

# AGM

## Friday 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 19.30

Newport Church of England Primary, Hazel Close,  
Newport PO30 5GD

The CycleWight AGM is here again. This year's is an especially important one for us as the group is being asked to consider a new role. The Council, as we are all aware is to be pared down. There is an expectation by Central Government that many of operations carried out by local councils will now be done by the community – in our case the cycling community. It means CycleWight may well find itself thrust into a different role – not one of just representing cyclists' views to the various bodies but also looking to provide solutions to issues, which may also include acquiring funding. How we face up to the challenge is a question that the committee has been discussing of late. This is the time to make more people in the cycling community aware of the challenges ahead and to discuss how as a group we respond to them. Your attendance along with anyone else with an interest in the future of cycling is crucial to future developments.

It is as always important that we send out a strong message to a variety of organisations and bodies that cycling is important on the Island and one way that can be achieved is by having a well attended AGM with people making their views clearly known.

## Wight Wheels Challenge

You may well remember that in July people were asked to participate in the Wight Wheels Challenge. This was part of a national project to encourage more people to ride. The Island did well in the Challenge, comparing well with the other places involved in the project such as Milton

Keynes and Southampton. For example Wight Wheels Challenge attracted the highest proportion of people who had not cycled in the last year, which was one of the main thrusts of the project. The challenge was carefully monitored and the findings make some interesting reading. Do look on the web site. In fact it is good to see many people are still using the site to log rides. The main reason cited why people do not ride more was the lack of cycle tracks. A point to ponder.

For the record, over 800 participated, riding 42,000 miles, 64% were for transport purposes saving more than 7 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

Will Ainslie, the coordinator for the Island, for reasons beyond his control, was given very little time to organise it and so it is a testament to him and to others that it was so successful. It is also a reminder that the 'community spirit' on the Island is an important element to make such projects work. It is to run again next year from May 7 for three weeks.



## Mince Pie Ride

The Mince Pie ride is on again. 27<sup>th</sup> Dec from Alverstone Village Hall at 11.00. Some people were cheeky enough to suggest that maybe we should go elsewhere. BUT NO came the reply. Please come along for a short(ish) ride to be followed by the warmth of mulled wine and mince pies. Donations welcome. More information on 520529.

## Sad news

Sue Cracknell is to leave her post as Cycling Officer after 6 years. To say she has made a difference would be a gross understatement. Her enthusiasm and tenacity have led to many improvements. It was said of Sir Christopher Wren, if you wanted a memorial for him, look around you. This could be said of Sue. The bridge on the Cowes to Newport route is a fine example of that, the rebuilding of the track after damage by badgers and the large number of schools who now have cycling as an integral part of their activity curriculum are just a few. We all wish Sue well in her new ventures.

## Improvements to Cycling at Brading?

Brading Council are bidding for Green Town status and as part of this they are looking at a new cycle track from Brading Station to St Helens Green. On 25 September plans by the Highways Department were on display. The track would be useful for school pupils who travel between schools in both towns, as well as for Island cyclists.

There are two possible routes. A new cycle section to Brading station may be on the north of the line then use the existing level crossing to cross to the south. Alternatively the station footbridge may be used plus a new section on the south of the line. At Brading a property is for sale and a footpath section can be widened. The route then follows the old railway line which some of us already use, and taking advantage of Southern Water land and some new path sections leading to St Helens but avoiding Carpenters Road which is unsafe for cycling.

It would be fair to say that the day did not seem to be well supported though many people did appear to have voted for the alternative routes. Nick Farthing of Sustrans and Martin Gibson of Natural Enterprises were on hand to explain the options and to get comments from the public.

## Extra

- A men's Giant town bike. 15 years old and hardly used. Free to a good home. Ring 520529
- We have had Nimbys, Yuppies, Dinkys. Now Romeos: Retired Old Men Eating Out. Remind you of anyone?

## Can you help?

I am sure you have all noticed the huge Vestas factory going up on the site of the old cement mills in Stag Lane!

While this will no doubt create welcome employment for the Isle of Wight, the factory operations may cause additional disturbances to birdlife in what is the most sensitive part of the Medina Estuary. The migratory wading birds and wildfowl that feed in the estuary during the winter months are at risk from a multitude of disturbances. Every time a bird takes flight it is using valuable energy reserves and I am interested in quantifying these disturbances. If you are out cycling on the Newport-Cowes route then please let me know if you see any evidence of bird disturbance. This could be caused, for example, by boats, bait diggers or bird watchers!

Of course birds will take flight as a result of natural disturbances e.g the rising tide or predators. Any information on this would also be useful. Roger Herbert. Medina Valley Centre

## Cycling Festival Report

Once again the Cycle Festival has increased the number of events organised and the number of participants.

Over 400 entrants participated in the two triathlon events, Recycle the Island attracted nearly 50 participants and Cycle the Wight, the British Heart Foundation event, totalled over 700. The organised bike rides, of which there were over 60, were better supported this year. This was particularly so for the family rides and is an area that organisers are looking to further develop next year.

A pleasing effect of the festival is the large number of charities that benefit by funds raised by people taking part. Final facts and figures are still being worked on but it has been a great success. Next year's festival is to be 17 – 25 September.

## Membership

In the square by this item there is a box, which if ticked highlights that your membership is now due. Please re-join as we rely on your small membership fee to keep us going. £5.00 Per. Household. £3.00 Unwaged. Please make all cheques payable to CycleWight. Mr D Jackson,  Toad Hall, Church Rd Havenstreet, PO33 4DW

