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Can we do it? Yes, we can

Something that has been very obvious in the last few years is that members of the group have been excellent at supporting actions when requested by the committee. We know that there has been a sizable number of you who, when asked, have written letters, contacted councillors and such like. In this newsletter we are asking you to get out your pens, get on your computers and also put on your thinking hats. One request is directly below. Throughout the newsletter there are other items requiring your support. Please do get involved.

The Group is constantly being contacted by a wide range of people or the accessing the web site looking for information about cycling on the Island. Many are looking for rides etc. There are several; publications which outline routes as well as some that have been produced by such bodies as Wightlink and the Council. This appears to be not enough. Do you have a favourite route on or off road? Are you willing to share it with others? On Wednesday 5th Sept the group will be meeting in the Castle Inn in Newport to put these routes on to a map. Can you turn up and do your bit? If not can you e-mail them to Tim and he will pass them on.

Something else that has been brought to the notice of the group is the need for there to be rides to begin at bike shops. Can you write a route from any of the Island bike shops?

Events

Wednesday 5th September, 8pm,
Committee meeting, Castle Inn Newport.

Sun 10th September Tour of Britain in
Southampton, Hoglands Park at 14.00
approx. More Info 023 8083 3333

15 – 23 September Cycling Festival.
There is even more happening this year.
Look at the excellent web site.
www.seasonandcycling.com

Sat 15th Sept. Family Bike ride to launch
of Cycle Festival. 11.00 Northwood
Garage.

Sun 8th October. Grid Iron. A ride round
the New Forest. You can pre register and
get route details from Wessex CTC.

Fri 23rd Nov AGM 7.30 1st Newport Scout
Hut, Woodbine Close, Newport. Plenty of
space for bikes and cars.

Thurs 27th Dec Mince Pie ride 11.00
Alverstone Village Hall. Easy family bike
ride around the surrounding country side.
Mince pies and mulled wine to follow.
Children Under 16 must be accompanied.
Donations for refreshments



At a cycle track near you

Cross Solent Cycle Forum AGM

There is always the feeling that it is done better somewhere else. The opportunity arose for the cycling fraternity of the Island to find out on July 7th whether it is. At Enterprise House in Newport cycling groups from the Island and Southampton met with representatives from both respective Councils. There was also in attendance representatives from Sustrans from the Island and the Hampshire area Island 2000 and Halfords. Much was learnt during the day. Each Cycling Officer did a presentation of their work as did Martin Gibson of Island 2000. There was detailed questioning from all the people sitting round the table. It was apparent that there was envy from both parties over what had been achieved by both areas. "If only we could do that..." was a common saying.

What came to light was the nature of the environment and population are very different; size and composition of population, urban and rural. The attitude though to similar issues was very different in some cases. For example for getting people to be less dependant on their cars and to switch to other forms of transport. It would be fair to say that the Southampton Council's approach was to be much more pro-active. A sizable part of their budget was dedicated to promoting other means of transport which included cycling. It was interesting to note that Southampton Council employees were seen to be an important part of the strategy with all manner of incentives given to help them to use other methods of transport getting to work and to carry out their duties. For instance officers who cycle when they are carrying out official duties receive more than the minimum amount of travel expenses that is suggested to local councils and the maintenance of their bike is subsidised.

Another interesting topic was a project for a new street layout. There is a concern that streets are becoming more and more cluttered with signs, barriers etc. This is often seen to be a means to protect the pedestrian from motor vehicles; this as a trial in Southampton has been looked at a different way. The streets in the project are to become more open in appearance but visually 'challenging' to car drivers so they use the area in a safe manner.

Things were not all one way and Southampton were impressed with the level of cycle training in schools on the Island, the fact that our cycle forum embraced such a wide range of people; we saw the inclusion of Councillors as an integral part.

There is not space in the newsletter to report all the issues and ideas discussed during the day. Without doubt it stimulated lots of thoughts in our minds. It is welcomed that there is to be another meeting in the near future on the mainland and that Portsmouth is to be invited too. Congratulations must be passed onto Sue Cracknell and Chris Wells, the Local Transport Manager for organising the day,

Are years getting shorter or is time moving faster? The AGM is here again. Once again we are asking you to attend. As usual we have invited a variety of guests to the AGM. This year's guest speaker is Dale Bostock, the Cycling Officer from Southampton. As you will read elsewhere in the newsletter Dale gives a very fresh perspective on cycling provision. It is important that members attend so as to send out a message that cycling is important. I am sure that the usual features will be there.

Cycle Festival

The full programme has now been published. It continues to grow, which is good news. Congratulations to the organisers at the 'Events' department at the Council and those people who have volunteered to take part in events. There is plenty of information the web as well as an easily available guide.

The main launch on 15th Sept is to be at Seaclose Park this year. There is to be a range of activities including 'The Sink or Swim' event where people try to cross the Medina using pedal powered vehicles. Tony Doyle, the cycle racing champion will be opening the launch of the festival and Charlie Dimmock of television gardening fame will be there too making a programme.

The group will be leading an easy ride from Northwood to the event as well as having a stand at site.

Cycle Forum

This is the body that meets on a regular basis to do discuss all bike issues on the Island. Throughout this newsletter there is information raised at the forum. It meets on a regular basis. The minutes for these meetings can now be found on the Council web site. The address is below. Please do have a look to see more details of what is happening than can appear in the newsletter.

www.iwight.com/living_here/environment/Transport_Strategies/Cycle_Forum/minutes.asp

Committee Meetings.

Weds 5th September at the Castle Inn at Newport at 8.00 As well as the usual agenda there will be an opportunity for people to draw on a map their favourite route. Please come along. See other article.

Thursday 11 October, 8pm, meeting, Castle Inn Newport.

Sorry

Some of you may have not received a newsletter in June. This was down to the ineptness of the Chair (acting) If you would wish a copy please do contact me. Hopefully this will not happen again.

Please support

It is always good to see people who are willing to try something new. Since January Will and Russ have begun to run Wight Mountain. They have changed the shop round but it is good to see that they have continued to have a wide range of bikes and spares to sell. Members will find a card in this mailing offering 10% discount.

Gavin Sullivan who had run Wight Off Road as a cycle hire business and led organised rides, has now opened up a shop in Sandown. There he is selling a variety of bikes including Meridian Cycles which is a new name to some. The bikes are mainly off road.

If this is not enough of the entrepreneurial spirit there is now another cycle enterprise. This is Re-cycle-D. Based also in Sandown Marsh Close it repairs bikes as well as sell second hand ones. Al Sheath the proprietor also offers to restore that old bike in the shed. You can find out more on:

www.re-cycle-d.co.uk

Got any ideas?

CycleWight meetings always have several moments where people consider the 'big' issues. We therefore are asking the membership for some ideas linked to the National Cycle Network (NCN). As many members are aware we have two of the National Cycle Network routes on the Island. It was felt that to raise awareness of this to the general populace and the official bodies on the Island that there should be a ride sometime next year where we use one or both routes but carry on (or start from) the mainland to highlight the links between both Islands. If you have any experience of using the routes 22 or 23 on the mainland please do get in contact. This would be a particularly effective event if we maybe could get 20 or 30 cyclists involved as it would be easier to get press coverage and support from organisations as well as have a jolly good day out.

A trip out

Val Lawson has developed a circular ride for the Cowes area. She has taken into consideration the hilly nature of some of the town and has made sure that it is suitable for families. It uses part of the cycle track as well the quiet lanes around Gurnard and Northwood. As with any good ride it has short cuts and places to stop for tea. If you would like a copy please contact Val. She is hoping for it to be available soon in the tourist office and in the long term for the map to be reproduced in by a professional body.

Bike Safe

This was an event organised by The Isle of Wight's Safer Neighbourhoods Partnership held at Medina High School to promote cycle safety and security. Cyclists who attended had their bikes registered with www.imobilise.com which is a searchable database used by the Police. Each bike was tagged with a special security band. For those who attended then received an opportunity to purchase subsidised safety gear or some free lights. The day was supported by several bikes shops as well as various Council departments and Police and Paramedics who use bikes in their daily work. The days concept was hampered by poor weather and in some areas a lack of promotion.

There will be another opportunity to register a bike at the launch of the cycle festival.

Electric bikes

Some of you may remember that the group organised a very successful electric bike event in 2002 where we had close on 20 participants in attendance. As part of these events it was discovered that there were nearly 100 on the Island then. There is to hopefully be a pilot project linked to electric bikes on the Island in the next year. There may well be a need to contact people who have one in the near future. If you know of anyone please send their names and addresses (with their permission) to Susan.Cracknell@IOW.Gov.uk. There is certainly more bikes and so hopefully this should be a very full list.

Connect2

This Sustrans led programme has been mentioned in the newsletter before but it is nearly the time we have to act. This project is about completing some of the gaps in cycle provision all across the country, a bridge here, a bit of cycle track there; literally connecting communities together. There are 79 individual projects as part of connect2. This project is bidding against others charities to be awarded the £50 million pounds. There is to be a television vote to see where the money is to be allocated. It will need as many people as possible to vote to make sure that this project wins. It is particularly important to us as two of the 'links' are to be on the mainland close to the Island; one in Southampton and the other in the New Forest. You can register your interest in voting with Sustrans who will contact you when it is needed. Log on to www.sustransconnect2.org.uk. If you do not have the internet, you can get some one to do it for you as they will send it to your mobile. (Yes I know!!!!!!)

From the Saddle

What makes a good yorkshire pudding? For many this simple dish is an art form. Some never quite the hang of making it. Its ingredients are simple and to many, especially those people from other parts of the world it must seem strange. It can be a triumph, crispy and tall or flat and stodgy. Ha, I hear you say here is coming some kind of analogy. Quite right I reply. But you then go onto say it is a tortuous analogy because it is nothing to do with cycling. The links are many. The ingredients for yorkshire puddings are good for cycling as they will give you plenty of energy. It is easily transportable as it would not suffer from the banana problem. Yorkshire pudding is also a great addition to a roast dinner as is cycling to a healthy life style.

As soon as cyclists get together one of the topics you can sure to come up is how to improve some feature of their actual experience. Cyclists on the Island are no different. "If only if so and so was done." Or "It would not take much to do..." We can all think of these; Cross Town Route in Newport, cycling on the revetment in Sandown or the West Wight Green Way. I along with most of you would like to see these issues resolved within the next week. It is unfortunately not going to happen. Ultimately these projects will rise like a good yorkshire pudding into a wonderful accompaniment to our lives. It is going to take patience and perseverance like making a yorkshire pudding but for the time being we will have to keep working away. Keep supporting CycleWight.

This must be the way

Some hotels in the New Forest are giving guests reduced rates who hand in their car keys at the beginning of their break. It is hoped to reduce people's reliance on their car and instead walk or use a bike. Is anyone doing this on the Island? Locally the opposite is happening. If you attend Dinosaur Isle or Brown's Golf Course you actually have your car park fee paid for you. Several supermarkets do the same. This in someway could be seen as a subsidy. This is not the way to get people to leave their car at home or back at the holiday camp Why do people who have made a contribution to minimising their carbon footprint get no benefit?

This is an initiative that people all over the Island could become involved? Do you know of anyone who is running such a scheme with a reduced entry fee for non car users or positively encouraging people to cycle to work. In Kent some employers pay their workers a bonus if they do not bring a car. This is obviously an area on which CycleWight can campaign. If you know of any institution on the Island please let us know. If you are someone who is reading this and are in the position to offer some form of incentive to cyclists or walkers, please let us know and we will be pleased to spread the word. How pleasant would it be if you turned up somewhere on

your bike and got a reduced entry fee or found your well earned ice cream cost less than car drivers. You certainly could guarantee the Wayfarers on their Sunday rides turning up on a regular basis.

Troll Trail

The Troll Trail has been launched at the end of July. This forms part of Route 23 between Newport and Merstone. The theme is intended to encourage access to the country. There are wooden sculptures along the route which are linked to the theme of Trolls. Another part of the project has to enhance the area around Merstone Station including a turf settee. The trail is supported by a flyer which contains a map of the route and its features. This can be obtained from dispensers on the cycle track itself.

This work has been led by Island 2000 and is not the first project they have done linked to cycling. They initiated the Sunshine Trail which it is good to see has been continually improved. Their Gift to Nature programme(www.g2n.org.uk) covers a wide range of environmentally linked projects.

The picture on the front page is part of the launch of the Troll Trail.

The Full Picture



Finally and most importantly

the Council budget for the year has been decided and the major areas of development to be worked upon.

These are: Improvements to the cycle track south of bridge at the old cement works, the Cowes contra flow system, Little London, The Race Course, a study of Lower Newport by Coppins Bridge and an improvement of the surface at Horringford.

As the year progresses there is a hope to look at options to improve the link between Brading and St Helens, to support the 2nd phase of the bid for the West Wight Green Way and to investigate ways of opening access to mountain bike routes in the forests.

Membership

In the square by this item there is a box, which if ticked highlights 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.