

Wheelrights

Notes of AGM on 9th November 2021

Present: John Sayce (Chair), Dareyoush Rassi (Sec), Chris Walsh (Treasurer), Allyson Evans (Vice-Chair), David Naylor (Routes Group co-ordinator), David Judd (President), Nick Guy, Gordon Gibson, Cllr Nick Davies, Patrick Tribe, Bruce Hanlin, Alice Saville, Eifion Francis, James Dewitt, Jeff Green, Phil Brophy, Dawn Aplin, Hamish Osborn.

Apologies: none.

1. **Speaker: Matthew Gilbert from Transport for Wales (TfW)**

Matthew described the work of TfW as supporting Welsh Gov. deliver their Active Travel (AT) programme, which has seen a massive increase in spending on AT (incl. cycling infrastructure) from £30m to £70m

They had helped introduce different types of funding to include core funding, route development, monitoring/evaluation and minor works.

TfW's mission is to promote sustainable travel, esp. over short distances. TfW is widening its remit from rail to look at bus improvements, cycling and walking. They support a "culture change" within Local Authorities LAs (esp. around improved consultation, etc). Matthew sees this as a gradual cultural change, aimed at embedding AT aspects in more development plans.

TfW's projects include access to stations, identifying priority routes (with LAs), plus:

- AT marketing framework.
- More monitoring, consistency across Wales.
- Streamlined monitoring eg at scheme level, and producing FAQs.
- Expansion of cycle hire schemes.

Matthew offered more contact and dialogue with Wheelrights.

There followed a Question and Answer session.

– Tea break followed by Business Section. –

2. **Reports.**

The Reports from Chair, Secretary and Treasurer were presented and are provided as the appendices A, B and C respectively. All were approved by a proposer and seconder.

3. **Election.**

Re-election of the existing Officers was proposed by Gordon Gibson and seconded by Nick Guy. This was agreed.

The Following members of the WR Management Committee were nominated and appointed:

	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Seconder</u>
David Naylor	Nick Guy	Chris Walsh
David Judd	Dareyoush Rassi	Gordon Gibson
Nick Guy	John Sayce	Chris Walsh

This was agreed.

4. **AOB:**

The speaker for next meeting will be a Go Safe speaker. **[Action: Secretary and Chair].**

David Naylor asked about a Xmas social. David Judd proposed a social "fun" ride with lunch instead. This was agreed. **[Action: David Judd]**

Nick Guy

APPENDIX A

Chairs Report 2021

Last year, I left members with two questions that were at that moment unanswered, but possibly pointed the way forward. A year on, we know that home working does not seem to have affected the level of motor traffic in Swansea and that the City Council missed the opportunity to set up any pop-up cycle lanes.

Whilst the Welsh Government has put forward some of the strongest commitment to the promotion of Active travel in the English-speaking world, our local leaders continue to be in thrall to personal car use as the way forward despite all the evidence to the contrary. Most campaigning groups are asking the Government to change this law or that order. But cycle campaign groups in Wales are calling not for a Government change of direction, but for the Government to enforce its own policies!

It is now nearly a year since the local Council held its last consultation on a proposed scheme with us, despite the latest Active Travel guidance stressing the importance of this. Correspondence with ministers, civil servants and Council Officers have had no effect whatsoever. What does seem to have been effective is a public campaign to clear the foreshore regularly and this is certainly the way forward for the next 6 months whilst an election campaign for councillors is under way. We now need to build on the support of more than 500 people that took part in the facebook and consultation events. I look forward to members' suggestion for the next campaign issue!

One small indicator of the way forward was the success we had in joining forces with the good people of the Clyne Valley Country Party. Here, we successfully argued for a 100 metre extension of the shared use path to avoid continuing damage to their sports field. As cycle campaigners we have much in common with other environmental groups and any future campaigns need to be run alongside others who have similar aims. After 4 years of political stone walling over the Walter Rd cycle lanes, there is some very small glimmer of light! Was this because the local Living streets group got behind it? Was it because a large majority of local residents voted for it in an online poll? Watch this space to see what happens in 2022.

The decarbonisation of transport remains one of the hardest problems that our Government in Cardiff has to grapple with and we need to be at the forefront of those offering possible solutions. One of our successes of the last year has been the Welsh Government taking up our suggestion of an e-bike scheme for those living in areas of multiple deprivation. Although it has been tweaked to become a one month loan scheme, we need to talk to other organisations about how those who take up the loan offer can then acquire an E-Bike permanently. The full potential of e-bikes and e-scooters has yet to be realised in the Swansea Bay area. Should schemes like these focus on those in schools and colleges as they hopefully take the cycling habit into adulthood rather than persuading adults to limit their car use? Perhaps what I am suggesting is that we may need to move away from campaigning just on infra structure issues and think about behaviour change tactics to offer incentives for Active travel!

It only remains for me to thank the officers in particular and Routes Group members generally for their continued support to both the organisation and me personally. Dareyoush has been a wonderful addition to Wheelrights as Secretary with his willingness to listen and learn, whilst Chris, our Treasurer remains a bastion of common sense, understanding how to reconcile differing opinions. It was Vice Chair Allyson who suggested the Improve the Prom campaign and got fully stuck in with Phil Brophy as our facebook guru. I count myself blessed. More power to all their elbows in 2022!

John Sayce
November 2021

APPENDIX B

Secretary's Report 2021

Over the last twelve months Wheelrights has continued to campaign for more and better cycling provision despite the pandemic still dominating our lives. And as restrictions have been gradually eased, we have begun resuming our group rides and face-to-face meetings including this year's AGM.

Since our last AGM (in November 2020) we held two public meetings (in February and May 2021) as well as several officers' meetings. Most of these were 'virtual' meetings. A recurring topic of discussion has been a name change from Wheelrights to something that more directly connects with Swansea (or Swansea Bay) and cycling. I wrote to all our members regarding this question and received a handful of replies most of which were in favour of keeping the name Wheelrights. This debate deserves a wider participation by our membership which I hope will result in a well-considered decision.

The Routes Group has held eight meetings since our last AGM six of which were held 'virtually' but have now reverted to physical meetings. A recurring topic of discussion has been the controversial new cycle route on Mayals Road which is finally nearing completion, more than seven months behind schedule. More welcome recent additions to Swansea's cycle network were the Cockett Road, the 'Olchfa link' and the Gowerton to Gorseinon route (which is being extended to Pontarddulais.) Further new routes under consideration, and which are fully supported by Wheelrights, include the Gorseinon to Penllergaer link, Walter Road and the Clyne Common (Gower Access Path).

The notes of the Routes Group meetings can be accessed on the Wheelrights website <https://www.wheelrights.org.uk/newsnotes.htm>, as well as copies of the quarterly newsletter which have appeared regularly thanks to the able editorship of David Naylor.

The Active Travel agenda has been gathering momentum and is now recognised as a priority area of government policy. I wrote to all our members about the Commonplace exercise inviting comments and suggestions on Swansea's cycle route network. The public response was truly remarkable with hundreds of submissions which have resulted in the recent publication of a 'map series' on Swansea Council's Active Travel web page containing a 'wish list' of 158 new cycle routes. The consultation period on these proposals is due to end shortly and Wheelrights is in the process of submitting detailed feedback. I requested our members' help in identifying 'high priority' routes and I thank those members who responded and whose comments have been included in our submission to the Council.

Recently several Wheelrights members took the initiative in starting a petition for improvements to the Swansea foreshore shared use path. Large sections of this well-used path are frequently flooded and covered in sand sometimes making it dangerous for cyclists (and pedestrians.) The petition calls for better and more frequent maintenance of the path, as well as installing lights (similar to the ones in the West Cross section) in the wooded section of the path near Sketty Lane. I am pleased to report that the petition has been signed by nearly 500 residents and has attracted positive media attention. The petition will be handed to the Council in the next few weeks.

It only remains for me to thank our members for their continued support and to hope that the situation will continue to improve so that we can organise more group activities. Since the lifting of restrictions Allyson Evans has organised several 'Cappuccino Rides' and all being well these will resume next spring. New ideas and suggestions are always welcome.

Dareyoush Rassi
November 2021

APPENDIX C

Treasurer's Report

Summary:-

Income exceeded expenditure by just over £100 and primarily derived from annual subscriptions and a small amount in donations.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our membership for its continued support.

We supported the Mount Pleasant E-bike scheme by making a donation and I am delighted to see that it is now up and running.

Membership saw a modest increase to 70, 11 of which joined during 2021.

Subscriptions for 2022

We will accept cash at the forthcoming AGM, otherwise refer to our website link for current payment options:- <https://www.wheelrights.org.uk/joinus.htm>. Those currently paying by Standing Order (now just over half) many thanks as this simplifies things considerably and as usual I will confirm payments as they are received.

Wheelrights Financial Report

Year ending 31 Oct. 2021

Opening balance: £717.98.

Income	Amount £	Expenditure	Amount £
Membership subscriptions	309.39	Donation to Mt Pleasant scheme	100.00
Donations	30.00	Environment Centre Annual sub.	20.00
		Subscription to Cycling UK	82.00
		Improve the Prom. petition	10.00
		Newsletters	25.00
Sub Total	339.39	Sub Total	237.00

Income less Expenditure 102.39

Closing Balance: £820.37

Current Membership:	70
People joining this year:	11
Non renewers	7

Chris Walsh
4 Nov. 2021