

# Minutes of the Start-Up Meeting for the Cycling Embassy of Great Britain

## FIRST DRAFT

**Held at Look Mum No Hands, Old Street, London EC1  
Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2011 (12 noon)**

### Introductions

### Mission Statement (Read out in full by Mark Ames)

*An Embassy, free from the burden of history, legacy and ties, created to **work in partnership with fellow organisations and charities** in Great Britain, mainland Europe and around the World trading ideas and experiences in how to promote cycling and make cycling infrastructure work in urban and rural contexts.*

*To develop relations with private companies already committed to **Green & Sustainable values** and promote the truth that cycling can produce a fitter, healthier, happier workforce saving billions in 'sick' days to the British economy.*

*To lobby relevant Government Departments that **cycling is a solution** to transport congestion, noise pollution, carbon emissions, deaths and serious injuries on our roads, obesity and illnesses from more sedentary lifestyles, stress and expense.*

*To politely correct the Department for Transport that '**Sustainable Transport**' actually means walking, cycling and public transport as opposed to spending further millions on expanding the road network which will only sustain more pollution, deaths & serious injuries and congestion, like the decades that preceded. The idea is to make something sustainable for future generations to inherit. A bigger M25 isn't it.*

*To redefine what **Road Safety** in the UK means by working with relevant groups; to highlight what the real dangers are, to enforce a duty of care to the most vulnerable and promoting prevention, rather than cure. This will be through a raft of measures including reduced speed limits in urban areas and changes in streetscape design to put community needs before those just travelling through them. We will strive to create an environment where helmets and other forms of protective wear are seen as unnecessary as opposed to essential. We will strive to make riding a bicycle as easy as riding a bicycle.*

*To work with local authorities and relevant parties to redefine **Cycling Infrastructure Design Standards** in the UK and bring them in line with best practice in partner countries. 'Hierarchy of Provision', although well-meaning and correct in principle is too open to abuse or compromise by practitioners that know little about the requirements of cycling (or indeed walking) yet may wish to know more.*

*To engage with and support **better communication** with exchange of knowledge and ideas between architects, transport planners, designers & engineers as to how to get more people cycling [and walking] and improving access for all to town & city centres and transport interchanges. Also working out what makes decent cycle infrastructure work and how it benefits society as a whole.*

*To protect **cycling proficiency for children and adults**. It is an essential skill that did us very well in the past, as it can again in the future.*

Was felt that use of the word 'cyclist' reinforces the idea of the Embassy being an 'outside' group.

It was welcomed that the word 'cyclist' doesn't feature in the Mission Statement and should continue throughout all future press releases

Comment – Just because someone is classed as a 'driver' doesn't mean that they are a sports car enthusiast attending track days.

Comment - When Cambridge Cycle Campaign talks about ‘Cyclists’, they don’t mean ‘cyclists’ because they acknowledge that many have cars, use public transport and have bicycles. It is simply a case that they own a bicycle and it is the best mode from some trips.

If we have an excellent cycle infrastructure network, it also benefits car drivers through reduced congestion, pollution so instead of seeing cycle infrastructure as having a negative effect on other transport modes, we need to emphasise the positive.

JD – Also, by growing a cycling culture, more motorists will also be cyclists bringing increased road awareness. Also better access for pedestrian access, wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs etc.

(Reference made to post on David Hembrow’s website on street layout comparisons between UK and the Netherlands to emphasise what can be done to improve access

<http://hembrow.eu/cycling/comparisons.html#comp>)

Goodbye Jacques made point about people having bikes stolen and not returning to cycling as a result. Would like to see Embassy commitment to addressing cycle theft.

JD made general point that cycling helps address ‘Culture of Fear’ – At the moment people walk out of boxes into metal boxes to drive silly distances to larger boxes to work – No requirement to interact with neighbourhood whatsoever. With more people out on bicycles or walking, they act as eyes and ears of the neighbourhood. Infrastructure should include better and more secure bike parking (it was acknowledged that Councils are better at providing bike parking than bike paths)

Need identified to liaise with Police.

JD noted that when he set up Worthing Cycle Forum it was for the cycling (or non-cycling) public to meet with official agencies that have effect on cycling such as NHS, Sussex Police, local schools etc.

Question raised as to how we would fit in with pedestrian groups.

Crawley [West Sussex] was identified as not being very pedestrian friendly (specifically, the five or six holding pens for pedestrians just trying to cross roads to get from the Railway Station to the library)

Living Streets and other groups identified (*see list of potential partners*) as any new Cycle Infrastructure must not impede on pedestrians and disability groups.

SH – ‘A bike painted on the pavement is no better than a bike painted on the road’

There are already Pan-London design standards and with the new Localism Agenda gives us a real chance to make impact. Regional tier in planning has been removed. There is a ‘disconnect’ between having a standard and how this is applied and it’s good that the Embassy is hoping to address this. Disconnect between Planning Documents and Local Implementation Plan (LIP), for example where ‘Section 106’ monies are concerned. It was felt that the Embassy should not only harmonise Cycle Infrastructure Standards but also assist design professionals and planners on how to get the money from Developers as it’s not going to come from Local Authorities in the future.

## SECTION 106 Definition

*Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority (LPA) to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission. The obligation is termed a Section 106 Agreement.*

*These agreements are a way of delivering or addressing matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They are increasingly used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, such as highways, recreational facilities, education, health and affordable housing.*

*The scope of such agreements is laid out in the government’s Circular 05/2005. Matters agreed as part of a S106 must be:*

- *relevant to planning*
- *necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms*
- *directly related to the proposed development*

- *fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development*
- *reasonable in all other respects.*

*A council's approach to securing benefits through the S106 process should be grounded in evidence-based policy.*

SH raised point that she spoke to the Planning Officer in Dumfries, and no-one has ever mentioned cycle infrastructure to him even though there are lots of cyclists but also no councillor has ever raised cycling as an issue in the town. The Planning Officer is a cyclist and as far as SH can tell, he's just put infrastructure in. If we're not talking as voters to councillors then they are not going to know about issues such as cycle paths. Local elections often have a derisory turnout so it's a good chance to start lobbying and engaging local politicians direct.

KMcC noted that infrastructure guidelines are too open to flexible interpretation and compromise. If we're to get change to take place, we have to 'lobby our local councillors and kick up a fuss and make it clear that, although there is an [assumed] motorists lobby, there is also an organised cycling lobby prepared to attend meetings and ask awkward questions.

Cambridge Cycle Campaign noted that one of the most successful campaigns they did in 2010 was where people were parking on a 'Primary Cycle Route' (advisory on-road cycle lane). Money came in from Cycle Demonstration Town and the Campaign wanted double yellow lines implemented. They recognised that local councillors were not cyclists and might vote against any action so they invited them to ride a bicycle from one end of the road the other during rush hour whilst pointing out all the children that were cycling to school illegally on the pavement because they didn't feel safe on the roads. The motion was passed by Councillors.

If you want the councillors to get involved, you have to get them cycling and what is missing from the Mission statement is a goal for percentage of people cycling (it was pointed out that it was in the Manifesto)

To those that say 'we don't need segregated infrastructure, I can cycle on that road', the reply should be 'would you expect a Granny to cycle on it'. We should be attracting more people from groups that don't cycle as much (children, women, the elderly) and providing high class infrastructure for them.

MA – Although we are cyclists pushing for better facilities for cycling, this is not a cycling campaign at all in that it is an aspiration – to get lots more people to buy into our idea by saying what a wonderful lifestyle they'll have as a consequence of our ideas like being able to get around more easily. We have to tie in with emotive ideas [such as children being able to cycle to school safely or childhood obesity. As a minority, we have to think big in how we project our ideas and get people interested.

Point made that we should maybe include Women, Children and the Elderly in our Mission Statement.

Cambridge Cycle Campaign – They identified lack of cycle parking at the railway station (1000 spaces already when treble that is needed). Hospital does not cycle parking despite there being a new cycleway to the site. Parking infrastructure is regarded as just as important as the infrastructure to it.

JD Cycling needs to be regarded as transport and receiving a far more deserving share of the Department for Transport spend (as opposed to being cast out to the provinces as in the Local Transport White Paper, January 2011)

Question was raised as to whether the Embassy was the cycling 'wing' of a Revolution or whether we **are** the revolution.

JD stated that we have to represent cycling as it's what we know best but act as part of 'a broad church' to see our vision through.

MA also pointed out that there are other organisations such as Living Streets representing pedestrians and disability groups already representing different groups of people so we shouldn't try and be everything to everyone.

It was suggested that the 'Hierarchy of Provision' line be removed – Not everyone agreed with it in principle and not many members of the general public would know what it was.

Point was raised that we should use Equity of all Road Users as it is seen as positive. It was viewed however as ambiguous and could be used against us as some infrastructure measures [such as permeability] won't be seen as fair to motorists.

It was suggested that as an Embassy, we should be working as 'Ambassadors to other organisations (such as CTC and Sustrans) to encourage our way of working.

Jan Gehl 'making walking and cycling look inviting'

Access to services (should be on other draft)

It was agreed that group has to gain more women and engaging more with people that want to cycle.

It was suggested that we should not underestimate the fun aspect.

JD – We should be putting forward the simplistic aspect of cycling above all else

It was agreed that the main emphasis of the group has to be about dedicated infrastructure.

## Manifesto (as read out by Sally Hinchcliffe)

*We, the Cycling Embassy of Great Britain represent the everyday cyclist: anyone, young or old, fit or not, who wishes to use their bicycle as transport.*

*We believe that everyone – be they nine or ninety – should have the freedom to go about their business by bike without fear or harassment.*

*We believe that Britain's planning and transport policies to date have served to confine cycling only to the quick, the brave and the stubborn, leaving the rest of us behind. Promoting cycling without tackling this will not raise cycling levels significantly.*

*We believe that current rates of cycling in this country are too low, that targets to increase them are miserably unambitious and that a decent rate of cycling should be nearer 30 or 40% of all journeys*

*We believe that this can only be achieved by the provision of decent safe bicycle infrastructure, in line with the best practice found around the world.*

*And finally, we believe that this is worth it, because we believe that the bicycle can contribute to making Britain a less congested, fitter, leaner, greener cleaner, quieter and above all happier place.*

*TO THAT END, WE INTEND TO WORK IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHERS TO:*

***Gather and disseminate information** about the best practice in design and transport to promote safe and healthy cycling for people of all ages and all abilities, bearing in mind the different needs and conditions of urban, suburban and rural areas, and the different requirements of children, adults, older people, the disabled and parents, using their bikes to shop, commute, get to school, run errands, make deliveries, go down the pub or generally get out and about.*

***Lobby** to change planning guidelines to make sure they reflect this best practice and that they are treated as minimum standards, not unreachable aspirations*

***Investigate** the state of cycling infrastructure in our own areas, and work with local authorities to bring them up to standard.*

***Challenge** anything that raises barriers to cycling unnecessarily, be it licensing schemes, scaremongering campaigns or poor road or transport design*

***Encourage** anyone who wishes to take up or rediscover cycling, however they choose to do it, and provide guidance and education when required.*

*Act ourselves as **ambassadors for cycling**.*

*IN PRACTICE THIS MEANS:*

*Primarily our aim is more **dedicated bike infrastructure**, to **encourage everyone to ride**. We believe that existing cycling campaigns, with their emphasis on training, exhortation, minimal infrastructure and bike share schemes, have largely run their course and will never raise cycling levels above a tiny proportion of all journeys taken, confining people who use bikes to an embattled minority. We want bikes to be the quickest, most direct way to get to our shops, workplaces and schools and for bike routes to be integrated with longer-distance transport like trains and buses. This will mean freeing up space for both pedestrians and bikes, in our towns and along our major routes, to create correctly designed and built infrastructure that will open up travel choices to the whole population not just the few. We believe that this will bring about a transformation of our society.*

*Where well-designed, traffic-free dedicated cycleways have been built (such as Bristol-Bath) people have flocked to use them - **if you build it, they really will come**.*

It was agreed that the Mission Statement and the Manifesto should be combined.

It was suggested that we should play an 'enabling role' – not just campaigning for minimum infrastructure standards but enabling advice and guidance to assist local groups and even planners as the Coalition Agenda is for Localism and cycling may not even feature unless we can help people who want to lobby at local level.

We should however be cautious not to tread on the toes of local campaign groups that are already in existence.

JD also believes that it's not just 'from the bottom up' but also from the top down. We should be continuing to keep discussion about cycling at National level, however hard the Government tries to force it all out to the provinces.

SH – Also we should bear in mind that we are 4 nations and although Cycling England is due to close in March 2011, Cycling Scotland is still going.

Question was asked that although the Netherlands made their change away from car-centric policies in the 1970's, how are we intending to emulate that and how do we find out how they achieved it?

JD – There are already documents on the website such as the Dutch Cycling Master Plan and other documents that show what caused the change and how they went about it.

Action: To distil this information and make it easily available for people

Also we can look to New York.

A general need to 'farm' data and make it available, not necessarily to bombard people with numbers but we have to back up what we say.

SH suggested an action: A task group formed to summarise the documents

It was noted that in the Jan Gehl talk, where cities have made conscious effort to encourage cycling and walking (liveable cities), it has had the effect of benefiting the city economically so maybe the Embassy should compile the data to make a strong economic case.

In Local Transport White Paper, reference was made to cycling having economic benefits for town or city (with references) but was hidden within the document.

CCC suggested that if the Embassy is going to gather and disseminate and make available this information, we should make it clear in our Manifesto as this would disassociate us from other organisations.

CMcC The changes that Embassy wants to see will seem quite large compared to how others see the World at the moment. As a result people look at these aims as difficult and the issue with cycle campaigning is that a very small proportion of people cycle regularly and even less campaign for it so cycle campaigns are a very small voice asking for big, difficult things so they become easy to ignore. We need to reframe what we're asking for in a way that the rest of the population can get behind, and that is why 20's Plenty is successful when it is specifically not made a cycle campaign. When a greater number of people start voicing the same opinion, it's surprising how much politicians and other people in power can move goal posts to help achieve those aims.

We must reframe what we are asking for.

Can we agree that the Manifesto and Mission Statement are good first drafts and will continue to be modified on the Forum  
Motion carried.

**Structure:**

CCC has just become a charity

If you are a Charity you have to abide by rules laid down by the Charities Commission. It is probably better to remain as a limited company.

**Proposal: That the Embassy is a Not for Profit company**

**Carried nem com**

JD Action – to start up the company.

As a limited not-for profit company the Embassy has to have two Directors, Secretary and Treasurer.

CMcC As we need £35 to register company, he suggested having a whip round to start funds.

£80.56 was raised.

The roles will have to be defined and advertised on the forum for nominations

Concern expressed that by being a Cycling Embassy, we instantly ‘shoot ourselves in the foot’ for being a cycling campaign.

JD stated that the name came from Cycling Embassy of Denmark and the Netherlands (launching Spring 2011) which we should aspire to work with. Above all, we are the cycling part of the revolution as opposed to ‘being a Sociology Department’ and trying to be all things to all people.

SH made the suggestion that the name CEoGB raises more questions than answers which should get people interested.

We could have a tagline suggesting that it’s not just for cycling.

**Groups**

It was suggested that people should be encouraged to set up sub-groups for such things as Cargo Bikes.

SH made the suggestion of Regional Consulates (as there is no campaign group where she lives in Dumfries). Maybe a Scottish Consulate.

JD stated that he would like the Embassy to focus nationally as to start local groups could put us in direct conflict with Cycle Nation and all campaign groups already established.

MA made point that we haven’t properly established who we are as a group (are we going to be a membership organisation campaigning for increased infrastructure etc). We need to work out where we are in relation to other groups.

There are cost implications for banking, administration, having the name registered etc

We set a subscription so we can raise money even sponsoring those in power to go to the Netherlands

It was stated that we should be wary of becoming a membership organisation without offering any direct benefits

CCC cautioned against going down the benefits route as where they have given 10% discount on local bike shops across Cambridge, they are not able to claim gift aid from membership subscriptions as they have recently become a charity.

**Motion: That we start with a light subscription with no benefits**

Governance Steering Committee suggested to look at issues and report back to the forum.

**Governance Working Group**

Mark Ames  
Carl McCracken  
Geoff (aka Fatbob)  
(Jim Davis to assist and co-ordinate)

**Website**

Joe (At War With The Motorist)

Wiki to be created (one page per topic) Collaboratively coming up with answers to frequently asked questions. A good way of finalising documents.

It is advisable not to get into 'Wiki Wars'. Once something has been agreed, get it on to the static website.

A suggestion was made for improved links

MA suggested a better Landing Page to make the entry portal more appealing.

Suggestion: improved links page.

**Campaign Strategies**

SH Instant Dutch Lane idea – Close a road outside a school and transform it into a street in Groningen. Get everybody cycling to school. A road closure can be applied for. Must be done in collaboration with the school. It isn't illegal and would get good coverage from local press. Good way of conveying what a proper cycle lane could look like.

Preparing questions for local politicians, councillors etc (probably from the wiki)

Amnesty International have a section suggesting different choices on actions ranging from direct action to lobbying your local MP.

SH Everything we do must be about Infrastructure.

Areas need to be picked for action.

Suggestion made that we design our own London Superhighway to proactively highlight what we would have done to make it better.

VeloCity is taking place in Seville. Suggestion made that Embassy delegates should be attending this type of event as it good for networking.

Suggestion made that we need to attract celebrities and politicians to push the envelope of cycling

Suggestion made that we hold Cycle Embassy awards to celebrate the good as opposed to highlighting the bad

**Partners**

A tentative list was suggested which may include some, or all, of the following:

Cycling Embassy of the Netherlands

Cycling Embassy of Great Britain 2011

Embassy of the Netherlands  
Fietsberaad  
Cycling Embassy of Denmark  
Embassy of Denmark  
NSPCC  
Mumsnet  
British Medical Association  
Living Streets  
RNIB  
RADAR – The Disability Network  
Age UK  
Diabetes UK  
Roadpeace  
Department for Education  
Department for Health  
NHS  
Royal College of Nurses  
Department for Transport  
Association of Police Chief Officers  
Transport Planning Society  
Royal Town Planning Institute  
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors  
Royal Institute of British Architects  
Friends of the Earth  
Campaign for Better Transport  
Local Education Authorities  
Head Teachers Association  
10:10  
Bicycle Manufacturers (Pashley, Batavus, Charge, Workcycles)  
Cycling Scotland  
Mayer Hillman  
M&S  
Waitrose  
Co-op  
IKEA  
Bike Shops (Evans, Wiggle, Halfords)  
Bike Biz  
Road.cc

## Launch Date

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April agreed for official Cycling Embassy of Great Britain launch

## Actions

SH, Mark and Ben? volunteered to go through documentation to pull out salient facts

JD offered to put up map of Governance and set up company

JD will report to Anthony Cartmell with regards website issues.

**APOLOGIES WILL BE ADDED ON SECOND DRAFT**