

Minutes of a meeting of Hamsterley Trailblazers held on Thursday 6 February 2014 at 7pm in the Cross Keys Pub, Hamsterley

Trustees Present: Vicky Chilcott (Secretary)

Members Present: Mat Clark
James Dods
Gary Ewing
Kaye Graham
David Holmes
Andy Keaveney
Geoff Morson
Shaun Rogers
Paul Stockdale
Alex Talks
Ian Tate
Andrew Walker

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

Apologies for absence were received from Kathryn and Neil Gander, Ollie and Emma Graham, Fiona Ewing, Rob Myers, Lyndsey Talks and Nigel Watson

1. Minutes of Last Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2013 were approved as a correct record.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

- **HTB Leaflet** – Still outstanding – action Olly
- **HTB Banner** – Details sent to Alex Talks for action.
- **4DC Red Trail** – Noted section now signposted with new name. Website information on name still outstanding – action Vicky

3. Update on developments at Hamsterley Alex MacLennon gave a detailed update on work being carried at Hamsterley. This included new cladding to cycle centre (being renamed Hamsterley Forest Cycle Centre instead of WoodNWheels) exterior cladding and internal improvements to the cafe and information centre, new lower windows in the cafe, wood burning stove, outdoor seating area etc.,. WCs were being revamped including looking at a shower room. (Noted members felt hot water and decent sized sink and changing facilities should be provided. Hamsterley had got the worst mark for Forestry Commission WC's in England.) Alex said £250,000 was being put into buildings and car parking.

Alex went on to update members on the Northern Lands Project at Hamsterley (first outlined at the last meeting.) The tender for the new mountain bike trail would go out next week and the first part (Pike's Teeth) must be complete and invoiced by 31 March 2014. The rest needed to be finished by the end of December. Noted that plans for the Blue trail needed to be finalised as soon as possible, especially as planning permission was

required and this could take 12 weeks. Action – Olly, Gary, Mat and James to liaise with Alex and Neil.

Members sought clarification on the recent relocation of containers to the Nest. This meant that bikes for children's coaching sessions now had to be transported from the Nest to the Visitor Centre adding some 40 minutes of work at the start and end of each session. The same applied to tools for trailbuilding. Alex offered to re-look at this but said containers did not fit in with the new look for the Visitor Centre. Mat suggested having a timber clad container near the Visitor Centre for bikes etc.

Alex drew attention to recent issues raised by the Horse Riding Association regarding mountain bikers and asked that good relations be promoted between the two and better understanding. It was noted that Trailblazers and the Horse Riding Association had met shortly after HTB was first formed and that discussion had taken place on how to avoid startling horses. (Cyclists were asked to slow down and shout out, 'Coming through' if approaching from behind and not to use bells. Horses responded well to the human voice and would not generally be startled if they heard a voice then saw a cyclist. Horses did not like cyclists just rushing past.) Action – FC to arrange advisory signage, HTB to promote good cycling conduct on website, Vicky to remind all members. Also noted, that many cyclists in forest were not members of HTB.

Discussion took place on the recent Open Adventure Race (orienteering cycle and running race at Hamsterley on 5 January) and complaints made to the Parish Council that the Village Green was used for parking rather than the Forest. Noted that HTB did not know about the event in advance. Neil Taylor advised it was not possible to start the event in the Forest because indoor facilities (including refreshments, hot water, WCs and changing) were needed for around 150 people. This meant the event had been based in the Village Hall instead.

4. Statement of Accounts Noted £18,396 in bank of which £2,000 was restricted for grants. Left £15,000 of £20,000 needed for Trailblazers contribution to Northern Lands Project at Hamsterley. Neil Gander was contacting Beamish OddSox for possible contribution. Also some funding left from Barclays to claim, but was partly children's specific.

5. Trailbuilding Noted that Alex Talks had arranged for student trailbuilding days on 10 February, 25, 26 and 27 March, plus 1, 2 and 3 April. These days would need supporting by HTB regular trailbuilders. Action – Vicky to email members for help. Neil Taylor said FC would support 10 February trailbuild. Mat drew attention to need for good 'Trail Closed' signage when trailbuilding was taking place to avoid cyclists using the trail and endangering themselves and trailbuilders. Action – FC.

6. Coaching Noted Alex Talks was running a Level 2 MTB Leader course at Hamsterley on 22 and 23 March. 6 places were available. Agreed – Vicky to email members for interest.

7. Go Ride Conference 22 March 2014 Noted HTB attendees were Olly Graham, James Dods, Geoff Morson, Shaun Rogers and Paul Stockdale.

8. Monthly Club Ride Leaders 2014 The following volunteered:

- 9 March Neil Gander
- 13 April Alex Talks
- 11 May Enduro race weekend
- 8 June David Holmes – away ride to Reeth area
- 13 July Gary Ewing
- 10 August Shaun Rogers
- 14 Sept Mat Clark
- 12 Oct Ted Liddle – away ride
- 9 Nov Gary Ewing
- 14 Dec James Dods

9. Calendar of Events

- **Saturday 1 March 7.30pm - 10th Anniversary Ceilidh** – Hamsterley Village Hall. The Joint Stock Band to play. Cost of tickets £10 including supper. Bring your own drink.
- **AGM – Monday 7 April 6.30pm**, Hamsterley Village Hall. To include refreshments and entertainment.
- **Saturday 19 April, Hamsterley – First 2014 North East XC MTB Series** race (first of 8)
- **10 & 11 May – Enduro weekend** at Hamsterley. Action: James Dods
- **4 – 6 July – Tour de France, Dales Centre Camping Weekend.** HTB members invited to attend – cost £150 per tent for two. Extra people £30 each.
- **Sunday 13 July – 10.30am – Duck Race and BBQ** after brief monthly club ride.
- **Saturday 6 September, Hamsterley – last 2014 North East XC MTB Series** race (last of 8.)

In addition, children's coaching sessions would continue to be held on the first Saturday of each month; Dan Small would hold Interval Training sessions on Tuesday evenings and informal night rides would be held on Wednesday nights. Trailbuilding would continue to be held on the 3rd Saturday of each month, with extra sessions as required.

9 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Next meeting AGM on Monday 7 April 2014 at 6.30pm in Hamsterley Village Hall.