

Wakefield District Cycle Forum

Minutes of 2021 Annual General Meeting

Held on Wednesday 22nd September 2021

at St Giles' Church Pontefract

In attendance

David Leigh, Meg Andrews, Neville Andrews, Neil Battersby, John Burton, Ruth Burton, Sandy Clark, Nick Fox, David Keighley, Pat McAvoy, Cherry Oldham, Miles Roche, Joyce Roche, Janet Taylor.

Apologies received

Andy Beecroft, Mark Beswick, Sandi Kinkead, Isabelle Leigh, Keith Shuttler.

1 Welcome

Members were reminded of the death in October 2019 of Dennis Bell from a heart attack and asked to record thanks for what David had done for the Forum. His first ride with us was in February 2014, when 46 people attended - the second largest ride in the Forum's history. He soon became a keen ride leader, a stalwart of workdays and a bike doctor with a detailed knowledge of cycles. Thanks were given for Dennis's contribution.

2 Minutes of 2019 AGM

These were accepted as a true record.

3 Matters arising

Thanks to the Covid pandemic, of the 7 future priorities listed in paragraph 11 of the minutes, progress had only been made in one of these- improvements to the cycle route from Pontefract Park and Flass Lane. The route from the park to the M62 bridge was now possible but there were still elements outstanding.

4 Election of Officers

David Leigh announce that he was retiring as chair.

Chair - Meg Andrews (Proposed by John Burton and seconded by Miles Roche).

Vice Chair – Cherry Oldham (Proposed by Meg Andrews and seconded by Janet Taylor). It was agreed that David Keighley remain as co-Vice Chair until Cherry became familiar with the committee.

Secretary – Mark Beswick (Proposed Neville Andrews and seconded by Miles Roche).

Treasurer – Joyce Roche (Proposed by John Burton and seconded by Neville Andrews).

Membership Secretary – David Leigh (Proposed by Neville Andrews and seconded by Sandy Clark).

Statistics – David Leigh (Proposed by Neville Andrews and seconded by Sandy Clark).

Campaign Officer – Sandy Clark (Proposed by David Keighley and seconded by Miles Roche).

Publicity and Communication – Meg Andrews (Proposed by Cherry Oldham and seconded by Sandy Clark)

Events Manager – David Keighley (Proposed by Sandy Clark and seconded by Neville Andrews).

Rides Manager – Neville Andrews (Proposed by David Leigh and seconded by John Burton)

WMDC Liaison – Mark Beswick, David Keighley and Meg Andrews although, following a recent change, only two of the three will be able to attend any of the meetings at any one time.

Facebook Administrators – David Leigh, David Keighley, Angie Boyd and Neville Andrews.

Website Manager – Neville Andrews assisted by David Keighley.

Workgroup Manager – Andy Beecroft (Proposed by Neville Andrews and seconded by John Burton).

Auditor – Neville Andrews.

David Leigh was thanked for his service as chairman during the period from March 2019, a very difficult time thanks to the restrictions arising from the Covid pandemic.

5 Treasurers Report

The accounts for the year 2020/21 were presented showing

Opening balance 28.2.20	£56,892.20
Income	£10,441.56
Expenditure	£638.61
Closing balance 19.2.21	£66,695.15

The most significant income was the grant from WMDC for the year (£10,000) and donations towards a bench in memory of John Harvey totalling £264.56. Since the end of the financial year further donations had been received, bringing the total to £350.69.

On the expenditure side, the major items were public liability insurance costing £486.14 and a new trolley to move equipment on workdays, purchased for £89.95.

The treasurer confirmed that accounts for 2019-2020 had been prepared and agreed to bring these along to the next committee meeting.

The meeting approved the Treasurers Report.

It was pointed out that, although none of the group's officers had claimed any expenses for attending meetings as Forum representatives, whether petrol or parking, and some had even supplied tombola prizes gratis, it was perfectly appropriate to claim legitimate expenses and officers should not be deterred from doing this if desired.

In the past, ride leaders have been provided with first aid kits and other equipment but this has not been the case more recently, although many supply their own. Equipment lists are being drawn up, with a view to all ride leaders being provided with functioning radios, an up to date first aid kit, high vis vests and a basic toolkit. The grant from WMDC for the provision of guided rides will more than cover this.

Although the Forum has personal liability insurance cover for rides from Zurich Insurance, this is not thought to cover workdays. It is unlikely that the cover provided by Cycling UK will do so either. It was agreed that the workday manager look into the situation and in particular whether we needed to organise certificated training and safety equipment for using the whacker plate and strimmer.

6 Ride/Events Report

(A) Ride Report

The 2020 rides programme was significantly affected by Covid lockdowns and only 30 rides were completed during the year, 19 in the period from January to mid-March and 11 between August and October. With total participants at 270, rides averaged only 9 cyclists per ride. The 75 individual riders included 19 newcomers and were split 34.7% female 65.3% male. Of the 270 ride participants, 100 were female, an increase to 37%.

In the 2021 rides to date, 34 riders were new to the Forum. Each location has a hardcore of riders but it's always nice to see new people.

(B) Holiday Wednesdays and Village Thursdays and the Bike Doctor

These were all cancelled due to the pandemic

Thanks were given to the various ride leaders for their sterling efforts over the months.

The suggestion was made that it is helpful for ride participants to know in advance how long a particular ride is going to be and the approximate route. This might affect whether they cycle to the start or come by other means. The point was made that sometimes the decision is made on the day, depending on the experience of the those participating and the state of the trail. Ride leaders should always explain at the beginning the route proposed and any stops and hazards on the way. The Darrington ride is definitely a steady plus route and can extend to 30 miles.

7 Membership Report

Membership now stands at 1189. Of these, 856 subscribe to our newsletter, although only 774 receive it by mailshot and just 289 open it when received in this way.

8 Liaison with Wakefield Council

Regrettably there has been little to report in the way of progress since our last AGM in March 2019. This has been in large part due to the pandemic.

The £15,000 which the Council normally allocates to cycling infrastructure from the Transportation and Highways budget was not spent in 2020/21 so they are making £30,000 available in the current financial year.

The Forum intends to ask the Council to fund from this budget some or all of the following:

- Upgrading the footpath under the bridge between Altofts and Normanton to a cycle path
- Reinstating the “Dando Way” cycle link from Ackworth to Fitzwilliam Station (currently in poor condition)
- Linking the Flass Lane bridleway in Cutsyke (which has been partially resurfaced) to the adjacent bridleways reinstated by Waystones in 2018.
- Upgrading the link from Manor Lane in Ossett to Manorfield Drive in Horbury.

However, some progress can be reported:

- As mentioned above, Flass Lane has been properly surfaced in part and it is hoped that this surfacing will be extended towards Rose Bungalow/Mickle Hill (nearer the A6539)
- Lawns Lane, also in Outwood, has been closed to vehicular traffic and resurfaced
- Plans have been announced for on road cycle routes on the A61 north (Leeds Road) and south (Barnsley Road) of Wakefield City Centre and on Ings Road
- Consultation has taken place regarding cycle facilities on Doncaster Road (A638) and at the Black Road intersection with Neil Fox Way

- Although not in Wakefield, the Castleford Greenway has been extended north to the edge of Methley. After a short on road section through Methley the route continues to meet the TransPennine Trail from Bottom Boat. This was delivered under the Government's City Connect initiative through WYCA.
- The Council has commissioned consultants to draw up plans for cycling improvements. A summary of their 147-page report will be published shortly
- On the boundary with Barnsley there are aspirations to create a cycle link from the TransPennine Trail at Old Royston to Bleakley Lane along the old rail line. This would link up with two other cycle routes, including one to Notton.

The Cycle Forum has put pressure on the Council to achieve a number of aims, unfortunately with little success to date:

- The establishment of a cycle route from Montague Street in Agbrigg to Oakenshaw Lane in Walton. This leads straight into Walton Colliery Nature Park
- The enforcement of compliance with planning conditions relating to two bridleways on old railways in the Winterset/Ryhill area. The landowner is obliged to enter into an agreement with the Council to upgrade these to full bridleway status and this has not happened despite many years passing
- The enforcement of compliance with planning conditions at the old café/Rustic Villa near Cutsyke Level Crossing. This is to improve on the highly unsatisfactory access arrangements at the Southern end of the Castleford Greenway
- The removal of 3 unhelpful kissing gates on cycle routes (at Haw Park Wood and Pontefract Park)

Some discussion took place about this last item. A complaint had been made to the Local Government Ombudsman about the lack of consultation before the kissing gates at Anglers were installed and WDCF's complaint had been upheld. The Council accepts it was at fault and agreed to consult about the changes to the gate and then retake its decision about access arrangements in the light of the results of that consultation. They have belatedly decided to consult by means of an online questionnaire with carefully circumscribed opportunities to respond. The Forum's preferred response is simply to remove the kissing gate which would permit easy access for pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair and mobility scooter users, whilst keeping out cars, vans, lorries etc. Failing that, the obstruction should be limited to bollards.

10 Future priorities

It was suggested that the Forum should:

- Press to have all cycle routes classified as highways, so that their future maintenance and clearance becomes the responsibility of the local authority.

- Attract new riders by holding 'Pedal in the Park' sessions at Nostell and Thornes Park, thereby introducing parents to the Forum.
- Hold Ride Leader training to increase the number of available ride leaders.

11 Any other business

It had been suggested that a Christmas dinner be arranged, to celebrate an escape from lockdown. Kings Croft in Pontefract could accommodate us on the 15th December in a large room to facilitate social distancing, particularly for vulnerable participants. A four course meal with vegan and vegetarian options would cost £22.95 a head with no room charge. A provisional booking had been made and a £100 deposit would be required. The majority present supported the idea and it was agreed to subsidise the meal to the extent of £2.95 a head. The meal will go ahead if enough people are interested.

12 Date of next meeting

A discussion took place whether it would be better to have the next AGM in April of 2022, just over 6 months away and the traditional time for the AGM, or late September 2022. It was suggested too that the meeting could be followed by an annual dinner, which could attract more members to the meeting and avoid the usual Christmas price rise.

It was agreed that the AGM will take place on Thursday 27th September 2022 at a time and venue to be determined.

MMCA/ 2021 AGM/WDCF/24.9.21