £1 per member.) It was noted the constitution would need to be adapted to include changes relating to becoming a British Clubmark organisation and Olly and Bill AGREED to work together on this. It was also noted the Charity Commission would need to approve the constitution before it was formally adopted by the club. Bill was formally thanked for all the work he had done on this and it was AGREED he finalise the document with Olly and that it be re-circulated as soon as possible and then submitted to the Charity Commissioners in time for formal adoption at the 2012 AGM. **(Action: Bill & Olly)**

8. Calendar of Events

- **New Year Ride** – AGREED for Monday 2 January 2012 – hopefully at the Black Bull, Frosterley for lunch or Wolsingham eatery if closed. **(Action: Vicky)**
- **AGM** – AGREED for Monday 2 April 2012. Ideas requested for entertainment after **(Action: Vicky & all members)**
- **Duck Race & BBQ** – AGREED for Sunday 13 May after a brief monthly club ride **(Action: All members)**
- **Female Evening Rides** – AGREED to change dates to Monday evenings, fortnightly from 16 April **(Action: Vicky)**
- **1-2-1 Race** – AGREED for 1 & 2 September. Olly to discuss organisation with Dave (noted Dave was moving to work in Derby, but it was hoped he would keep an involvement with the race.) **(Action: Olly & Dave)**

9. Bowes Museum A letter had been received inviting the club to submit details of its activities as a part of a display on sporting clubs in County Durham to be held in 2012 and it was AGREED details be sent in accordingly. **(Action - Vicky)**

10. WoodNWheels Wednesday Night Light Hire Martin reported disappointment in the current low uptake on this offer. Vicky suggested contacting local papers to advertise it more widely eg Teesdale Mercury, Weardale Gazette, D&S Times, Northern Echo etc. It was noted that whilst all Trailblazers had been emailed about it, many members already had night lights so that uptake from them was likely to be fairly small. Martin said he would look into press publicity for the evenings.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Next meeting Monday 6 February 2012, 7pm at the Cross Keys Pub, Hamsterley

