

Push Bikes AGM June 24th 2021 The Cycle Path Ahead by Zoom

1. Members present: Naresh Sandhu, Ana Adams, Paul Manzotti, Jim Smithson, Nick Hall, Carole Sparke, David Gausson, John Bennett (Treasurer) , Joe Green, Kim Wall, Shivaji Shiva, Ian Robathan, Chris Lowe (Chair), Jennie Lee, David Cox (Vice Chair and Secretary), Esther Boyd, Paul Balfe, Robert Latham (Website, Membership etc) Denis Murphy (Sec Living Streets Birmingham) Rod Macrorie.

The meeting was quorate.

Apologies: Kay Fox, Jules Todd, Simon Harrison

Guest: Adam Tranter

2. Talk by Adam Tranter Cycling Mayor of Coventry

The Five Asks Campaign and the West Midlands Mayoral Elections 2021

Adam summarised the campaign supported by many local and national active travel organisations including Push Bikes, Sustrans, Cycling UK, Living Streets and British Cycling.

In his day job talking to journalists Adam realised that there was little interest in the West Midlands Elections compared to London and even Greater Manchester. We wanted to raise the profile of active travel especially in view of the COVID pandemic and current Government policies and funding for Active Travel and cycling. We now know that Andy Street won but all the candidates agreed to our Five Asks and it was good that Liam Byrne provided a strong contestant for the incumbent Mayor. These were the Asks in brief :-

Ask 1. Pledge to meet the Government's targets to double the level of cycling by 2025 and for 50% of all journeys in West Midlands towns and cities to be walked or cycled by 2030.

Ask 2. Only commit funding to projects that provide high quality active travel provision in line with Local Traffic Note 1/20 guidance. This provision should be assessed by an independent peer review board.

Ask 3. Sign up to the Vision Zero ambition to eliminate all deaths and serious injuries from the streets of the West Midlands. Work with local authorities to enable 20 mph as the default urban speed limit. (we also saw the elected West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, Simon Foster to put this commitment into his manifesto following a campaign led by Action Vision Zero)

Ask 4. Support the local implementation of active neighbourhoods, enabling safe active communities. Launch a publicly stated target to reduce car dependency in the West Midlands.

Ask 5. Appoint an Active Travel Commissioner to lead the West Midlands cycling and walking revolution and provide them with the political support and funding achieve real change.

Minutes of previous AGM in July 2018. Chris apologised that he can't find the Agenda or the Minutes. (NB Some notes have since been recovered). We recalled that Chris was re-elected!!

3. Chair's Report

Chris Lowe has been chair for 10 years and will be standing down. There has been a lot of change in cycle campaigning and Push Bikes has often been ahead of the curve. We contributed to the Changing Gear Report in 2013 which led to the Birmingham Cycle Revolution and since 2014 have seen money become available to begin to build infrastructure and support cycling. But stuff takes a long time !!! In 2018 we were talking about the scheme to make the Priory Rd/Pershore Rd junction safe. Ground still hasn't been broken on this. But we do have the vision and a lot of the Council now has that vision and ideas of what's possible.

We need to support Councillors when they are courageous with new infrastructure and low traffic neighbourhoods. In 2018 we hosted the Cycle Nation/CUK conference and ran a training day for council officers and the keynote address was by Cllr Waseem Zaffar referring to his own experience of walking his children to school on polluted streets.

For the future we need to work with a wider range of voices and greater diversity of experience and interests across the city. This is why we are putting forward the proposals on today's agenda.

4. Treasurer's Report

John Bennett submitted a written report which was on the screen.
£941 subscriptions were received in a year where we hadn't been doing any recruitment until Robert Latham's recent efforts this year.

Push Bikes has £3633 in current account and £4946 in deposit account. David and Robert are now approved signatories on the accounts.

The only major item of expenditure was £1050 for legal advice and a report on charity registration and a draft constitution.

Funding is available if we have good schemes to support.

Question from Denis Murphy

Does Local Giving allow collection of Gift Aid. Chris said that Local Giving take a fee but they do allow local groups to receive Gift Aid.

5. Membership Report

Robert said he had transferred the data base from a spreadsheet full of errors to Mail Chimp. We now have list of 90 active members from a list of 200 most of whom didn't respond to emails or letters. Just a few haven't paid subscriptions. Robert was thanked for his work on this.

We need to now improve communications with members.

6. Motions

There were two related motions proposed by the Committee on the agenda and we agreed to vote on them together

The text was shared on the screen and had been circulated with the Agenda.

a. Amendment to the Push Bikes Constitution. This requires a majority of 2/3rds of the members present.

This suggests a modification so that the aims are charitable for the public good. This will make it easier for Push Bikes to be part of Walk Cycle Play as a charity.

It removes the idea that we can ensure what public authorities do. We cannot actually do that. What we can do is influence, educate and persuade people that our aims to actively encourage cycling are to the public good.

There were no questions so we moved on to the second motion.

b. To support the establishment of the "Walk, Cycle, Play" charity

David said that the future of cycle campaigning nationally and locally is to work with a wider range of interests in active travel partnerships. This would encourage more people to take an interest and be willing to talk to councillors and turn up to ward meetings etc.

Cycle Birmingham the social rides side of Push Bikes was very successful and would continue and we needed to maintain our specific expertise in consulting on cycling schemes and street designs. But we need this partnership with people concerned about clean air, school streets, playing out (ROAM), local pavements etc to have real influence and improve the liveability of the City and its neighbourhoods.

Questions from Joe Green. What was the geography of the new charity? Would it be Birmingham or West Midlands? Would the new entity replace Push Bikes or would Push Bikes activity continue as a part of it.

Answer from David was that it would be the West Midlands Combine Authority Area because the same issues affecting Push Bikes were seen within the Bike West Midlands Network where local cycling campaigns needed to build wider partnerships.

Push Bikes would continue to do its cycle specific work as part of Walk Cycle Play as long it could attract volunteers.

Question from David Gausson. How much more would the set-up costs be?

David answered between £1750 and £1200 depending on the amount of work that was needed. We will use VWV where our member Shivaji Shiva is a partner because we've worked with them before but another member of staff would do the work to register with the Charities Commission.

Question from David Gausson. Would all members get a chance to vote on joining the new charity? Chris answered that once it was set up then probably at the next AGM members would be able to decide whether to become part of the charity.

The secret ballot was carried out through a link on the chat function.

Motion 1 to amend Push Bikes Constitution was supported without opposition.

Motion 2 to support the setting up of Walk Cycle Play Charity was supported without opposition.

Both Motions were therefore carried by the 2/3rds majority.

7. Election of committee positions (in line with the constitution)

The only nominations were confirmed by the ballot as follows

Chair David Cox

Treasurer John Bennett

Robert Latham also agreed to continue with Membership, Website and campaigning but needs support with some of this.

Vice Chair and Secretary remain vacancies and the Committee would seek to fill them after the meeting. If anyone is interested, please contact David or come along to one of the monthly meetings. We won't drop you in at the deep end.

8. AOB.

David Gausson felt that Push Bikes wasn't as well publicised as it should be. For example, there were two Facebook pages devoted to cycling issues Protect Birmingham Cyclists and Birmingham Cyclists with a lot of activity. People posted their problems, near misses etc but

this wasn't connected to Push Bikes engagement or campaigning. Ian Robathan was involved with these Facebook groups and offered to help with monitoring and building links.

Chris was given a warm vote of thanks for all his efforts at Push Bikes over 10 years. He said he had enjoyed it most of the time and we agreed that a lot of progress has been made with cycling in Birmingham which now has a much higher profile. He will stay in touch although leaving Birmingham and still advise on detailed plans via Google Earth!

Everyone was thanked for their attendance and the meeting ended at 9.28.