**VCV Women’s Section Report**

It was only in January of this year when Michele moved away and asked Amy and I to take over the organising and running of the Women’s side of the club. We were very aware of the shoes we had to try and fill but hoped our enthusiasm for cycling would get us through.

We hit the ground running. And although neither of us are particularly interested in racing, we do love riding our bikes. We are proud of what we’ve managed to achieve so far and have some big plans for next year.

Here are some of the things we have organised this year:

Weekly banded Zwift rides with the support of Discord

Joint club Zwift racing with Sotonia ladies

Fortnightly road ride, which has been very well attended, with new and old faces.    Evening Socials, which have included a night at Overdraft and at the King Alfred.

Glorious Gravel ride with Sotonia ladies across Salisbury Plain

Joined the men for a gravel ride, which was great fun.

Many new members have joined us this year. As is always the case, women struggle to allocate the time to ride due to family commitments, but we feel a huge sense of pride at the community we have created and facilitated amongst the women who ride with VC Venta. Although many cannot join us for every ride, they are very much a part of our community. This is supported by the numbers attending the banded Zwift rides and the social evenings.

It is great having more than one ride leader and we are hoping to have a few more before the year is out.

 It was agreed amongst the women that the sportive Tour de Test Valley, Ride on Nelly is an amazing sportive and one to add the club calendar. The women plan to ride this each year as a club, effectively it is our designated club sportive as we are in love with the routes and supportive of the charity it is in aid of.

Amy and I have spent many hours discussing what we could offer for next year. We have already put some dates in the diary regarding planned rides, with more in the pipeline. Some examples are below:

              Off road from Overton to Coombe Jibbet this weekend with some of the                       Sotonia ladies

5th November Fireworks Ride, away day to Michele’s

10th December Christmas Ride, hopefully with mince pies

Summer Solstice ride out to Stonehenge 24th June 2023

Audax?

SDW 5th August 2023

KAW, segments and/or complete route

We are very interested in endurance and adventure cycling. So far, the ladies have shown immense interest in these disciplines when asked.

One of our directives was to increase participation of women in cycling within the club. So far this year we have achieved this. The number of women members has increased as have the numbers attending the fortnightly rides. We have discussed in detail how to encourage involvement in the wider club. We feel that the women need to feel a valued part of the club and not a separate entity. Club jerseys are a great way for this to be achieved. Sadly, for women who struggle to allocate time to ride more than a dozen times with a club in a year, the current price of the jersey is too much to justify. With this in mind, we think t-shirts with the club design on would be a good idea. We also think these could be part of a goodie bag for those who step up into the role of ride leader. This is an incentive to get involved whilst fostering the feeling of pride and belonging in the club they ride for. Also, not everyone likes wearing tight lycra! (subsidised by VC Venta). Once they feel a part of the club, that’s when they will get more involved within the wider club.

Other planned events include:

Continue with quarterly socials

Family trip to New Forest option/Pub ride, Amy and I have recced this.

Encourage more Zwift rides / potential Zwift racing.

Saturday partners ride (at women’s pace) - once per quarter?

Also wondered about a Calshot session (for people who haven’t tried track cycling?) but might be worth polling this one.

Pump track session

Mechanics sessions

How to get wheel on/off (if need!)

Tube v tubeless - repairs & options.

Emergency Chain repair & how to check chain

Minor gear adjustment

Brakes adjustments

Many of the dates are in the calendar already, some are just continuation of existing events, and others have been polled for possible interest. We have loved what we have achieved so far and all the adventures had. We are grateful to Michele for her continued support and guidance whilst we transitioned into the role, and to the wider club for their support. Here’s to 2023 bringing more cycling adventures, fun and friendships.