



# Chairman's Report

## A decade of Cycle Seahaven

This is Cycle Seahaven's Amateur Sports Clubs 10<sup>th</sup> birthday – quite a mouthful!

The inaugural meeting was held on 13 January 2009 at the Wellington. There were around 35 attendees.

The aim then, as it remains today, is to get people on their bikes. And the club certainly achieved that as you'll see during the forthcoming reports.

Many of the original members are still active and one of them, Den Bass, has served on the committee since 2010.

I think other members of the committee would agree with me that he has the most responsible and time-consuming roles in the club – treasurer and membership secretary.

The original committee and successive committees obviously did a fantastic job to get us where we are today.

One of the things that makes me proud to be a member of this club is that it retains the spirit and values of its founder members.

When you ask people why they join the club inevitably the answer is because of the encouragement and friendly people in it.

10 years on and things have evolved. Mostly for the better and some of them out of necessity. Things like General Data Protection Regulations, Child Protection and other similar considerations are perhaps more essential now than they were a decade ago. Dry subjects but nevertheless important.

In the last decade social media has boomed and the club has utilised this to good effect. The club's footprint is certainly bigger now than during its inception and it is no doubt responsible for encouraging people to join the club.

In the last two years alone membership has increased by just under 57%. That's impressive.

One thing that hasn't changed, well it's had a facelift, is the cycle Seahaven website. This was the primary means of communicating with members. That remains the case today, as I believe this is the supporting pillar on which everything Cycle Seahaven should hang.

I and last year's committee have done all we can to ensure that that core values remains at the heart of everything we do. I hope the founder members would approve.



## Cycle Seahaven in 2018/2019

So to the present. Firstly, I'd like to extend a big thank you to all of those involved in last year's committee. It's only behind-the-scenes that you realise just how much energy, enthusiasm and free time you give up for the members. Without people like you the club could not function in the format that we see it today.

I'd also like to welcome the new members of the committee. Churn is always a good thing as it brings renewed vigour, fresh ideas and recharges the enthusiasm of the existing members. I'm confident we will have a good year but we will have to work hard to surpass what was achieved last year.

As chair it was a rollercoaster ride for me last year. I think the others felt the same. I can't deny that there were a couple of times when I asked myself can I really do with this hassle. I was talked out of it both times and I'm grateful for the support and comments of both the committee and some of the members that told me to apply 'rule five' and man up.

One of the main factors for staying was the sense of team created by the committee, particularly in the latter half of the year, when things moved up a notch and started to really get going. There are several individuals on the committee who are inspirational and continually fight significant personal hurdles to serve the members. Some of you may have read the excellent article by one of them in the Seaford Scene and one of the quarterly newsletters. Collectively they are a great bunch of people who occasionally take unjustified flak for trying to do their best for the membership.

It would be totally remiss of me not to highlight the work of the co-opted members of the committee. These individuals, whilst not elected members, have done some outstanding stuff. Special thanks must go to Michelle Brett who volunteered to take on the role as co-opted secretary and Webmaster. A big task by anyone's standards.

Last year I delivered my report in the form of a PowerPoint. I'm going to do the same this year and I have asked those committee members that want to, to deliver a brief snapshot of their specific areas of expertise.

One of the hardest things about being involved in an ever expanding club is that the committee needs to change with the times to meet the demands and challenges that such increases bring.

With a bigger membership comes larger logistical problems such as collecting membership payments (please take out a standing order if you haven't already). We've had think about data protection and how that links into insurance requirements for Cycling UK, together with a whole host of human factor issues which larger numbers bring.

One of the bigger projects last year involved the club jerseys. This was a huge piece of work and we'll talk more about this later.

Historically, the style of jerseys changes every two years. The current sponsorship deal has another year to run. One of the things that were aiming to do is to deliver club shirts without sponsorship, it's something that many members dislike. To achieve this and keep the shirts at an affordable price the club needs to generate some income. As we want to keep the membership costs down we need to find alternative ways to do this.



Cycle Seahaven's reputation led to us being approached by the South Downs National Park who asked us to deliver a cycling program called Ride the Downs aimed at getting people off their couches, onto their bikes and riding in the National Park. They agreed to pay us £60 for every organised ride we led and this has helped us generate income.

That project has brought its own logistical problems and we learnt a lot from it last year. Moving into this year I'm confident that next year's programme will be more focused with very little impact on the club's day-to-day running and hopefully inspire people to join the club.

At this point it would be totally remiss of me not to say a massive thank you to Joanne Barlow, Roy Francomb and Paul Sandles who, together with their assistants, made it happen. Thank you all.

Cycle Seahaven was also fortunate enough to be instrumental in the Centenary Park (Big Park) project in Peacehaven. This gave us an opportunity to work with partners such as Sustrans and East Sussex County Council to create a cycle hub aimed at encouraging people to ride their bikes.

£10,000 of funding was allotted to this and because of Cycle Seahaven's success and presence in the area we the partners look to us on the best way to use that money. As a result three e-bikes were purchased (two men's, one ladies), some additional shared use bikes and some good quality toolkits for Dr Bike. Whilst these items don't belong to the club it's fair to say we currently seem to have exclusive use of them. So if you're recovering from injury or have a friend who wants to have a trial ride with the club we can accommodate this.

These are only two of many major projects undertaken by the committee on your behalf. As you work through the slideshow you will get a better indication of what they do for you. I hope at the end of the presentation you will agree that the massive amount has been achieved.

That said, there are still areas where we are lacking. Campaigning is one of them. There are lots of initiatives to promote cycling in and around the area and whilst Cycle Seahaven supports them we are not as proactive as we could be in pushing forward. For anyone that is been involved in campaigning you will understand it's often very slow, bureaucratic and frequently frustrating process. It's the kind of work best suited to someone with lots of time, an ability to research and patients. So if any of you like the idea of that challenge would be delighted to hear from you.

The other thing would like to accomplish is to increase the number of road riders and improve the integration between roadies and the MTB group. I know that one of the new committee members has that as his goal and I look forward to his ideas to make this happen.

## Media

Social media is also more prevalent than it was a decade ago. Love it or hate it you can't get away from it.

For the committee it's a double edged sword. We try to be more open and transparent than we've been before but that can occasionally open us up to criticism. Nevertheless it is the right thing to do and I guess it goes with the territory.



Some would say that club information is spread over too many platforms that not all people subscribe to (Facebook). Our current survey results show that 80% of members rely on the website and 70% use Facebook as their main point of information.

As I said in my opening comments the website is and should remain, at least for the foreseeable future, as the main source of information for members and public alike.

The website has been revamped since the last AGM and I hope that you would agree that there's been a vast improvement with it being a lot easier to navigate. We must thank Tony Rowswell for this as he was a driving force behind these improvements.

We've also tried to reach outside of the club through regular articles in Seaford Scene and I know these pieces have brought new members into the club.

We also revamped the quarterly newsletter thanks to the editorial skills of Clive Aberdour. The feedback we've had regarding these newsletters has been very positive.

We are keen to keep moving forward with this but currently the majority of the articles come from the committee. With like to change this and ask some of you to come forward with articles of your own to keep it fresh and vibrant

## Concluding

Before concluding I would like to formally thank, on behalf of the members, the committee, its co-opted members and all those that have helped it in the past year.

They are only half the story. The other half of the ride leaders. They are the lifeblood of the club and their dedication and commitment to put on rides, run them in all weathers, throughout the year is commendable.

They are frequently the first point of contact for new members and their positivity, enthusiasm and encouragement is frequently cited as one of the main reasons for returning.

I wish you all the best for 2019. Please engage with the committee. Let us know what you want.

Help us achieve it and if we are doing it wrong will always welcome constructive criticism. Have a great year.

**Guy Reynolds - Chair 2018**