

# Deeside Thistle Cycling Club

## Membership Survey Report

### Introduction

In December 2010 a club wide survey was released in order to gather the required feedback to determine a new strategic approach for the club. Of its 452 total members at the time of release, 180 members responded to the survey, representing 40% of the membership. The results of this report are based on these responding members' answers and so reflect what is deemed as the active membership. Throughout the report it is assumed the responses are representative of the club as a whole and recommendations are made on this basis.

This report is split into four main sections below;

- **1.0 Key Recommendations (summarised from Section 4)**
- **2.0 Categorical responses from the multiple choice questions**
- **3.0 Free written responses from the open ended questions**
- **4.0 Full explanation of the recommendations identified from the survey results**

The interpretation and recommendations from these results has been presented for review and implementation is subject to DTCC committee agreement.

## **1.0 Key Recommendations**

This section identifies a series of key recommendations emerging from the survey. These are drawn from the answers to the open ended questions and some of the multiple choice questions. The background to each of the items is further expanded on in Section 4 but is presented below as summarised bullet point items.

They have been identified because;

- a) They reflect the majority view of the written responses
- b) They are novel ideas which the committee may wish to discuss and act upon

Some points are quite minor, only requiring a small input from a single member to implement whilst others are more substantial, affecting the future direction of the club. All require some input and have to be balanced against member's willingness and ability to give time. It is worth considering that these also do not necessarily need to be provided by a club member but may be organised by commercial companies at the request of the club. (e.g. club winter turbo) and subsidised by the club if not financially viable.

The items have not been included in priority order. They are proposed as a list for which it is expected the committee to decide on priority. It is suggested that two criteria for selecting priority are importance for members and ease of implementation.

- A. Youth team development;  
Youngsters require support, structure, coaching, team atmosphere & financial assistance. Grampian Tigers have highlighted the need to fill the age gap for older children as they only provide support for 7-14 yr olds.
- B. Structured club coaching with development plans
- C. Reporting of achievement through all levels of success and disciplines
- D. Development and support of club racing teams
- E. Evening League;
  - a. Only riders who marshal should be allowed to collect points
  - b. Marshal and Time Keeper training sessions
  - c. Add non-TT disciplines
  - d. Intersperse with Open events to support district level racing
  - e. A beginners night early in season with guidance
- F. Introduction of sessions/information on the following;
  - Fitness/coaching information
  - Training sessions
  - Bike maintenance
  - Cycling in a group
  - How to organise events
- G. Organisation of family friendly events  
This would under pin the development of the youth team and provide better links with Grampian Tigers as well as increase club community spirit.
- H. More information for beginners and new members on website.

## **2.0 Analysis of Individual Questions**

### **2.1 General club statistics:**

- Over 50% have been cycling for 10yrs+, 25% for 4-10 yrs, remainder less than 4yrs
- The average age is 41-50 accounting for 40%, with the remainder equally distributed below 40 and above 50 years of age.
- 85% are male, 15% female

### **2.2 Why are you a member of Deeside Thistle CC?**

#### **High Importance:**

- To find like minded cyclists
- I like feeling part of a club
- To keep in touch with local events

#### **Intermediate Importance:**

- To do the evening league
- I want to be in a club when I do events
- To do the reliabilities/sportifs
- I want to be part of a racing community

#### **Low Importance:**

- For the kit
- To get bike shop discounts
- To do the tours

#### **Question Summary**

The club is strong in its community feel with the primary drive being for its members to interact with other cyclists and maintain good links with the cycling community. The racing aspect of the club and evening league are still of a healthy importance to many members.

### **2.3 Are you generally happy in the way Deeside supports you as a member?**

- 35% are totally happy
- 55% are mostly happy
- 10% are not happy

#### **Question Summary**

There does not appear to be any major discontent but these results suggest that there are improvements to be made. Pleasing everyone 100% is a difficult target but if 1 in 10 members are not happy then there is certainly room for improvement.

## 2.4 Methods of Communication – popularity by usage

- 95% of members read Deeside Notes and 90% read Cranks
- 50% read the website occasionally with 34% using it often, 17% never use the website
- 42% use the forum regularly with 35% using it only occasionally, 23% never use the forum

### Question Summary

The Deeside Notes and Cranks are extremely well received and indeed later credited as a strong feature of the club. The website by contrast and the forum are not popular as means of keeping updated. It is important to note that since the survey the website has been heavily re-vamped with more plans to continue its development.

The forum has an issue in that new members are unable to gain access and place posts. This limits usage to only members who have been historically registered.

## 2.5 What type of cycling do you do?

The most active discipline is Road, including Time Trial, of which 96% of the club participate and 90% of the club ride regularly. Mountain Biking is also popular with 80% of the club members participating in the discipline. Of the club, 40% regularly ride MTB, with 40% riding on a less frequent basis. Cyclocross, Audax and Track are low in popularity with 24%, 20%, and 15% of the club respectively only occasionally riding these disciplines. Touring is undertaken by 60% of the club on a varying frequency basis but with the majority only touring on an occasional basis.

90% of members claim they would like to cycle more!

### Question Summary

The DTCC is heavily weighted as a Road club given the number that regularly ride Road or Time Trial bikes. Also high however is the number of members who participate in Mountain Biking on a regular basis.

Complementing the Road theme, touring is also a regular if not frequent style. The nature of this type of riding however lends itself to less frequent usage such as holidays or long weekends.

The other three disciplines of Cyclocross, Audax and Track are expected to be lower, particularly with Track, given the travelling distances to the nearest circuits.

## 2.6 What type of cycling do you compete in and would you like to do more events?

30% compete in Road Racing, of which 6% regularly through the year, 70% never compete  
70% compete in Sportif's, of which 10% regularly through the year, 30% never compete  
65% compete in the Evening League, of which 33% regularly through the year, 35% never compete  
44% compete in Open TT's, of which 20% regularly through the year, 56% never compete  
27% compete in MTB, of which 8% regularly through the year, 65% never compete  
35% compete in Tri/Duathlon, of which 12% regularly through the year, 65% never compete  
10% compete in Cyclocross, of which 3% regularly through the year, 87% never compete  
5% compete in Track, of which 1% regularly through the year, 95% never compete  
83% of members would like to do more events

### Question Summary

In terms of regular attendance, the top competition disciplines within the club, in order are: Time Trial (EL then Open), Tri/Duathlon, Sportifs, MTB, Road Racing, Cyclocross and Track

## **2.7 Do you take part in club reliability rides?**

60% of members participate in the Reliability rides, whilst 40% do not take part

### Question Summary

These are popular and generally appear accessible for the members, perhaps supported by the strong social aspect of the Reliability rides.

## **2.8 Do you take part in Doug Haig's tours?**

72% do not undertake the tours.

22% undertake the tours occasionally

6% undertake the tours regularly

### Question Summary

Although a smaller percentage of the total membership, the tours will appeal to a particular style of rider which would make it niche. As a result, the low percentage does not necessarily equate to it being given any less importance to be maintained or given support. Since the survey, these tours have been successfully re-developed in 2011 with increased rider numbers.

## **2.9 The club finds it hard to find marshals and other helpers for the evening league, what are preferred options to deal with this?**

30% were in favour of giving extra points for marshalling (44% against, 26% unsure)

66% were in favour of only allowing riders who marshal to gain points (10% against, 24% unsure)





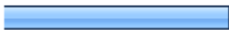



16% were in favour of having less league events (62% against the reduction, 22% unsure)

41% were in favour of the club simply being more persuasive (25% against, 34% unsure)

### Question Summary

The most popular and committed option was to only allow riders who marshal to gain points.

**2.10 What would you like the club to provide information/sessions on? Would you be willing to contribute to the development of any of these?**

		Response Percent
How to organise events		35.1%
<b>Fitness/coaching information</b>		<b>71.8%</b>
Cycling in a group		52.7%
How to enter events		35.1%
Equipment		40.5%
Bike maintenance		54.2%
Other members travelling to events		35.9%
Training sessions		62.6%

70% of members would commit to contributing to these sessions

Question Summary

Fitness and coaching, training sessions and bike maintenance were the top 3 choices. Other support type assistance relating to event organisation, equipment and joint members travelling to events was also highlighted as important. There is strong support from the members to contributing towards these sessions.

**2.11 Deeside organises only a small number of races for its size partly due to difficulties in finding organisers and marshals. 1. Are the members aware of this problem, 2. Have members ever organised an open event and 3. Do members marshal at open events?**

Part 1

76% of members are aware of this problem

7% are not aware

17% are only partly aware

Part 2

89% of member have not organised an open event

11% of members have organised an open event

Part 3

44% of members have not marshalled at club open events

56% of members have marshalled at club open events

Question Summary

Members are aware of the issue of lack of support, most members have not organised events and only slightly more than 50% have marshalled.

**2.12 What stops you from organising events?**

No.1 Too busy

No.2 I would not know what to do

No.3 I am new to the sport

Question Summary

How busy people are can't be changed, however, we can try to address the lack of knowledge with support and training.

**2.13 Do you have children?**

62% - Yes

38% - No

Question Summary

The majority of the club members have children though it should be noted that many of these are not young children.

### **2.14 Do your children bike?**

- 28% of member's children bike rarely
- 17% of member's children bike most weeks
- 10% of member's children bike every week
- 4% of member's children race
- 2% of member's children ride with Grampian Tigers

#### Question Summary

There is a pool of approximately 80 children through the club who cycle

### **2.15 Would you/your children like Deeside to provide support/facilities/events for youngsters?**

- 70% - Yes
- 30% - No

#### Question Summary

These percentages mirror closely the number of members that have children.

### **3.0 Personal Written Responses**

The following have been taken from members responses to each of the questions. Some of them are direct quotes and others paraphrase a number of responses.

#### **3.1 Areas currently provided but where it was felt improvements could be made**

- Website Communication
- The club image in relation to other clubs in the district needs improving i.e. more inter club and district association
- Transparency regarding club money and expenditure
- Committee needs to be better structured to cope with new challenges e.g. officers, subcommittees
- DTCC do not currently provide winter training sessions e.g. weights/turbo
- Raising of the level of reporting of lower field rider's success
- Introduction of a second tier Evening League e.g. youths
- Beginner's development plans to progress them to proficient riders/racers
- Cranks needs to be freshened up with less repeating nature of information i.e. new stories
- Better use of the forum to promote better community feel
- More reporting on good routes/races and stories of 'people', not the just the club
- Better representation in local events i.e. a north east cyclocross event
- Improve the racing performance of the club with a more cohesive team structure as well as racing and event support
- Encourage young members to join and offer support with youth training, funding and closer association with Grampian Tigers as children are the future

#### **3.2 Things that are positively received**

- Talks, for example HTC Colombia
- Reliability days which promote good community feel
- Good routes of communication with Cranks and Deeside Notes
- Evening League

#### **3.3 Main Aspirations of the members**

- Etape du Tour
- Duathlons/Triathlons
- Sportif's
- Reliabilities
- Lands End to John O Groats
- Cyclocross and Scottish Cross Country (MTB)
- Returning to cycling again after a year off
- Complete Cape Epic, No Fuss events and MTB enduro's
- VET BAR & Long BAR
- Maintain or improve fitness
- 24TT and Open TT's

- To race more as a team
- Improve mountain bike skills
- To do the Evening League
- Generally to increase enjoyment of riding
- Super Six Series
- Audax's

It is good to see a wide range of aspirations from club members. These should help the club identify future direction. They can also act as 'inspiration' to other members and should be listed on the website.

### **3.4 What stops you cycling more?**

- Time
- Weather
- Family
- Not enough group training rides
- Not enough local cat 3/4 only races to practise locally
- Lack of confidence

Some of these cannot be changed i.e. time and weather. Others may be indirectly affected by implementation of the survey recommendations.

### **3.5 What do you like/dislike about the Reliabilities?**

- Well organised, good discussions and sense of comradeship with club members
- Dislike going over the Lecht on the 100 milers
- Lack of a mid-season event as well as the ones at the start and finish of the season
- Better selection of riders groups to prevent the faster riders breaking up the field
- Lack of definition of Reliability rides including what it entails
- The pace is faster than advertised

### **3.6 What is liked and disliked about the Evening League?**

- Traffic is a problem
- The league is limited to only TT where it could be extended to other disciplines e.g. MTB, cyclocross
- EL could be evolved into a multi-disciplinary series to introduce members to racing. After all why should we only be encouraging racing in one discipline – especially one which is not suited to youngsters. Format could have 6 TTs, two APRs, two off-road events, a hill climb. The 7<sup>th</sup> TT, 3<sup>rd</sup> could be an APR and 3<sup>rd</sup> off-road could be open.
- The EL dominates the race calendar including Open events. Making 2 of them Open events will open up the club and still allow the EL to thrive. EL should not be a substitute for Open events.
- Daunting for new riders, it requires much better instructions and guidance information

- A pre-league beginner's night would be useful as well as moving the novice event to the start of the session so new riders feel welcomed to ride the rest of the league. It should also be just for beginners
- More balance in the reports including mid field battles etc. only top riders are reported. Makes it more interesting as the majority can relate to it, develop stories for members to follow weekly
- Too many repeat events of the same route/distance – introduce new routes e.g. hilly's, TTT, APR's, Crits etc
- Don't change EL its great.
- The issue of finding helpers is still a weekly repeated issue. Strong feedback received regarding being strict about the marshalling rules with focus on either volunteering or riders points don't count. There is a feeling of unfairness on the volunteer work load.

### **3.7 What should the club provide information sessions on?**

(In addition to the categorical responses we included an open-ended question)

- More guest speakers/film nights etc
- Sessions on race tactics
- Help the members to help themselves by developing website and forum as good starting tools
- The club doesn't provide the warmest of welcomes, hard for new members to find their way.
- Better beginner's guides to the club, events, and racing types.

### **3.8 What should the club develop?**

- Beginner's event including a beginner's night at TT early in the session
- TT teams at open events
- Set up a coaching hierarchy so junior coaches can be trained
- Promote official coaches better and offer funding to support coaches and coaching activities
- Repair evening for bike maintenance
- Options for family cycling with the club, family friendly events
- Purchase of hire equipment and purchase starter bikes (as per Stirling Bike Club)
- An induction program for new members
- Introduction to various forms of racing
- Novice and youth events
- Event organiser pack/mentor for first timers
- Track visits e.g. Dundee, Edinburgh or Manchester Velodrome
- Club house/minibus
- Club night once a week off-season
- Midweek training ride
- Bike jumble sales
- Skills sessions – on and off road
- Sportives
- Marshalling/timekeeping course
- Increased and focused spend on club money
- Slower club runs
- More offroad events

- Racing squad support (car and mechanics)
- Marshalling (and timekeeping) training sessions
- Racing events
- Sportives
- Tours
- Racing squad
- Youth training
- Deeside Notes used as signal for what is on forum
- Define better the types of offers of help

This is a long list which a club made up of volunteers is unlikely to be able to meet. However, it provides an excellent indication of what members would like from the club and a starting point from which to improve the club.

### **3.9 How can you help out?**

- Don't know what to do
- Will help out if events are advertised in good time so dates can be set
- Organisation of woman's racing
- Youth cycling
- Racing for 1<sup>st</sup> timers
- Family events/touring/sportifs
- Road racing
- MTB skills session
- MTB events and marshalling

Plenty of respondents stated they would be willing to help out. This doesn't necessarily reflect what happens at the moment as the club continually struggles to find volunteers. However, perhaps members are willing to volunteer for different types of activities than are currently requested e.g. organising family events.

### **3.10 What stops you organising events?**

- Don't feel competent with little or no experience
- Stress of finding volunteers
- Not interested
- Don't want to organise hard core events

## **4.0 Recommendations for Implementation**

Many potential recommendations emerge from the survey results. In Section 1 of this report a number were listed. In this section we have expanded on six specific recommendations to prompt discussion and action.

### **4.1 Committee Structure and Transparency**

The committee had a reshuffle performed following the 2010/2011 AGM in which we saw a new chairman elected and some new positions formed, these included MTB Officer, Press Officer and Web Site Officer. Together with this, 2 sub committees were formed in order to break up the work and drive development. These were Rider/Club support and Evening League sub committees.

The formation of sub-committees appears an effective way to focus on the key requirements and ensure that deliverables are met. Going forward increased use of these would be beneficial.

### **4.2 Structured Development Programs including Club Coaching**

Currently there are no official club coaches performing sessions and there is no club endorsed structured development plan in place. Positively, despite this there is still coaching being performed with particular groups through the week but these are self-supported e.g. women's specific groups and general road race training.

There is also currently no youth development program in place and the club is not Go Ride accredited. There is also no Welfare Officer position.

A structured, progressive and club endorsed development programme needs formulated. This programme needs to identify particular groups and outlay a road map in order for coaching support to then be put in place.

There are various dimensions by which the club activities can be defined which should be considered when determining development groups. These include,

Age – Youth/Senior

Gender – Male/Female

Competitiveness – Social Riding/Sportives/Race Competition

Cycling discipline – Road, Time Trial, Mountain Biking, Cyclocross, Touring

### **4.3 Website**

Since the survey, the website has been given a large amount of focus, made possible by the new Web Master position. A large proportion of the information rolled out to the members is now available on the website and a continuous development and improvement plan is in place. The filling of previously empty or out of date pages is underway with a completely new website layout planned. Control of events such as the Evening League has been passed over to dedicated EL pages and specific email addresses, increasing the efficiency and perceived professionalism of the league and organisation process, whilst raising the awareness of the events.

Continued development of the website however requires committee backed support. The structure of the pages has been revamped, but to keep the site fresh and active, continuous material updates

are required. Positions such as Press Officer and team leaders such as coaches as well as club publications like Cranks and Deeside Notes should drive feedback from the members to produce continuous and up to date material from all abilities and disciplines.

#### **4.4 Evening League**

There is a continuing problem with supporting the success of the evening league in terms of marshals and official positions such as time keepers. The problem is well known by the riders but it still continues. The most strongly supported method of addressing this is to instigate a rule that only riders who marshal are allowed to collect points at the league. Building on this, providing two club sessions at the start and middle of the Evening League season on how to perform marshal and time keeping is recommended. These sessions remove the excuse of members not being given the necessary training to carry out the minimum Evening League requirements.

There was also support for opening up the league to other non TT disciplines. This would allow a great number of non-Time Trialing members to participate in what is already a large success for the club. Following on this theme, instigating a beginner's night near the start of the season would allow members new to Time Trialling to be given support.

The final supported change for Evening League was to promote better interaction with other clubs and race events. Currently there are 13 EL races which absorb a large amount of the member's time and willingness to travel to external Open events. If a number of the current EL races were made Open events it would bolster the clubs position in the district and promote a wider field of competition. Greater revenue streams would also be generated which could be fed back to improve the league for the future.

#### **4.5 Information/Training Sessions for Club Members**

There was wide popularity for a number of session types to directly support the knowledge base of the members. The top three types were Fitness/coaching information, Training Sessions and Bike maintenance. Other well supported types were Group cycling skills and Event Organisation.

Providing sessions of these types, as well as the intended benefit, also promote good interaction between members and increase community spirit.

#### **4.6 Organisation of Family Friendly Events**

Two thirds of the membership have children of which a proportion cycle. The introduction of family friendly events was keenly supported and would help to underpin the growth of more children moving into mainstream biking.

There have been a number of successful case studies such as the recent Cyclefest event at Alford where Ythan hosted a youth event, the Ythan GP and a cyclocross event held at Knockburn Loch. These are excellent extensions to existing races where both the children and the adults can enjoy participating in cycling events.