



# Mid Devon Cycling Club Committee

## Annual General Meeting Meeting Minutes 6th March 2021 via the Zoom app



**Present:** Shani & Peter Adams, Peter Cowlard, Mike Gibson, Mike Gratton (Chairperson), Paul Martin, Jamie Horton, Ron Keegan, Paul Martin (Secretary), Heather & Ian Myers, Andrew Parker, Ken Robertson, Mark Sanders, John Scanlon, Linda Simpson, Martin Smith, John Styles, Sarah Welsh, Rob Woodger

1. **Apologies:** Jane Taylor, Ian Whitear & Sue Wood
2. **Minutes of the 2020 AGM:** Circulated to all present in advance and approved without changes.
3. **Reports from Officers:**

### Chairman

2020 has certainly been a year to remember, perhaps not for predictable reasons. As will be identified in the Officer Reports our racing and group activities have been severely curtailed by the worldwide Covid 19 Pandemic.

This presented a number of challenges, not least the need for interpretation of Government guidance/mandates and British Cycling attempts to make sense of these to assist clubs continue with their business.

We were very fortunate and have remained so. The importance of cycling as an activity to nurture and protect physical and mental health and wellbeing has been recognised and maintained throughout. Whilst many of our group cycling and social activities have fallen by the wayside, we have nevertheless been able to continue to cycle.

There were occasions when the reputation of the club might have been at risk and I am thankful to club members for their positive and appropriate response which has reflected the integrity and positive ethos of the club throughout, and of our collective support for those on the front line who have sacrificed so much to fight the pandemic, often at great personal risk.

Mention of the ethos of MDCC is a good point to look at what has been achieved during this year.

The General Committee set about tightening up on aspects of the club structures to protect it for the future. A consultation day was set up in early March. At this event attended by a wide representation of club members the club Mission Statement and Vision for the Future were identified, with a refinement of what club priorities are and an illustrative representation of the club ethos which we now see on the club website. The key was to reflect the words used most to describe MDCC by all present and the most used appear large in the diagram.

**Sport England are now looking to use this as an example of best practice “ as it sums up the club on one page and is a great example of an activity that other clubs could use to test out how they are perceived by members”.**

Why is this important? We are a club of 560+ members and a healthy bank balance. We have a multiplicity of interests amongst those members and many different activities. Most are cycling focussed but increasingly, social, environmental and community aspects of club membership are becoming more important.

We saw a need to prioritise what we do and manage and monitor our spends. We have already introduced a new way of ensuring financial transparency. All club spends above a set minimum

limit must now be applied for with a Project funding application and approved in General Committee.

**A set of ten strategic priorities culminated in an ambitious Action Plan, summarised as follows:**

- 1. *Secure growth in numbers and breadth of cycling activity and coach and develop future champions.***
  - a. Structured approach to racing
  - b. Multi Discipline Coaching Programme
  - c. Budget and Support Plan
  - d. Sponsorship
- 2. *Build expanding portfolio of activity to attract a broader community of interest and enable greater participation.***
  - a. CX Track Improvements at Velopark
  - b. Development of Stores and Training Rooms at Velopark
  - c. Project participation in build of Pump Track at Velopark
  - d. Work to close gender gap by increasing numbers of female cyclists both in the club and wider community through Pedal Project, Breeze and women's race coaching both in the club and wider community.
  - e. Provision of events and trips always suitable for all club members, including social riders, to encourage more members. Improve existing offer and avoid duplication.
  - f. Acknowledge off road disciplines more widely, MTB and Cyclo cross. Develop activities that would engage with this potential growth area, coaching, clothing, ride structure and events
- 3. *Provide an improved rewards and recognition process.***
  - a. Review present process
  - b. Create and propose new structure
- 4. *Continue commitment to Dartmoor Classic Sportive, enabling contribution to relevant Charitable concerns and to the infrastructure needed for development of its aims and of a growth in community hubs in the local area.***
  - a. Maintain DC Sub Committee
- 5. *Host national standard cycling events that will be part of the building of MDCC as a recognised leading club in the national context.***
  - a. Identify suitable events
- 6. *Expand its network of influence across community organisations to bring about positive change in attitude towards cycling and cyclists in every aspect of society.***
  - a. Seek out appropriate Community Projects for contribution/intervention
  - b. Contribute to Teignbridge DC Cycle Forum (input to local cycle strategy)
  - c. Influence a similar contribution to strategy in Exeter/Torbay/South Hams DCs
- 7. *Lobby for suitable engineering and construction work to accommodate the increasing importance of cycling as a means for transportation.***

**8. *Contribute to the improvement of the environment by influencing positive change.***

- a. Target Local Authority Infrastructure Projects

**9. *Centre of Excellence, unlock potential and provide fun and good mental and physical wellbeing.***

- a. Identify new events or projects which would benefit members H&W
- b. Work with British Cycling to understand what elements might make up a C of E
- c. Perhaps create an Academy structure and partner with an NHS organisation

**10. *Marketing and Communication Strategy to increase club profile as modern and progressive community Sports Organisation.***

Progress has been made against most of the main objectives with considerable advancement in certain aspects.

The new Youth Academy is a wonderful improvement, bringing much renewed interest in racing in all its forms and particularly in Road Racing and Cyclo Cross. The skill and dedication of our coaches and trainers, Mike Gibson, Rob Woodger, Martin Burrows, Martin Smith, Andrew Parker and others must be recognised and applauded. Early success was seen by young MDCC riders in road and MTB but lockdown stopped further ambition.

A similar story was to repeat itself for adult racing in all forms and categories.

Frustrated by the Covid -19 regulations good use has been made of Zwift and RGT platforms for e racing and training.

Our young aspiring professional rider, Harrison Wood, recently recruited into the SEG Racing Academy team (Dutch UCI Continental team founded in 2015 to participate in Continental Circuits Races) has shared his experience and time by supporting the coaching effort and has set a fantastic example to our own young racers to be.

To ensure integrity and probity, our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies have been dramatically updated and thanks must go to Sue McGrath and Maria Woodger, our Welfare Officers, for their work to surpass the minimum standards required by British Cycling. Without their support we would have difficulty maintaining our prestigious British Cycling Go Ride Clubmark status. It should also be noted a primary requirement is evidence of the adoption of BC's Equity Policy.

Mention must also be made of the fantastic support given by MDCC members to our local NHS providers and key workers during the periods of Covid virus surge. The additional provision of much needed PPE and subsequently of specific protective hand cream, all in short supply, but negotiated by Paul Martin and co-ordinated to show our collective support has certainly put the name of the club where it should be.

The major thrust of effort by the club Committee has been a concerted push to establish enhanced facilities at the Velopark in Torbay. The creation of a permanent Cyclo Cross Track and Pump Track would make the existing facility a much more attractive proposition. From casual day users to national competition, the potential to impact positively on the local cycling Community of Interest or a wide variety of other communities of interest or place is palpable.

A public consultation was overwhelmingly positive in its support of such a venture and the benefits to our partners, Lex Leisure and Torbay Council have secured a real swing of support for us as a club doing something so positive and in the interests of the community at large. Our numbers are increasing, the local media is very supportive and we have good indications for a successful outcome for our application.

We have as a Committee, provided considerable input to recent consultation exercises by Local Authorities on the shape and function of cycling infrastructure projects. These have contributed to

improvements under way to Newton Abbot facilities and the cycle path destined to link Teignmouth and Newton Abbot or the improvements on the old A38 just off Splatford Split amongst others.

Safe to say that in the absence of the freedom to carry out our usual plethora of cycling and social activities we have made good use of the time as a club and have laid a solid foundation for the future of Mid Devon Cycling Club as the leading Cycling Club in the region.

Members have found ongoing restrictions frustrating and hope very much to see a relaxation in the Spring of 2021 and gradual resumption of all those activities we had come to accept as normal, but must now treasure as valued freedoms.

Liam McGrath

### **Treasurer**

It has been a relatively quiet year with many RR and TT not being run. The overall results show a small deficit of c£2k as against last year's deficit of c£4k. Some one-off outgoings in 2020 include a net cost of donations to the local NHS, Dartmoor Search and Rescue and Cycling Time Trials, a purchase of stakes for the CX circuit at the velopark, and the first Xmas party for a while in December, 2019. Coaching and staff training have continued especially with youth coaching.

Last year (2019) there was a large one off expenditure (£3,818) of signage at Abbots Brook and advertising boards which accounted for a large proportion of the loss in that year.

Mark Sanders

### **Road Racing Report**

2020 was a hugely disrupted year for Road Racing as it was for many other things in the world. The season started well with a good turnout at the Primavera promoted by Ken. Morgan Gibson Clay took 7th in the 3/4 and was the best of the clubs placings. After the 1st Lockdown there were some low key circuit races at the Velopark held within the new restrictions.

The Race Team and Youth Academy projects started to take shape and we had hoped for a full season in 2021. Alas at the time of writing this looks most unlikely with the majority of events in the 1st half of the year cancelled. This includes the clubs flagship races of Totnes Vire and Primavera. We can only hope for brighter things in the 2nd half of the year.

Mike Gratton

### **Time Trialling**

Time Trialling, as with all aspects of cycling, was hit hard by the various Covid 19 restrictions. This meant that most events were cancelled.

The club only ran two open time trials. Both were at 25 miles and had fields considerably higher than in previous years. This showed the appetite to get back racing. Hopefully this will be repeated as and when the 2021 season commences.

As far as club events are concerned we ran two 10 mile time trials. Both were in the Teign Valley and used the Teign House Inn as the HQ. As with the open TTs they attracted larger fields than in recent years. The final event was cancelled due to last minute roadworks.

Thanks are due to all who helped with the limited race programme including timekeepers, marshals, signing-on clerks etc. Without their invaluable help there would not be any races for the riders to enjoy.

Ken Robertson

### **Youth Academy Report**

Well 2020 was a different but very successful year, with most events being cancelled and lockdown stopping face to face group training and racing.

January saw 2 riders take on the Track racing at Newport in the well known icebreakers Bayley Woodger and Grace Ward both enjoyed this experience. We started some circuit racing and MTB racing just before lockdown one seeing youth riders hit the podiums in both disciplines.

Lockdown saw us start a different type of coaching using Zwift and Zoom this help keep riders involved. Once we could start again it was obvious this payed off with more success in racing with in a different format. Training after lockdown one was a huge increase in numbers seeing the Velopark being used to its full potential. We are looking forward in seeing more young riders racing in 2021.

The decision was made back in March to re-launch with the race team using the up-and-coming junior riders. This paves the way for Mid Devon and the Youth Academy so that riders can see a development pathway.

All riders are ready and raring to go for the new season with some European trips, regional and national races being highlighted for the youth academy and the race team in 2021.

Rob Woodger

### **Off Road Report - Cyclo Cross and MTB**

A challenging 2020 for the Off Road side of the club as with all the other disciplines.

The South West Cyclocross League season concluded at the end of January 2020 with some great overall placings for Mid Devon riders. Yet again, our club event at the Velopark was featured on BBC Spotlight south west, and the event was a great success.

The sad news came after the announcement of the COVID-19 situation that the South West CX League would not commit to any racing for the season 2020/21 due to the increase risks and restrictions.

A few organisers felt that the decision by the league was taken too early and would work with British Cycling South West Event Officer, Andrew Parker, to create a series of races around the region but with more of a pop-up format so we could at least attempt to provide some races with all the coronavirus guidance available. We found a title sponsor in Jewson who would supply course marking tape for any events that were able to go ahead. Unfortunately the various lockdowns or increased restrictions prevented any of the 5 races in the series from happening but with all the feedback and connections via the Facebook and Instagram accounts it proved there was still an appetite for racing.

Throughout much of 2020 the club Velopark sub-committee worked hard in the background with Lex Leisure and Torbay Council to apply for funding from British Cycling to create extra features and a pump track at the Velopark. With a great response for the project from both public and clubs in the region. Huge thanks to all involved in the application process and the many meetings via Zoom, and not a cat filter in sight. We should hear the outcome from British Cycling very soon.

With many events on the back burners so far, we are sure that we can return to as normal racing schedule as possible in CX and MTB later in the spring/summer. Plus we would hope that our project the the Velopark will get the green light and will be ready for the next Cyclocross season as well as coaching sessions.

Ben Tisdall has kindly joined the committee to take on the role for reporting on Mountain Biking, while Martin will concentrate on Cyclocross.

**Gravel** - Ben Tisdall [Sportiva Events] managed to create a superb Gravel event called Devon Grit in August. Based around Bicton and taking in Woodbury Common and surrounding areas there was a superb turnout and the weather was also superb. A great turnout of MDCC riders for the event.

**MTB** - Mountain biking was hugely affected by the pandemic with the entire south west series cancelled. There were a couple of events that were able to take place at Ashcombe with some good turnouts and were very well run with all the safety and cover protocols in place.

Martin Smith

## **Membership**

2020 has seen the clubs membership drop by over 100 to 435 from a very strong 583 in 2019.

This is in many ways, to be expected, due to the unprecedented year we have had with COVID-19 and the almost non-existent ability to ride in any significant groups, be that socially or at race level.

This does not mean however that the club membership should be overlooked or considered not worth the money. Many cogs still turn behind the scenes to enable the club to be in a strong position once we emerge from the Covid lockdown. The growing Youth Academy continues to plan for the time when racing can resume.

The velopark park has a great future ahead with more facilities on the horizon.

Members are still encouraged to use, and take information from, our established Facebook pages, including the growing use of online training platforms such as Zwift and RGT. In fact on writing this report I counted 5 different Facebook groups under the mid Devon cycling club umbrella, covering all areas of the club.

All in all, well worth the £15 membership fee, and in conclusion, as membership secretary, I look forward to seeing the clubs numbers grow again as we look towards resuming the many activities this great club has to offer.

Jamie Horton

## **Club Welfare Officer report for AGM 2021**

Documents relating to Welfare have been uploaded to the Club website so they can be accessed via a single location, and communications were sent out to make Club members aware.

These include policies and procedures for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, anti-bullying guidance, guidance for children on Club rides together with parental consent form, as well as contact details for the Club Welfare Officers Sue McGrath and Maria Woodger, and contact details for the Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Otherwise there is little to report from a Club Welfare Officer perspective this year.

No safeguarding concerns have been reported.

Sue McGrath - Club Welfare Officer

## **Events Committee 2020 Report**

The list of events that are now in limbo waiting for a suitable time is: Camelford Ride Back, Brittany trip, 26 people, now re booked for 30/4 - 3/5/21 and the Tour of Britain YHA weekend, 28 people, now re booked for 03/09 - 05 or 06/09/2. The 90th Anniversary 90 mile, 90 km or 90 minute rides followed by a celebratory BBQ and large cake is still in abeyance and will be discussed once it is

clear when this could take place. The Christmas Dinner and Dance at the Langstone Cliff Hotel, Dawlish was another casualty.

The 90th Anniversary was not a complete casualty as the club produced a very popular celebration jersey including a tribute to the NHS and Key Workers selling over 200 items. The club provided a £5 subsidy per jersey in recognition of the limited activity likely to have been possible in 2020.

We look forward to being able to provide some more of these great events that are always popular with members,

Angela, Jamie, John, Paul & Rose

The adoption of all reports was proposed by Ken Robertson and seconded by Mike Gratton.

Mike Gratton thanked all officers for their work and in particular wanted to pay tribute and give credit to the former Chairman, Liam McGrath who had made a massive contribution during his tenure. He also wanted to thank Sue McGrath for the considerable work she had done in updating policies that was now reflected in the website and was essential for the club to maintain its 'Club-mark' status.

#### **4. Election of Officers for 2021:**

Chairperson - Mike Gratton, proposer Ken Robertson, seconder Ron Keegan  
Vice Chairperson - Rob Woodger, proposer Mike Gratton, seconder Mike Gibson  
Vice Presidents re-elected as before - Ron Georgi, Ron Keegan, Andrew Parker, Andrew Perkins & Ken Robertson  
Honorary Secretary - Paul Martin, proposer Pete Adams, seconder Ron Keegan  
Honorary Treasurer - Mark Sanders continuing  
Membership - Jamie Horton continuing  
Cyclo Cross - Martin Smith continuing  
Mountain Biking - Ben Tisdall continuing  
Road Racing - Mike Gibson, proposer Mike Gratton, seconder Andrew Parker  
Time Trialling - Ken Robertson continuing  
Club Time Trials - Jane Taylor continuing  
Events - Paul Martin continuing  
Welfare - Andrew Parker, proposer Mike Gratton, seconder Paul Martin with Maria Woodger continuing with the Youths  
Youth Development - Rob Woodger continuing

#### **5. Velopark Developments - Ken Robertson reports:**

- MDCC has put together information that has allowed Torbay Council, as landowner, to put in a bid for funding from the "Places to Ride" fund.
- The MDCC team has been led by Sarah Welsh. She is being supported by Martin Smith, Liam McGrath until he resigned, Ken Robertson, Cameron Scott, John Styles and Rob Woodger.
- The club has worked with potential suppliers, with officers of Torbay Council and Simeon Lewry, Manager of the Torbay Leisure Centre and will continue to do so.
- The application is now with BC and Sport England for adjudication and it is expected that a result will be known in the middle of this month.
- There is a very tight time frame to get the project finished. In view of this we have been doing all we can in preparation work without spending any significant amounts of money.
- The latest action was a site visit yesterday afternoon so we all had a better understanding of what we are going to do and where the fixed obstacles plus pump track will be located.
- There is the possibility of the claim being rejected. If that happens we think that it is possible to find alternative funding streams. If necessary with the agreement of the club they will

be explored. It is not expected that the alternative funding will result in an increase of financial commitment from the club.

Mike Gratton wished to record his thanks to Martin Smith for his vision that got the club moving on this project and the very able assistance and dedicated inputs given by Liam McGrath, Ken Robertson, Cameron Scott, Martin Smith, John Styles and Sarah Welsh.

## **6. Close of meeting**

The Chairman invited comment and question from the floor. Peter Cowlard asked for clarification on the membership numbers. The 2020 membership ended with 435 members. Currently the membership is at 230 but because of the complete lack of activity the club had not yet been asking members to renew but has been looking at the current offer and will be promoting this with a special edition of The Hub on 13th March.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 1945h.

Paul Martin - 8th March 2021