Chairperson report

Welcome to the 2023 AGM at the South Downs Social, thanks to Neil for hosting and thank you for attending. Your attendance and participation are greatly valued and is an important opportunity to have your input into the running of our club.

Last year we voted to approve some changes to the club constitution to clarify areas around governance and to include Honorary Life Membership. You will be pleased to hear that there are no proposed changes to the club constitution this year.

The club membership stands at 319 including an additional 65 new subscriptions this year. There has been steady growth throughout the year.

The club continues to be financially very healthy, with the generosity of London Camera exchange and we owe a very big thank you to Nick Richens for his continued support of the club. Jonnie will cover more detail on the club finances later.

Like any community based amateur sports club, our club’s success depends on volunteers. So, I would like to thank everyone who has given time to supporting the club.

I want to extend a special thanks to the committee members who ensure the smooth running of the club, the events and activities.

There have been some changes to the committee this year, with Richard Sambrook-Smith standing down as Go-Ride officer and Philip Allen as Rides Officer.

Richard has led a period of great success for Go-ride, which has continued to be a successful breeding ground for introducing young riders to the club and through into the youth and Junior sections.

Philip Allen built a comprehensive set of routes for summer and winter for all three ride groups, as well as adding in some longer routes for the summer, that were requested by the membership. The routes were published on the Club Website and were often new prospective members first impression of the club. I have subsequently spoken to many, and they have told me that it created the impression of a well organised and professionally run club.

A big thank you to Richard and Philip, who will continue to support the club with the Website and IT. Along with Richard helping with the relationships he has built with local developers in our ambition to have a more permanent place to run cycling activities. Again, a little more on this later.

We are fortunate to have Andy Watkins volunteer as Go-Ride Officer, Kieth Irvine and Oli Hitchings to be our new Rides Officers and for Dave Morris to also join the committee along with continuing to run Segment of the Month.

As the club secretary noted in the AGM invitation the reports from the different club sections are posted on the website.

I would encourage you to read the reports, as they offer a great insight into all the club, it’s activities, ambitions and challenges across the different sections.

I would just like to mention some of the highlights:

Go-Ride ran 3 series consisting of 6 sessions each, across Spring Summer and Autumn and barring a few poor weather conditions and the P&R being occupied. The focus for 2024 is to grow the number of coaches and volunteers as this is the bedrock for allowing and increasing places on Go-Ride. With the increase in coaches and volunteers the Marketing reach can be increased to grow the numbers participating and benefiting from this fun and engaging activities for young cyclists.

A bit of a mixed year for the woman’s section. With the fortnightly road rides being less attended, but with a growing number of women on the Sunday Club rides. There have also been good numbers on the monthly Gravel rides, along with the beginnings of a faster Tuesday evening ride in the summer. On the Cross field there has been a good number of women not only racing, but filling the podium places, in fact, having podium places across all the age groups recently. For 2024 continuing quarterly socials, regularly winter Zwift, sharing of ride plans, and review comms strategy.

On the racing front, we were for the second year running the 1st Rank Road club on British Cycling South region. Last year was our first and so it’s a measure of our strength in depth to retain this year.

The racing is more about the breadth and depth of what we do as a club. I think that BMX is probably the only discipline we don’t compete in, although we do have some BMX racers in the club. Not only the breath, but the number competing across all the age categories. From our very successful youth and Junior Road races to the U10 cross riders to the over 60 cyclocross, XC and road riders.

Also, the disciplines have extended into international stages races both on and off the road.

If you pin a number, then you are part of the race team and to encourage members to give it a go, we have subsided race entry fees for circuit, Cross and MTB races this year, as part of ‘Race as a team’

The Wednesday drop-in off-road training session for all abilities continue to be very well attended very well attended, often more than 30 riders. Using Farley Mount country park in the summer, and Strawberry Lane sports field in Up Somborne for the more specific cross training.

For 2024 we plan to:

Expand the number volunteering and so expand the number of activities we are able to offer

Continue the highly successful monthly Gravel/off-road rides

Third addition of the 3rd/4th RR on the Crawley circuit

Hoped to do Southern XC, but looks like this will be postponed to 2025

Continue the long running search out a CX race location.

Peruse opportunities for a more permanent cycling-based centre ATR/Bushfield

Youth/Junior race team and continue to build on the development of talented riders to bigger opportunities.

Host inter-club TT and look to retain for another year.

Open TT

A club-based TT and Hill Climb championship

Expand SOTM to include a veteran category.