

Longleat Collective

Meeting Minutes and Action List

Prepared by Andrew Denham

1. Meeting Info

Meeting: Preliminary Meeting
Date: 28/02/08
Time: 20:00
Location: Frome, The Lamb Inn
Attendees: Andrew Denham, Ian Crook, Neil Cousins, Ben Irons, Alastair Mackinlay, Caroline Mackinlay & James Sinclair.

Meeting Chaired by: Andrew Denham

2. Meeting Agenda

- a. Saturday 23/02/08 – What happened?
- b. Longleat Estate – The official line (so far)
- c. Equivalent MTB projects – What can we learn?
- d. **Formation of a MTB Club - How do we do that?**
- e. National federation affiliation – BC & CTC
- f. Insurance – Options?
- g. Land rental costs – other examples?
- h. Damage limitation – preventing a repeat.
- i. Any further business.

3. Minutes

3.1. Saturday 23/02/08 – What happened?

Andrew explained Saturday's events: "Ian and I turned up at our riding spot (kings bottom, Longleat) on Sat morning. Were there with our tools to do some maintenance so decided to park in the lay-by at the top of the hill just past the toll booths however two pickups were waiting with security and forest staff. We turned around and parked out of site of the pickups then walked into the forest towards the riding spot where we met two further forest staff. They asked us what we were doing so we explained and they said that they had been given the order to close the spot down. The reasons they gave were that it had gotten out of hand with too many people visiting leading to complaints from locals, furthermore the spot had been seen to be advertised on the internet which could potentially lead to the popularity of the spot becoming unmanageable. They were polite, friendly and gave us contact information for the estate."

3.2. Longleat Estate – The official line (so far)

Andrew explained what the Estate has said so far: "After writing to Longleat they agreed to meet me on Sunday to discuss the future of the site. I have spoken to the man who placed the order to ban us and he is very keen to come to an agreement.

His main concern is that of liability and hence his request is that we form a body that can provide its own insurance for its members.

His preliminary suggestion is that we set up a club which would rent the land, acknowledge full responsibility for its upkeep and policing and indeed safety. We would still have the risk of short periods of disruption and possibly damage due to felling but would be forewarned of such activity. He has suggested that any body that we form should be acknowledged by a national entity (British Cycling Federation?) so that Longleat can be shown to have used due diligence by trusting a known reputable entity."

3.3. Equivalent MTB projects – What can we learn?

Andrew explained how it seemed useful to look at how other equivalent MTB projects were run and see what we could learn. On Monday 22/02/08 he had asked Ben Irons, Darren Eggleton and Kevin Andrews to look into specific examples for presentation at this meeting. Only Ben Irons was able to attend the meeting.

Ben Irons explained his findings having spoken to Derek the head honcho at Tavistock (www.woodland-riders.com): "They pay £600 land rental to a private land owner, they have 155 members and as far as insurance goes; they pay £60 GBP per year for British Cycling federation club membership that covers third party claims etc. "

It is agreed by all at the meeting that it would be very useful to attempt to find out the same statistics from as many other projects as possible so that we are able to gauge land costs against size for negotiation with the estate. (See action list)

3.4. National federation affiliation – BC & CTC

One of the requests made by Longleat was that if we were to form a club it would be affiliated with a national cycling federation so that the estate could be seen to be showing due diligence. Ian had spent part of the week looking into joining the BC; Affiliation can be arranged by completing a registration form and paying £82 or £165 if the club is sponsored. Benefits include insurance cover amongst other things, but it is this which is of most interest.

Andrew spoke to CTC about becoming affiliated with them however they currently don't offer the same level of insurance cover as the BC (see section 3.5 for details).

Joining each is relatively simple with a turn around time of no more than 10 days in either case.

3.5. Insurance – Options?

The main reason for Longleat being forced to close our spot down is their liability in the case of an accident occurring, therefore it is imperative that we as a collective are able to take on that liability if the estate is to allow us to continue operating as we have done in the past. This however is too great a risk to take without having taken the relevant insurance to cover the collective and its representatives appropriately.

The types of scenario that may occur:

- a) A member of the club causes an accident that injures a non member.
- b) A member of the club causes an accident which causes damage to the property of a non member.
- c) A member of the club injures themselves.
- d) An uninvited non member injures themselves.
- e) An invited non member injures themselves.
- f) The club through its actions causes an accident.
- g) The club officials through following through their roles within the club cause an accident.

3.5.1. The BC

The BC offer third party liability insurance for clubs that cover the scenarios **d**, **e**, **f** and **g**. Scenario **a** and **b** require personal third party insurance cover (included in Silver and Gold membership with the BC) * this information has been corrected since the meeting as the information given at the meeting was incorrect. Scenario **c** requires personal insurance cover (included in Gold membership with the BC).

Crucially by covering scenario **d** the club would satisfy the Longleat estate that it would not be liable even in the most extreme and uncontrollable scenario. There are however some points of concern namely the fact that individual members would not be covered by the clubs insurance. However this is not any different from how most people operate currently and so not necessarily a large problem. This thinking can be applied to the lack of cover for scenario **c**, as this too is not ordinarily the case.

Race insurance must be applied for on an event by event basis. This would be necessary for any activity with an element of competition or deemed to be outside normal club activity such as a timed event or club trip to another venue. The cost of insuring such events is £20 event registration and £3 per competitor/participant.

Importantly the club must operate on a non-profit basis to qualify for the above insurance. Also, that it is advised that the club erect clearly

visible signs displaying legal disclaimers along with other information so that the club can be seen to be showing due diligence.

3.5.2. The CTC

The BC offers third party liability insurance for clubs but this doesn't cover scenario **d**. This is unacceptable as it would render the management of the riding spot to be almost impossible as the club would be liable for any injury to an unaffiliated third party. Thus further detail on the CTC's insurance has not been explored.

3.5.3. Other

Quotes are being made by other insurance brokers however none have been completed.

3.6. Land rental costs – other examples?

Longleat have not yet given any indication of land rental costs however as mentioned in section 3.3. £600 is paid in land rental by Woodland riders. It is agreed by all at the meeting that land rental negotiations would not be conducted on Sunday by Andrew Denham, however that he may ask what the estate proposes to charge the club.

3.7. Damage limitation – preventing a repeat.

Longleat have said they had become aware of the fact that the riding spot was being advertised on the internet with directions, in videos and in pictures and on forums. Since becoming aware of the directions being given on bristolfreeride.com a number of regular riders have asked the riders responsible for the site to remove them. This eventually happened in January however this was too late. Ben Irons has since asked them to remove all mention of Longleat including any videos; this has been done in the main however some video's still exist upon other MTB sites.

It is agreed by all at the meeting that further steps should be taken to minimise the exposure of our riding spot and that as far as non regulars were concerned it must be made clear that the site is officially closed until we know how it will operate if at all.

3.8. Formation of a MTB Club - How do we do that?

As mentioned earlier in section 3.2. longleat have stated that they would like us to operate as a club. The setting up of such a club has been researched by Andrew Denham: "This seems to be quite simple with some templates existing online however neither the BC nor CTC offer set-up templates. Essentially The club needs to form an executive committee by vote who will make up the inner workings and take responsibility for specific club roles. This is typically done by people who state an active interest and who make their intentions clear by nominating themselves to

be considered for a specific role. Voting is then carried out by meeting attendees and the club is formed.”

It is agreed by all at the meeting that if people want to be considered for executive club committee roles they must be seen to attend preferably all initial meetings until the club is formed starting with the next. It is also agreed people who would like to be considered for executive committee roles are to make themselves known at the next meeting with justification of why they feel they should be considered for the role. This is to safeguard the club and its prospective members by ensuring candidates with the highest level of commitment and relevant ability take on the responsibility of executive club committee. **Exceptions will be made for extenuating circumstances leading to being unable to attend these meetings.**

3.9. Any further business?

The following section will detail (in short) the topics discussed under the above heading.

3.9.1. Gorilla building – how do we prevent/manage this?

This point was raised by James Sinclair. The group agreed that by all at the meeting that clear warning and rules would have to be displayed on signs around the site. In the event that building is carried out on club managed land without club approval this would simply be destroyed. If carried out anywhere else but discovered by the club then the club would have to make the estate aware.

3.9.2. Litter - how do we prevent/manage this?

This point was made by many who attended the meeting. It was agreed by all who attended that a periodic litter meet would have to be scheduled in which the club would tidy up the land it managed. This would be in addition to rules being included in the terms of membership making littering illegal from a club perspective. Bins were deemed to be a fire risk and so will not be provided for.

3.9.3. Parking – where will we park?

This point was raised by Ian Crook. Ian suggested that a designated parking area may be possible, however it is agreed that this is unlikely. It is suggested by Andrew Denham that Longleat will most likely ask club members to park in existing car parks, however this could get to the point where other users are forced to seek parking elsewhere. Therefore the suggestion is that the club provide car stickers for its member so that the estate can monitor the parking behaviour of the club members. Parking will have to be discussed with the estate.

3.9.4. Fire and first aid precautions – what will we need?

It is agreed by those present that the club must provide facility for both regardless of legal requirement however that guidance would be sought from the estate so that our actions fit in with their protocol at the very least.

3.9.5. Tools – should the club provide them/where can we store them?

It is agreed by all those present that unless specialist and/or otherwise not available the club will not buy any tools. Some form of lockable store is suggested by James Sinclair however this will need further discussion.

3.9.6. Course management – how do we do prevent collision?

It is suggested by Andrew Denham that at any one time three (for example) tracks are officially open, with these being selected so that they don't allow collision to occur. In this time the non operational courses can be renovated/repaired changed etc once done these can be opened to allow the previously open courses to undergo similar work as required.

3.9.7. Club web site – requirements?

AI suggested the following:

- a) Club rules and regulations
- b) Membership info
- c) Events calendar
- d) Meeting minutes
- e) Contact information

That the southerndownhill.com forum is still used for general communication.

The meeting attendees agree with this. With it being suggested that a Longleat representative be given access to the forum.

3.9.8. Andrew's meeting with Longleat – what should we ask for?

Ian suggested that we make a definitive list of requirements, this was populated as follows:

- a) A specific area to operate within. Preferably to include the area already developed and that surrounding it from fence enclosure (west) to fire road (east) and from just above fire road (south) to fire road (north).
- b) A long term commitment with a rolling contract that incorporates clear notice periods for either party.
- c) Periodic review of the clubs operation to ensure that the club operates in a manner deemed satisfactory by the estate.

- d) A designated contact at the estate.
- e) Co-operation from the estate in the way of a statement of backing on club signs.
- f) Co-operation from the estate by providing health and safety and conservation guidance.
- g) Clarification of club parking facilities.
- h) Practical notice of forest activities in the area.
- i) An alternative venue in the event of such activity.

3.9.9. Whitbourne Springs and Longhedge – polite notice.

It is suggested by Andrew Denham that the club sends a polite notice to the inhabitants of Whitbourne Springs and Longhedge stating its intentions and giving them contact details should they feel the need to complain for any reason. This is in light of the previous disruption caused by rider parking between the two villages leading to many complaints.

3.9.10. Good will

It is agreed by all that it is essential that we show good will to the estate by offering the clubs services wherever possible. This may include offering to partake in repairs fencing known to be damaged by riders (not affiliated with the club) of the kings bottom site.

4. Actions

This section will outline any actions that have been produced by the meeting with clear indication of who is allocated to complete them and by when.

Ben Irons

- Collate statistics of as many equivalent MTB projects as possible. Number of members, cost of membership, land rental cost, etc 06/03/08.

Andrew Denham

- Write up meeting minutes and publish by 02/03/08.
- Set up next meeting. 04/03/08
- Formalise proposal prior to Sunday meeting, to include a loose breakdown of club costs. 02/08/08.
- Liaise with Longleat to establish preferred meeting numbers. 29/02/08.

Ian Crook

- Collate all relevant information and documents relating to insurance to allow the club to set up cover. 13/03/08.