

To all Tyne Valley MTB Cycling members:

Your membership counts....

I hope you are all well and surviving in these difficult times. This Christmas message is a short sit rep of the club's position at the end of 2020. I will write a more detailed report in advance of our AGM and Open Evening planned for Monday 8th March 2021 (please put it in your diary) for which 3 interesting speakers are already lined up. All members and friends are welcome to attend. Note: Usual AGM stuff is always pre-voted and kept to an absolute minimum.

- Our membership stands at 74 excluding long lifers and trade associates
- This year there were 59 club rides - even with 2 months of shutdown
- Every ride was summarised with pics on the club's Facebook page [Tyne Valley MTB Cycling | Facebook](#) and posted on several other cycling sites which generated a lot of interest
- Mid week evening rides continued to be popular
- Weekend rides were split equally between road rides and off-road rides
- There are about 15 members who ride ebikes
- We tried to ride in groups of 6 - often 2 lots and quite often 3 lots
- Ted and Graham led most of the groups occasionally assisted by Rob
- Sadly, there were no two or more day rides due to C19 and both proposed Alps tours were postponed until 2021
- A core of members ride as often as possible
- We much value periphery members who have joined to ride on the annual Alps tours
- Three Alps separate Alps Tours are planned in 2021 - subject to C19; all full - 30 Alpine MTBers out of a membership of 74 is incredible
- We much welcome associate members who 'join' the club to support our ethos and project work - more needed!
- There was a flux of new members in 2020 some of whom only rode once and some only two or three times - we don't know why
- The Committee have begun to revise the Club's constitution and all its policy docs - additional volunteer proof readers will be welcomed to complete this task by the end of January
- Our project work continues – currently we have two grants apps in process for £10K and £15K to which we will add at least 3 figures from our funds
- This will fund the repair of 1.3km of Restricted Byway near Elsdon being part 1 of a 3 part access improvement plan we are engaged in to support NCC RoW team

- In conjunction with the Northumberland Joint Local Access Forum we have initiated creating the Alnwick West Greenway and are supporting the creation of a nearby coastal Greenway
- A small nucleus of Club members endeavour to report access issues to Northumberland CC Access team
- We are keeping up dialogue with the National Trust and adjacent landowners to open useful sections of Disused Railway Tracks in Northumberland
- We are supporting Forestry England's plan to open up 300 km of Gravel Bike routes in the Kielder Forest Area including 6 standalone loops all of which will be waymarked
- We plan to hold monthly fund-raising rides around Northumberland when C19 allows based on the proven self sufficiency, self navigating Alpkit model. Note: these are NOT Sportives
- We have more funding applications in the pipeline for further cycling projects
- We continue to support the Sandstone Way and increasingly, the off-road Rievers Cycle Route
- Core members have been riding the 15 best gravel bike / easy MTB / suitable ebike routes as image extras which will feature in Northern Heritages' guidebook *33 More Cycle Routes in Northumberland & Beyond* to be published in the Spring

Your ideas to add to this are welcome as is your support to make the above continue to happen.

The Club has transferred its insurance arrangements to Cycling UK from British Cycling in favour of insuring organisers and helpers whilst on organised rides. Neither organisations offer discounted rates for members of affiliated clubs. We recommend personal membership of either organisation for peace of mind. Do research them both to see what is included.

TIP OF THE YEAR: Make it a resolution to always carry a split link for your chain size and an effective chain splitter tool.

REQUEST: Avoid riding natural trails whilst they are very muddy - this can cause long term damage to them or at the very least make it harder to repair naturally.

We should share the trails and leave no trace

Finally, thanks to Alan Mitcham for reporting on last Saturday's group ride which was similarly enjoyed by 2 more groups on Sunday, albeit in less favourable weather:

On Saturday 19th December 2020, club ride leader Graham Patton led a small group of us on what Ted now calls The Land of Oak & Iron loop. Four of us were on e-bikes and Vivienne, the youngest and fittest amongst us, rode her trad MTB. An inauspicious start under a Western Bypass viaduct turned into my best ride of the year – a superb 42km in perfect blue sky weather with 90% of it completely new to me! A long uphill pull from Swalwell to the wonderfully named Clockburn Lonnen gave us fabulous views over the Derwent Valley. Then the views kept coming for most of the ride – both sides of the Derwent Valley and eventually views down into the Tyne Valley. With too many highlights to mention, we rode the lovely trail alongside the historical Tanfield Railway pausing to watch the North Pole Express steam loco waiting to pull off – surely with Santa on board. Later we had a well-timed coffee and cake break outside the excellent Riverside Bakery at Blackhall Mill, between riding a double sweep of Chopwell Woods! With yet more highlights in the second half the route, we finished where we started beaming from ear to ear and very muddy!



Best wishes to you and yours for a lovely Christmas and a happy and healthy 2021

Have a restive festive: Ted and TVMTBC committee

