

MINUTES OF THE MID COTSWOLDS TRACKS AND TRAILS GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.30pm Wednesday 14th October 2015 at Box Village Hall

24 members were present: David Allott; Joanna Bird; Julie Dickens; Kim Diment; Isobel Elliott; Vickie Elliott; Sue Ellis; Janet Evans; Saxon Greenway; Olga Griffiths; Pat Harris; Celia Horner; Sue King; Jane Moss; Steve Radcliffe; April Read; William Reddaway; Caroline Simms; Joy Spencer; Katrina Thacker; Andrea Thomson-Taylor; Teresa Turley; Trevor Weldon; Nicola West.

We were pleased to welcome 3 non-members, who were present but did not vote: Alan Greenway; K. Laker; Penny Laker.

- 1. Apologies were received from:** Caroline Barnes; Mary Day; Wendy Dayment; Margaret McKiddie; Lesley Radcliffe; Jo Redgewell; Fran Rees; Julian Rees; Kathryn Wakeman; Nigel Wakeman.
- 2. Minutes:** the minutes of the 2014 AGM were agreed and signed as a true record.
- 3. Matters Arising:** None
- 4. Treasurer's Report:** Saxon Greenway circulated copies of the receipts and payments account for the year ended 31st July 2015 which had been checked and signed by S. Taylor, Independent Examiner. These showed a closing balance of £1,155.24. The group had raised funds from several fundraising events including table top sales and donations. Costs included website hosting; Memory Mapping Licence; and BHS affiliation which included insurance for the committee and events. Payment had been made for a new gate at Chavenage. The committee kept £250 as a contingency reserve, leaving £905.24 for projects. £500 had been offered towards an upgrade of the Stroud to Nailsworth track as a multi-user track.
- 5. Chair's Report:** Pat Harris gave her report looking back over the 7 years of work by the group and summarising this last year's achievements and challenges. She also provided summary sheets updating members on the ongoing issues, relating to safety, new tracks and modification orders. Her full report would be made available on the website.

Members: Membership now stood at 182, (with 440 linked to our Facebook page and 107 Trailriding Buddies).

National Issues: MCTTG had been able to influence national debates. We made a submission to the House of Lords on a proposed amendment to the Deregulation Bill regarding vehicles on unsealed roads and the Canals and River Trust Survey acknowledged our input to their policy making process. The successful 4 years of work with Gloucestershire Highways on local fundraising for improvement to a class 5 highway had led to the BHS to reconsider and to actively support fundraising for track improvements in any circumstances where it might benefit riders.

County Issues: Locally, MCTTG assisted the Cotswold Conservation Board in their submission to the County Council regarding public rights of way funding, by compiling evidence on the health and economic benefits of good bridleways. This was now kept as a source document to draw on as needed. A similar piece of research identified issues relating to cyclists and rights of way, following an enquiry from a local cyclist. We also made a response to Stroud District Council's consultation on the Standish Hospital site. Following a suggestion to local groups from the BHS and a sample document, we were now considering our own draft bridleway strategy document, which we hoped to circulate soon.

Safety: We had raised the profile of horse and rider safety with the Glosfire Road Safety Partnership and this year had suggested several safety posters to them – this was ongoing work. The proposal for a treetop walkway at Westonbirt crossing the bridleway had caused concern among members, leading to us submitting a full safety report, and protesting about the length of the bridleway closure while work was in process.

Track Improvements: Over the years we had secured improvements to 26 gates and 11 tracks. Following our report on the Stroud to Nailsworth Cycle Track, we had been invited to accompany the Gloucestershire Local Access Forum in October when they would make a site visit prior to their discussion of the issue and any recommendation to the county council. The proposal for an offroad route between Stonehouse and Oxlynch/Standish was ongoing work, but we had helped Standish Parish Council to draft a Section 106 application for funding from development work in their area to be used for just such a track improvement, whenever such funding might become available. This could be adapted for use in other parishes. The Penn Wood bridleway had finally opened after 16 years of lobbying and hard work, including a public enquiry, public hearing, and diversion proposals.

Committee: The committee was thanked by Pat for the range of expertise and experience members brought together which enabled a better understanding of issues and practical strategies for tackling them. Most recently, for example, Nicola had been instrumental in raising awareness of disabled access, in designing safety posters and in getting the Memory Mapping system working for us. Pat was keen to encourage other volunteers on a range of issues including fundraising. Local subgroups might enable work to happen more quickly, but had not yet been established.

6. Election of Officers and Committee Members: Current officers and committee members, namely Jo Bird, Kim Diment, Sue Ellis (Secretary), Saxon Greenway (Treasurer), Pat Harris (Chair), Jane Moss, Steve Radcliffe, Katrina Thacker and Nicola West, had indicated that they were happy to continue. Other volunteers were encouraged and all members were welcome at the regular committee meeting which were held every two months, usually at the Amberley Inn, with a slot reserved for members to raise any issues. No-one being immediately forthcoming, April Read proposed that the committee should be elected en bloc and Vickie Elliott seconded this proposal which was passed nem con.

7. Any Other Business: None

The formal meeting closed at 8.10pm and was followed by an inspirational talk by Verity Smith, an international dressage rider, about her life journey as a blind rider.