

Minutes of a Meeting of the WNBR London Collective

Wednesday 9 September 2020
By Zoom Videoconference

(Action items in *red*)

Present: Barbara, Cy, Harvey, Ian, Ken, Mike, Simon Mr

Apologies: Richard, Natasha

Update on Fake Ride

The website has vanished but communications are continuing. Some people reported having emails from a person calling themselves Vince. Vince is saying they did ride. He said 1000 people signed up but because of Covid-19 only 30 were allowed and photos and PR were banned (thus explaining why nobody saw or heard anything about it). Vince also said, do not be fooled by WNBR London – his ride is real and the others are fake. We have no reason to believe Vince.

Cy confirmed that it is unclear who owns the hijacked website, depending on what ownership means. Our view is that it was acquired on our behalf, for our purposes, by one of our volunteers, so it is ours. However, the person with the email address on the registration form is viewed as the owner by the authorities. GDPR regulations mean we cannot confirm who that is but we assume it is Simon My.

Revising the Constitution

We discussed suggestions for revisions to the constitution including a way to exclude unwelcome people from meetings.

The current constitution was drafted by Ian. Suggestions were made to avoid the current issues happening again, and also for some tidying and improvements.

Currently anyone can come to meetings and vote. There is no mechanism to prevent people from attending, or coming 'mob-handed' to do a surprise takeover. The only exception is the treasurer who can be excluded for financial wrongdoing. The financial issue was 'tackled head-on' because the constitution was written largely for the purposes of opening up a bank account.

Actual issues we have experienced included:

- In the past argumentative and critical behaviour has led to other members of the group leaving. Also, on occasion, people coming for the first time were made to feel uncomfortable and did not come back.
- Latterly, a member has left and hijacked the website, damaging the WNBR London brand and sabotaging the online event programme. There is no constitutional mechanism to exclude him.
- We have also had people enquire about joining, whose presence might not be beneficial. To be able to exclude someone in advance of a meeting we might need to act between meetings.

The idea of tight/loose was raised – having some processes that required control and possibly regulating and leaving everything else open and loose – a small committee with some oversight and the larger group. The point was made that if we have a committee, we are adding a layer to the collective. Organisations such as student unions, XR and Green Peace were suggested as offering possible models to look at, though Green Peace has employees who make decisions and plan. The desire is to keep open

participation but to prevent disruptive, harmful takeover. We need examples of how others solve this problem.

The consensus was that it is important to keep the open participative process but possibly having, as a safeguard, people with some kind of disciplinary role who could exclude people if necessary. The discussion then centred round how to do this and suggestions included:

- Giving this to the role of those people voted as “officers” (which is a defined role in the current constitution)
- Sub-committees with oversight for specific areas but with open meetings
- Having to give notice to raise a challenge
- Voting in a committee at the AGM (there are various ways this could be handled)

The point was made that to change the constitution an “extraordinary meeting” was needed with three weeks’ notice given for it. Ian (with his consent) could be regarded as our General Counsel with regard to legal issues for the constitution.

Action: **everyone (including people at this meeting) should look at the constitution and make suggestions for changes. Proposals for change should be considered at the January meeting.**

Planning for 2021

It was agreed that we work to the usual timing for the next ride, which would therefore be Saturday 12th June 2021. Dates on Facebook have already been changed. Publicity should reflect this date, although, future meetings will be able to review that in the light of future developments.

Cy sent out an email with a long list of the things that need to be done to run WNBR London. We need people to volunteer. Roles need defining and it would be useful to have more than one person in each role, eg, Ian had offered to do police liaison and Ken is also interested so both should be able to do it.

Action: **everyone read through the list of activities and volunteer!**

This will be discussed at the meeting in January. It was suggested the list could be published as a Google doc and updated collectively. The main objective is to get more people actively involved.

XR participation in rides was raised. There is some genuine overlap of interests. The discussion included how to work with groups whose activism is more directly political and/or whose tactics are unlawful. It would be a bad idea to be arrested while naked. The approach of WNBR is that it should be legal, joyful and celebratory to attract attention to its mission by being a happy spectacle.

Date for first meeting in 2021

To tackle the constitution and agree roles, we give notice that the next meeting will be an “Extraordinary Meeting” on the 13th of January 2021. We propose to have meetings every second Wednesday of the month.

Zoom has been good at enabling out-of-Londoners to be more involved. The suggestion was made that if we can find a room (to rent at a cheap rate) we could have face-to-face meetings (when that is safe and permitted) and also bring a computer to allow people to join via Zoom.

Any Other Business

Ken is looking to organise a WNBR on the A40. Possibly between Central London and Uxbridge. The point was made that maybe it could be a new WNBR rather than a part of WNBR London.