

FROM THE CHAIR OF CTC

CLUBBING TOGETHER



David Cox reflects on CTC Council meetings – and on meeting up with local club cyclists to enjoy and promote cycling

THANKS TO CTC's Vote Bike and Space for Cycling campaigns across the UK, politicians of all parties are more aware than ever of the importance of cycling to many voters. Now that the UK general election is over, along with many local elections, we have to follow up to ensure that the good will and promises from many candidates are put into practice with funded policies that enable more of the population to enjoy cycling safely.

Governance is a topical issue for CTC Council at the moment. What is the relationship between our Council meetings – agreeing budgets and strategies, monitoring outcomes and giving feedback – and what CTC staff, volunteers and members are achieving practically to encourage cycling? We are looking at improving the way we work while maintaining or enhancing our democratic traditions. We are benchmarking Council's historic structure and ways of working against best practice in the charity and voluntary sector in a thorough Governance Review.

Across the country, volunteers in UK local campaign groups and CTC's Right to Ride representatives are assiduously pressing local authorities, planners and police authorities to improve conditions for cyclists and enable more people to cycle. Much of this involves yet more meetings, commenting on documents, and email campaigns, but also some fun rides to gain publicity and impact. Yet if chairing Council was all about meetings I wouldn't be doing it. Like most of you, I get my inspiration from riding my bikes and from meeting other cyclists.

After spending a sunny Saturday cooped up with Council in a room near Euston, I was happy to spend the week afterwards out riding. On Sunday, I led a club run with CTC-affiliated Beacon RCC. On Tuesday evening, we launched the Beacon Academy summer programme for 28 four-to-nine-year-olds. It was great to see children free to enjoy their bikes in the local park while, as welfare officer, I could make contact with their parents. Wednesday was our monthly



● David Cox taking part in a Space for Cycling ride in Birmingham

consultation on Birmingham's Cycling Revolution with Pushbikes, Sustrans and the implementation team. On Thursday I piloted a tandem with a blind friend on a social ride with an older generation of riders, ranging from their late 60s to mid 80s.

I finished the week with 188 fellow cyclists on an inter-club ride from Sutton Coldfield, organised by CTC-affiliated club Boldmere Bullets. This is a new club that has expanded rapidly to over 300 members, making good use of social media to mobilise enthusiasm for cycling. One innovation is an early Sunday morning ride from 7.00 until 10.30 for people with family commitments. The inter-club was open to all the local clubs, with a programme of led rides of various distances and speeds,

a free breakfast, and then a barbecue.

The riders attending illustrated the diversity, strength and enthusiasm of the cycling culture of the area. Besides Boldmere and the well-established North Birmingham CTC Member Group, there were riders from several local racing clubs, the CTC-affiliated Pathfinders Club from the Sutton Coldfield Muslim Association, and a group from Bike North Birmingham Community Cycling.

Locally and nationally, CTC needs to be innovative and outward-looking if, as the National Cycling Charity, we are going to ensure that the current cycling boom becomes a permanent modal shift enabling future generations to travel, explore and have fun on their bikes. ●

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Photo: David Weight