

## Cycling Embassy AGM – day 2, policy bash

Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2012

Present: Sally Hinchcliffe, Christopher Waller, Sam Smith, David Arditti, Joe Dunckley, Shaun McDonald, David Calder, Andrew Mailing and Tim Beadle. Simon Parker joined us for the afternoon.

### Agenda

There was no formal agenda as such, so we considered some of the ideas that had come up at the AGM in more detail and attached actions to names wherever possible. We then considered other ideas for the future. We used Tim Lennon's email as a basis for our discussion as he'd picked up a lot of details that had been floated at the meeting on Saturday and merited further discussion.

### Personnel

Sam has agreed to be volunteer co-ordinator while Mark Treasure is our new Press officer

### Website

1. Making the website more 'push' oriented and feeding content out through more channels. It was agreed this was a good thing to do. The facebook page has to a certain extent been abandoned except for one person who wants to make helmets compulsory. We need 'facebook natives' to spend more time interacting on that page and make sure that any fresh content on the website gets pushed out better via twitter, facebook and any other channels that look useful.

#### **Actions:**

- a. Make Shaun, Tim Beadle, Sam and David Calder admins of the facebook page (Note I have just tried to do this and utterly failed. Can someone under the age of 40 have a go please?)
  - b. Schedule tweets for the blog roundup at 8:30 am, 11:30 am and 4pm each Monday (Jim will have to do this)
  - c. Investigate adding a 'page of the week' onto the front page. (Anthony will have to put this in place; Sally and/or Mark and others will have to pick out relevant pages. Ideally this could be scheduled – Sally, Anthony Mark & Jim to discuss the logistics of this)
  - d. Feed the latest post(s) from the forum onto the front page and do a better job of tweeting interesting posts (Anthony will need to investigate adding this to the front page; Jim / Sally / Mark would have to co-ordinate tweeting)
2. Rebuilding the website around the idea of a public pledge of support for the aims of the Embassy, along the lines of the Times campaign and Londoners on Bikes. We agreed that this was crucial, and also that the reasons people were giving for signing up were valuable ('gold') and should be scattered through the site, with more use made of them. Most of the 900 or so people who've signed up have done so because they support our aims – a few just to get access to the forums or out of curiosity. We've mostly done a poor job of engaging them after that.

#### **Actions:**

- a. Everyone who has signed up already will need to be re-contacted and asked to reaffirm their support for the Embassy and give permission for their name and reasons for joining to be made public. We could do this passively (your name will go up unless you opt out) or actively (opt back in) – latter would be more ethical and potentially less in breach of the data protection act. (Sally/Jim to draft email to members, Anthony to look at implications for the site itself)
- b. Everyone who signs up from now on to be sent a welcome email (could be automated or semi-automated) explaining what happens next, pointing them towards what they can do (donate, volunteer) and giving them the option to opt out of any further emails. Whether it's automated or not, we'll need to keep updating the email to make sure it's current and timely (Sam to draft email, Anthony to look at the technicality of sending out the email and making sure Sam can edit it)
- 3. Some sort of 'counter' idea. We did discuss this and agreed that number of cyclists killed was too gruesome whereas more telling figures (pounds wasted on crap infrastructure) were too difficult to do anything but guess at. In the end, unless we had a really sound source of figures we decided this was too much of a distraction.
- 4. Pages suitable for outsiders: on the whole the FAQ gives the best introduction to the aims of the embassy and what we're about, but clearly it needs to be more prominent. Other pages might also be helpful

**Action:**

- a. Look at making FAQ more visible (Anthony). Possibly also get some fresh eyes on the site to look at what is / isn't there and what needs to be added.
- 5. Populating the wiki. The actual structure of the pages works well enough (for the common claims and canards anyway). At the moment most of the content is being generated as a by-product of something else, for instance Joe updates individual 'canard' pages when he encounters one somewhere online and wants to point people to it. Realistically, this is likely to be the best way to continue to generate content. For instance, work on the book could include updating wiki pages on Dutch infrastructure, and we should also be more proactive about repurposing content from elsewhere (like Paul James's designs) and getting it onto the site.

**Actions:**

- a. Everyone to make more of an effort to put content onto the site rather than elsewhere – eg bookmark useful research on the research page, develop information for the book via the wiki, write up the infrastructure safaris from the weekend and before and add them to the wiki
- b. The technical team to collate information from their own blogs and elsewhere and get it onto the wiki.

Marketing / spreading the word

- 1. We agreed that we should be doing more to have a presence at events like Sky Rides and other bike promotional events like the Bristol Big Ride, and that getting people to hand out postcards at their local event was probably the most effective way to do this.

**Actions:**

- a. Get more postcards printed and make them available to any member who is planning on attending a sky ride or similar event over the summer in their area (Mark Ames had done this originally – Jim would have to follow up with him & see if we could get more printed or else Geoff Rone had a long time ago suggested investigating more local printing firms)
  - b. Create a web/twitter/facebook campaign to ask our members to do this (Sam). A good way to start getting people involved in a low-key way with the Embassy!
2. We discussed reaching out to the academic world to see if they could endorse us or work in partnership with us in some way. On the specific question of the NUS, we didn't feel that it was worth working with individual universities or student unions as that is more the territory of local bike campaigns but it was worth exploring whether they might be interested at a national level. In general, where we have a 'way in' to a national group or organisation it might be worth exploring this further. We did feel that we should do more to exploit our existing contacts with the academic world as this would also give us more credibility in the eyes of policy makers. We need to be better at submitting papers and attending conferences

**Action:**

- a. Chris Waller to start by talking to his local NUS contacts and see if they're interested. Others to suggest potential links they might be able to exploit.
  - b. Joe and Mark to follow up on existing contacts with Rachel Aldridge about 'guest lectureships' and Jim, Chris Page, Joe & Mark to continue to attend any likely looking even possible
3. T-shirts and other merchandising. We agreed that we needed to improve the position with our current set up which is too expensive and not raising much in the way of funds for us. We also needed to clarify what the tax position would be if we were to aggressively pursue using t-shirt (or book) sales as a fund raising tactic. Nobody at the meeting was willing to take on the role of getting t-shirts printed and fulfilling orders but it's possible someone else might be willing to do this. Alternatively, there may be a UK firm a bit like Cafe Press that would take on the orders and fulfilment for us for a fee, but with lower shipping costs. This is definitely something we need a fundraising co-ordinator for

**Actions:**

- a. Geoff to investigate / clarify the tax position if we were to do more trading to raise funds. Andrew Mailing to send information regarding becoming a social enterprise.
- b. Tim Beadle to look further into possible t-shirt and other merchandise suppliers.
- c. Sam (and others ) to make finding a fundraising co-ordinator a matter of priority!

## Study tours and safaris.

1. We agreed we should be encouraging people to go on the Netherlands study tour as an annual 'Embassy' event. The next one is in September and we need to start spreading the word about this now and see if we can book a full tour and go as a group. We also agreed that being able to offer a 'bursary' to send someone on the tour who might not otherwise be able to go would be good. We did think that some council officials or councillors might be reluctant to accept it as a gift as it might look a bit corrupt, however we could offer it as a bursary to any student on a town planning course, influencing the planners of tomorrow (this would take some organising – and some fundraising). It was also worth asking whether

the tour could be rearranged to go over a weekend so people wouldn't have to take so much time off work.

#### **Actions**

- a. Jim to ask David Hembrow whether a weekend course might be possible, if there was more interest in that
  - b. Sally / Sam to start spreading the word about booking for the next study tour (could maybe get a guest blog post from Claire Prospert who's just been on one)
  - c. Our non-existent fundraising co-ordinator to investigate raising funds for a bursary for a deserving planning student (more of a long-term plan).
2. More infrastructure safaris. The idea of simply getting out more around the UK and holding more infrastructure safaris seemed to strike the biggest chord via twitter (with several invitations extended before the meeting was over). They're a good way of energising the core of committed cyclists around the country and also gathering material for our book. Getting the safaris written up and on the website is also helpful for clarifying what works and what doesn't in the UK. . Once two or three have been written up on the website and people get the idea we wouldn't even need anyone from the core team to go – people could just submit them online.

#### **Actions**

- a. Someone (who?) to co-ordinate possible infrastructure safaris and schedule them and start spreading the word that we're interested in running more and where they will be.
  - b. Mark, Joe, David Arditti and others to write up the infrastructure safaris from the weekend and get them onto the website as exemplars. Also write up the original London and Manchester safaris if anyone can remember enough to do so in any detail.

### **Future stuff**

1. Conferences and Campaigning: We discussed very briefly the idea of a campaigning book (as suggested by Karl McCracken) but weren't sure how much it was likely to overlap with what's being done with Cyclescapes. It was suggested that we should investigate having a presence at the fringe events of major party conferences, if that is possible to do. We did not discuss the proposed Newcastle conference in any detail.

#### **Actions**

- a. Shaun to look at what the overlap might be with cyclescapes and report back
  - b. Jim to investigate the feasibility of having some presence at national party conferences
2. Promotional film, possibly to tie in with and market the book. The idea was to do something around 'Getting Zoe to School' – why it's so difficult for a London child to cycle to school just a couple of miles away. Shaun volunteered to use his technical filming and editing expertise if someone could provide a script and story board. Beatrix from 'Beauty and the Bike' might also be someone who could get involved (and might know about funding). This may just be a bit too much for our resources though

#### **Actions**

- a. Sally / Sam to flesh out a possible film outline and see if it's worth pursuing.

