

CEOGB AGM

26th May 2012, Bristol YHA

Present:

Officers: Jim Davis, chair; Geoff Rone, treasurer; Sally Hinchcliffe, Secretary, Joe Dunckley, Board; David Arditti, board, Chris Page, board. **Others:** Eileen Clegg, Mark Treasure, Nigel Shoosmith, Christopher Waller, Samantha Smith, Andy Preece, Alan Perryman, David Callaghan, Mark Annand, Joe Dunckley, Shaun McDonald, Martin McDonnell, Nigel Roberts, David Calder, Andrew Mailing, Tim Lennon.

Introduction and report from the chair

Jim Davis welcomed everyone and thanked Joe Dunckley, Tim Beadle in Bath, & the Bristol Cycling campaign for organising the event and the infrastructure rides.

He reported that the Embassy was in its 'awkward second year' – still finding where it fitted in relation to existing cycling campaigns while coping with the pace set by the Times campaign. The main objective for the AGM was to decide how best the Embassy could stick to its core mission and create a structure that would make best use of its resources

Much has been done since the last meeting, particularly to spread the word. Jim and David Arditti had represented the Embassy at the Labour Party Summit on cycling and Jim had spoken to the Movement for Liveable London, meetings of architects and planners, Ignite Lewes and other forums away from the 'converted' of other cycling campaigners. The Embassy also sits on the All-Party Cycling Group but because it's not formally a membership organisation that might limit our influence.

A number of members attended the study tour to the Netherlands in September last year which brought home to us what Dutch infrastructure was really about. The policy bash at the beginning of the year thrashed out in more detail how Dutch infrastructure might work in a UK context and has led to Paul James's visual interpretations of Blackfriars Bridge, Parliament Square and the Burnbrae roundabout.

We are currently supporting campaigns such as Love London Go Dutch, Sustrans Free Range Kids, & Times Cities fit for Cycling campaign. However, we do need to keep saying what our core message is and what good quality infrastructure is – for example when reacting to the LCC's Love London Go Dutch campaign. Now the dust is settling from Times campaign we need to actually build on that and make sure something concrete comes out of it, this may consist of helping CTC and Cycle Nation when necessary – for instance CTC are currently having a policy review over segregation. The Embassy needed more than ever but events have overtaken us in the past year.

We need to form better partnerships, especially beyond the world of UK cycling campaign – making links with the Netherlands and Denmark, and with UK non-cycling campaigns. We already have good

relationships with the Dutch Cycling Embassy & the actual Dutch Embassy. We also need to reach out to the non-cyclists and not-yet-cyclists, using forums like Mumsnet.

We need to do more with the website and think about how we'd like it to develop and how to strengthen it as a resource, particularly through the development of the wiki.

Report from the Treasurer

Geoff Rone went through the accounts (appended). In summary:

Income (net of Paypal commission): £2108.15

Expenses: £796.50

Bank Balance: £1311.84

Current projects

Wiki

The wiki is continuing to develop slowly but surely. Chris Page and Joe Dunckley have been taking the lead on the claims and canards page, Sally Hinchcliffe adding to the research resources. It works best when people add things to the wiki that they were doing anyway, meaning that work and research doesn't have to be done over. It was agreed that we need a better structure overall and we need to make sure that the top-level pages are accessible to an external general audience, while the more detailed pages you drill down into can be more technical and specialist.

Book

Tim Lennon reported that he and Mair Hughes (Sheffield Cycle Chic) have been co-working on the book particularly clarifying the audience and the structure. The audience was two-fold: on the one hand planners and council officers, to give them the idea of what good infrastructure could be and on the other hand 'Sky riders' (those who like cycling but find the roads too daunting under normal circumstances). Tim and Mair have put together a plan for about 50 pages, working out the key content of the book and they now need to start asking people for good images: photographs, infographics and so on. Tim has put together a Pinterest board with suitable images; a flickr group would also be helpful for gathering images. There is more detail on the wiki here

<http://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/wiki/cycling-embassy-book>

Role & purpose of the Cycling Embassy

From the start we have had a combined Manifesto and Mission Statement setting out our goals and our core mission is still about decent, high-quality infrastructure. Now we need to think about how we go about achieving that. The feeling was that we have helped influence the move towards greater segregation, and that we should continue to act as a repository of information and corrective to watering down of the 'quality message. We should also make it clear what Dutch infrastructure really consists of and the role of things like filtered permeability as well as cycle tracks and so on. It was agreed that we needed to do more to reflect the views of the non-cyclists (or not-yet-cycling) and also that we can't act as a consultancy although we could forge links with existing consultancies and even commission work where necessary.

The meeting agreed that our primary activity should be to lobby politicians directly, whether in the Westminster or devolved administrations, for instance we should be working with the Welsh Assembly during their consultation period over their cycling routes proposal. It was clear that while local groups were in many cases working well with their local authorities within the resources and guidelines available, no real change would come about until policy changed nationally. On the other hand, we can help provide some expertise to local campaigns to help local groups make the case about good infrastructure even within the existing policy framework.

The idea of becoming a paid membership organisation was suggested as a way of giving us more resources and more clout nationally. At the moment people are signing up to the Embassy because they support our claims (around 900 to date) but they aren't paying to join although many do subsequently donate money as well. One problem is that we are not representing as much the keen or committed cyclist (who might already be a member of their local cycling campaign) as those who would like to cycle – and they are much less likely to join a 'cycling' organisation. Having only a small membership would actually reduce our influence, whereas the Times has shown that using a public pledge of support can be an effective way of turning broad support into influence.

The meeting agreed that we focus on becoming a national lobbying organisation and that we transform our existing membership structure into a public pledge of support for the Embassy's manifesto and mission statement. It was further agreed that the Embassy would be resourced more on a project-by-project basis, raising funds for particular activities rather than going for general subscriptions for annual running costs.

Structure of the CEoGB

Jim Davis report that while lots of people were willing to help & pledge their support, the actual work tends to fall back on the same few people so the structure needs to be revised. It was agreed that we needed some more specific roles, including a volunteer co-ordinator, technical co-ordinator and a fundraising co-ordinator. It was also agreed that the board needed to take more of a co-ordinating role, with board members leading teams of volunteers spreading the workload. This would make it easier for people to get involved in small ways; many people are willing to help but it's often easier if they're specifically asked. It was agreed that the actual detailed structure would have to wait until we were clearer about what the immediate projects were so the board could reflect the work of the organisation.

Mark Treasure was elected Press officer and the rest of the board were re-elected without opposition.

Planning for the Future

We agreed to follow up on the Sunday to put some more detail on the proposals for future plans and how that would influence the structure of the organisation as well as what needed to be done with the website in detail.

AOB

We need to consider reaching out to members beyond the world of narrow cycling campaigns. This could include engaging with the NUS and NHS trusts, distributing postcards at Skyrides and so on. These were discussed in more detail on the next day.