

Wheelrights

Notes of launch of Swansea Bay Cycle Forum

Environment Centre, SA1 1RY, 2 February 2016

Present: Don Ashman (DA), Simon Bailey (SB), John Cardy (JC), Cllr Mark Child (MC), Chris Connick (ChC), Claudine Conway (CIC) Ian Davies (ID), Kev Demery (KD), Roger Dutton (RD), Allyson Evans (AE), Rhian Evans (RE), Stuart Gammon (SG), Nick Guy (NG), Pat Hansard (PH), Tim John (TJ), Ken Jose (KJ), Philip McDonnell (PM), Tony Moon (TM), Dafydd Morgan (DM), David Naylor (DN), Kevin Rees (KR), Terry Ryan (TR), Richie Saunders (RS), Alice Saville (AS), Patrick Tribe (PT).

Apologies: No rep.s from *BikeAbility (Wales)*, *Pennard Pedlars*, *Swansea Outdoor Group*.

The meeting was chaired by NG.

NG opened the meeting by welcoming all. He suggested that the name be changed from "Swansea Cycle Forum" to "Swansea Bay Cycle Forum" since it included representation from Neath Port Talbot as well as from Swansea. This was agreed.

He invited each group to describe briefly what they do. These contributions are summarised below. Those in the group attending the meeting are shown in [] with the presenter(s) underlined.

BBC (Wales) [DM]

DM said that he was producing a news item for BBC Cymru/Wales on the launch of the forum. Some members had told him that the regeneration of Swansea city centre was a great opportunity to put cycling infrastructure at the heart of the city. They told him that they saw the £500m plans to redevelop Swansea Civic Centre and St David's Shopping centre as a clean slate which would allow cycling facilities to be included from the offset, rather than an afterthought.

BikeAbility (Wales) [-]

NG spoke on behalf of this group. By means of specialised bikes they enable disabled people to become mobile. They also provide cycle training and, recently, gave a cycle awareness course to lorry drivers.

City and County of Swansea. [MC]

MC explained that he was Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Healthy City. He explained that his role was to get people to lead healthy lives. He noted walking and cycling was a way of achieving this and while not getting involved in the detail of the Forum's activities he wished to support the provision of cycle routes in the County and promote cycling as a means of transport.

CTC. [DA, SB, JC, CIC, ID, PH, KJ, DN, TR, AS, PT]. <http://swanseacycling.webs.com>.

CTC Swansea are part of the national organisation Cyclists Touring Club (CTC)

We cycle as a group in the Swansea Bay area, routinely providing three group rides per week, two on a Sunday and one on a Wednesday. The Sunday rides are normally one Easy Ride of 20-30 miles and one Moderate ride of 30-60 miles. The Wednesday rides are a combination of the groups and usually 30-40 miles. In addition to the group rides we arrange day events and cycle tours. The Rides programmes can be viewed on our web page (See above) or the pinned post on our FaceBook page 'CTC Swansea'.

Cyclecafe. [KD, SG, PT]

Cyclecafe is a newly formed cycling club in Swansea, set up by a group of keen cyclists who have become very good friends. We organise weekend and evening local cycle rides for our members, mainly road biking covering 30 to 80 miles. Also we organise cycle challenges. And take part in various Sportif events: eg Wales Velothon, Carten. You will find us on Facebook and Twitter under "Cyclecafe". We currently have 374 members and are growing fast.

Cwmtawe cycle group. [RS]

RS, Chairman of Cwmtawe Cycle Group, said how it was important to work with smaller communities and to encourage families to use their bikes for work, pleasure and to keep fit and active, also how it's crucial to keep campaigning for more cycle path links between communities to access the main routes safely and encourage safer cycling.

He also said that the Group gets people involved, giving them a sense of being part of a group and of their self worth. The Group does bike doctor sessions and communities rides. It is now in its 11th year and is heavily involved in Bike Week events.

The Group has also won two community awards for fund raising and a police award for “Best communities group in Clydach area”. It has worked with schools helping with Safe routes to Schools and arranges fun activities: BBQs, etc, and local fun days to encourage cycling.

Gower Riders. [KR]. <http://gower-riders.co.uk>.

KR informed us that Gower Riders Cycling Club was established in September 2012 as a family cycling club for all abilities and ages living in the Swansea area. Its sessions include youth (4-16 year olds), teaching them basic cycling skills in a safe traffic free environment.

The club is now thriving, with at least 100 members with up to 40 junior riders turning out every Saturday morning for the Go-Ride sessions. It runs Beginners rides, on and off road Club rides, Turbo/spin sessions and cyclo-cross training sessions. The club also organises cyclo-cross races and closed circuit racing in Swansea.

Rhondda Tunnel Society. [TM,]

TM gave the background to the tunnel which was closed in 1968 and the portals subsequently blocked. A recent survey shows the tunnel to be in good shape and the Society is trying to raise funds to open it for cyclists and walkers. He made the point that the tunnel would connect an extensive network of cycle routes on either side, thereby opening up the tourist potential.

Sustrans. [RD, TJ, DN]

TJ introduced the charity Sustrans who employ 20 people across Wales to promote walking and cycling with the aim to increase Active Travel. They deliver both infrastructure projects and behaviour change projects such as their Online Travel Challenge which is aimed at helping employees to have a go at cycling, walking, taking public transport and car-sharing to work.

RD works on Sustrans Schools Programme which aims to increase the number of children and young people regularly travelling actively to school by giving children the confidence, enthusiasm and skills required. He works with teachers, parents and governors. The project also aims to maximise the benefits of other related programmes such as pedestrian and cycle training, Safe Routes in Communities and local transport schemes and to assist local authorities and schools to develop their own active travel activities, sharing experience and best practice.

Swansea Environmental Forum. [PM]

PM explained that he worked with Swansea Environmental Forum which is the strategic partnership for the natural and built environment in Swansea and manages the Swansea Environment Strategy which promotes sustainable transport and active travel, including cycling.

U3A Cycling Group. [DN]. www.wheelrights.org.uk/events.htm.

DN explained that this group had recently been set up. It provided rides on the last Monday of most months. These are gentle rides, generally with two leaders so that shorter and longer options are available to suit the participants. None-U3A members are welcome for a limited number of rides.

Wheelrights. [SB, JC, ChC, AE, RE, NG, DN, AS] www.wheelrights.org.uk.

We have been going for 20 years. Our main aim is to campaign for better and more cycle routes. To this end we have quarterly meetings with the City and County of Swansea, assisting them in consultations and prioritising new cycle provision. We also organise an annual Gower Cycling Festival and are planning a series of "short rides" starting 4th April 10am at Coast Café, Marina. We are pleased to include other groups' events on our website.

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A discussion followed these presentations the focus of which was to establish how the Forum would work. It emerged that a key role would be for it to enable the exchange of information between groups about their activities, particularly organised rides. Facebook and exchanging links between websites would be a way of achieving this. We believed that there was a certain amount of duplication with similar rides taking place but at different times, and that there were people out there who were not aware of rides which might suit them.

Next meeting

6.30 pm on Tuesday, 12 April in the Environment Centre.

Notes prepared by
David Naylor (*Wheelrights* secretary)