

WIRRAL CYCLING GROUP

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD 11.11.25 AT THE LEVER CLUB, PORT SUNLIGHT

PRESENT

David Brewer (Chair), Steve Downs (Treasurer), Anne Lear (Membership Secretary), Peter Williams (Committee), Mike Elkins (Committee), David Hill (Committee), Una Keane, John Hampson, David Collinson, Richard Giles, Barry Roberts, Sonia Oldershaw, Sheila Coetzee, Rob Holmes, Janet Coventry, Ray Baird, Stephen Pickstock, Simon Etty, Barbara Etty, Tony Wright, Carmel Wright, Noel Schorah, Ewan Wilkinson, Angela Price, Paul Molloy, Michael Allen, & Nicholas Dinan.

APOLOGIES

David Branch (Secretary), Mike Grimshaw, Julia Young, Nick Bullen, Neil Ross-Jones, Don Thompson, Simon Flynn, John Garner, Harry Coxhead, Ken Grant, Alison White, Ed White, John Chambers, Jane Kilborn, Alison Edis, Tim Eldridge, Clare Proctor, Diane Ashton, Caroline Wiggins, Doug Curl, Sue Hughes, Mark Burrows, Mary Ritchie, Ian Ritchie, Ian Hughes, Dawn Grant, & David Williams.

OPENING REMARKS

The meeting commenced at 7 pm with the Chairman welcoming those present, and, with it being Armistice Day, calling for a one-minute silence to honour the fallen.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 2024 AGM

The minutes were approved as an accurate record, proposed by Noel Schorah, and seconded by Mike Elkins.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dave Brewer began with some remarks on WCG's safety record, it having been a good year until very recently: John Garner had had a fall earlier in the year, but only days ago Dave Williams had badly injured his hip en route to a ride, overturning his bike on wet leaves, & being hospitalised as a result. He was pleased to say that Noel Schorah had visited Dave, now back home, & found him in good spirits. Those present passed on their best wishes to Mr Williams for a speedy recovery. Dave reminded members to check their tyre pressures for wintry riding conditions, perhaps reducing pressures by 5 to 10 psi.

Much had been achieved over the last year. The club was in a healthy financial position. Rider training had been delivered for 24 riders in January. In February, first aid training was delivered to 9 riders, giving the club an excellent total of 33 first aid trained riders. 9 riders had attended a cycle maintenance course delivered by Energise Cycles. More recently, there had been a well-attended meeting of ride leaders and back markers to discuss the grading of rides.

On a social level, 36 riders had enjoyed a summer picnic at Whistlestop Café in Thurstaston. Another successful evening of wine tasting had been partaken at Lunyalita, expertly hosted by Peter Kinsella & his staff.

Further socialising had been combined with riding on a very successful long weekend away trip to Worcester. 10 rides had been organised in Worcester & many thanks were due to Rob Holmes, his

friend Mike, Una Keane, not forgetting Ken Fearon & Mark Burrows for their part in recycling rides. Honourable mentions also to Ken Fearon & Richard Giles, & to Ewan Wilkinson & Peter Kinsella, for flying the WCG flag unofficially in cycling expeditions along Hadrian's Wall & in Spain respectively.

The Chairman turned to the 179 rides put on over the last year, 26% were at D level, 34% at C, & 40% at C+ and B. There are 21 ride leaders, which is healthy but the more the better. Of our 104 members, 87 have paid up so far, according to the treasurer's records. Two thirds are male, one third female.

Regarding liaison with external bodies, WCG continues to be affiliated to Cycling UK. He and David Hill had attended a meeting of Wirral Borough Council's Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee at Wallasey Town Hall, and made the case successfully for the continuation and improvements of the bike paths on Fender Lane & New Chester Road. Finally, following separate accidents to both Dave & Una, and after two and a half years of lobbying, the North Road rail crossing had been made safe. The club had taken Jo Bird, the Green Party Councillor, to a site visit earlier; thanks were due to both Jo Bird & the current Director of Highways for their part in making the crossing safe.

The Chairman expressed his warm thanks to all the ride leaders for their work over the last year, in recceing, organising and leading their rides. He was glad to see two new ride leaders, Simon Etty & Dawn Grant, making their mark successfully. He also thanked all the backmarkers, [and Facebook report writers, in particular Ian Hughes, Dave Branch, & Dave Hill](#). The club was indebted to Dave Williams for his great work designing and ordering the new club jerseys. The Chairman expressed his thanks to fellow Committee members, especially Dave Branch as secretary, and Steve Downs as treasurer. He paid tribute to Peter Williams and Mike Elkins, both stepping down from the Committee after several years of valuable service.

Finally, there were presentations from the Chairman to three individuals in recognition of their long service and contributions to Wirral Cycling Group: framed certificates, designed by Dave Williams, awarding honorary lifetime membership to Sonia Oldershaw (former chairwoman, secretary, & treasurer no less, with 29 years' service), and to John Hampson (responsible for the best website of any cycling club, and still giving to the club after many years service) were presented. Neil Ross-Jones, currently honing his cycling skills & working on his suntan in Spain, received his in absentia.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Steve Downs began his report, saying that income and expenditure for the last year were significantly higher than the previous year, mainly regarding the new jerseys: individuals paid for their own jerseys and the club had covered the cost of delivery and the fitting session. Expenditure was also higher due to first aid, bike maintenance, & ride leader courses all being held within the year. The next first aid courses would not be due for two years, hence some financial respite in the year to come.

Regarding routine expenditure, Steve stated that the bank was now taking a £4.25 monthly surcharge; the Committee had investigated a change of bank, but this wasn't a practicable or cost-effective option.

Overall income had been £ 3,293; expenditure was £ 3,650. The small deficit of £ 357 was manageable in all the circumstances, with the club still having a healthy balance of £ 1,841. The

treasurer considered the club's finances to be in good shape, and he would continue to monitor expenditure in the coming year.

Approved – Noel Schorah, Seconded – Steve Pickstock.

A brief discussion followed, regarding “inflation-proofing” the annual subscription. The treasurer considered this potentially as disadvantageous, as a large balance could accrue, and he preferred to keep the size of the subscription under annual review. The Chairman assured the members that the Committee would continue to review the subscription at its quarterly meetings.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer had all indicated their willingness to continue in post.

Chairman – David Brewer was proposed by Peter Williams, seconded by Steve Pickstock, & elected unopposed.

Secretary – David Branch was proposed by Richard Giles, seconded by Anne Lear, & elected unopposed.

Treasurer – Steven Downs was proposed by Richard Giles, seconded by Simon Etty, & elected unopposed.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

Peter Williams & Mike Elkins stepped down from the Committee & were applauded for their service.

David Hill was willing to continue, proposed by Peter Williams, seconded by Ewan Wilkinson, & re-elected. Anne Lear was willing to continue, proposed by Sonia Oldershaw, seconded by Una Keane, & re-elected.

Richard Giles was willing to take over as the club's Webmaster & receive training from John Hampson; Richard was proposed by John, seconded by Mike Elkins, & duly appointed.

Dave Brewer explained that a position on the Committee for a **Welfare & Social Officer** required filling, & that Una Keane was willing to fulfil that role. As well as identifying possible social activities, the Club would benefit from a dedicated person able to be a point of communication in the event of bereavements, accidents, or members being absent for reasons unknown. Una explained that the role would entail offering support; helping to uphold the status of the club; to be a first contact for members to approach with any issues which the Committee needs to deal with; help address the concerns of members, act & report; and ensure fairness. (Note that a simplified role description will be provided by the Chairman & agreed at Committee level.)

It was AGREED that it would be appropriate for the club to have such a role. Una Keane was proposed by Anne Lear, seconded by Janet Coventry, & duly elected.

UPDATE ON WEBSITE/BOOKING SYSTEM

The Chairman explained that John Hampson would manage the ride leaders' rota, thanking Peter Williams for his previous work in this area. John invited ride leaders with any issues arising in the future to contact him when required, adding that Richard would take over as the new Webmaster.

TRIPS AWAY IN 2026

The Chairman said that previous trips to Shrewsbury, Gloucester, & Worcester had all gone well, and that trips with rides emanating from one base were easier to organise. Una observed that towns of reasonable size, offering several dining options & ideally a Premier Inn or such like, were preferable. Sonia suggested York as an option for 2026; Mike Elkins suggested Lancaster. Una said that generally 3 people were required to reccy sufficient rides for a three-day period. Carmel advised contacting local cycling groups for suitable ride routes. Una mentioned checking there were no annual festivals or events in each area that would inflate accommodation prices, and to consider weekdays instead of weekends.

In the absence of any immediate volunteers to undertake the necessary organisation, the Chairman said the Committee would look at the 2026 trip away in more detail, probably considering Lancaster or York.

POST MEETING NOTE:- John Hampson has since kindly come forward & volunteered to organise the main 2026 trip away, preferably to the Lancaster area (to be agreed by the Committee.) Many thanks, John!

SOCIAL EVENTS IN 2026

The Chairman reminded members that the 2025 Christmas Buffet would commence at the Lever Club around 12.30 pm on Wednesday 10th December after 3 shorter rides converging on Port Sunlight. He said the cost for each member attending would be £10 per head allowing for a surplus of approximately £3 per head to go to the club's charitable intention. Ken Fearon proposed Pancreatic Cancer UK as a suitable charity; Peter Williams proposed Clatterbridge Cancer Centre. Members AGREED to the Chairman's proposal to divide this year's charitable gift between these two charities.

Barry Roberts proposed a Christmas social night out in Liverpool on Friday evening, 12th December 2025. His proposal was ACCEPTED. He would place it on the Planned Rides section of the website for people to sign up to. (There would not be a ride in advance.)

For 2026, it was AGREED to repeat the summer picnic event, at Whistlestop if possible.

Una suggested a fish & chip event after a ride or rides on another date, catering for up to 40 riders, and asked members to consider if any private venues like rugby or cricket clubs would allow a mobile catering van to use their premises.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (i) The Chairman said that a ride leader co-ordinator volunteer was needed to mentor and train other ride leaders. The Committee would discuss this at its next meeting. Anne Lear mused that Dave Williams might want to be involved in this area whilst recuperating.

- (ii) Ray Baird stated regular Sunday rides were of great importance, particularly for those in employment. John Hampson informed members that every Wednesday there would be at least two rides, one C, one D, with a possible third being a B or a C; on a Sunday there would always be one ride, either a C or a D, the grade being determined by the ride leader for that day. He said that the club is a little short of ride leaders for Sundays. The Chairman said that the number of Sunday rides has increased in recent times, once it was only Sunday ride every fortnight. Peter Williams said that Energise might be able to accommodate a D ride every other Sunday from April to September.
- (iii) Ray said that a list of bike shops recommended by the club would be very useful. This was considered possibly problematic, preferences in this area being quite subjective. *POST MEETING NOTE:- John reminds members that he added a button to the club website some time ago; this can be found on the bottom right of the Join Us page & it shows the nearest bike repair shop to one's current location (ideal in emergencies etc.)*
- (iv) Sheila Coetzee spoke for many in deploring the current condition of many bike lanes in Wirral. Frank Lewis Way out of Heswall is causing particular concern. On a similar theme, Ewan mentioned the condition of The Runnell's potentially dangerous road surface, and Woodbank Lane was also decried. On a positive note, Tony praised the roads of Poland for safe cycling. The Chairman recommended that members approach their local Councillors if necessary. A final escalation by Committee members concerning non-acted upon safety issues could also be made to the Environment, Climate Emergency, & Transport Committee of Wirral Borough Council.
- (v) Club tops: there was some discussion about quality and sizing and future ordering. It was stated that it was believed future ordering would depend on a minimum quantity (not just a handful) being requested, and pricing had been competitive compared to non-bespoke retail alternatives. Absent members, Messrs Williams & Branch would be able to give members more detail if required on a future occasion.
- (vi) Janet Coventry asked that consideration be given to moving the AGM to an afternoon in future on safety grounds, thus avoiding the early dark nights. The Chairman said that afternoons could penalise working members, that the timing of the AGM is an historic matter, but it would be discussed by the Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm, the Chairman thanking members for attending.