Healthy Rides, 2019-20.

Annual Report for Southwark Cyclists AGM, 11/11/20

What a year!

**Pre-Covid**. From last AGM (November 2019) until mid-March things cruised along much as in the last 5 year. Rides every Saturday, plus one on Boxing Day. 20 in all with an average of 17 riders. Visited a number of new locations (Streatham Common, Walthamstow, Wandsworth Park/Putney) and lots of familiar ones (Royal Parks, Royal Docks etc).

**Post-Covid**. Wham. Locked down on 23rd March. Rides suspended. Individual exercise was permitted so we posted 10 routes suitable for “do-it-yourself” riding. Not sure how much these routes were used, but one regular healthy rider claimed she had ridden them all and another said she had taken her family riding on them. To keep people involved we launched our own Southwark Cyclists Healthy Rides group on Facebook. This provided information about the routes for self-riding and when rides restarted somewhere to post photos and brief reports about rides. Group has 147 members now.

1st June saw relaxation of the lockdown with 6 people allowed to meet outdoors. We did not pick up on this at once, but by start of July were really missing the rides. In discussion with LCC developed a risk assessment and protocol for Covid-safe rides for 6. Multiple rides (2 or 3) were organised for the 4 Saturdays in July and the first 2 in August, 13 rides in all. To control numbers we used Eventbrite to register riders. This worked well.

Mid August saw a further relaxation of the rules and we could have rides of up to 30. It was decided this was too much as we needed to social distance. Numbers were restricted to 20. We ran 5 rides with an average of 19 riders. Then Sept 14th the “Rule of 6” as introduced. We reverted to multiple 6 person rides. The group of cyclists who lead rides was expanded. Riders have been really grateful for these multiple rides and they allowed us to get nearer to meeting demand. Demand was high as there were few cycling groups organising rides. Even with 15 places available they were usually all taken within 24 hours of being announced.

Between Sept 19th and October 31st there were 21 rides. 7 individuals acted as ride leaders. Then, Nov 5th, back to lockdown. Healthy Rides are currently suspended and we have been again publicising the routes for do-it-yourself riding.

Looking back over the last 7 months have organised registration for rides, set up a Facebook Group and most importantly kept the rides going. At a time when outdoor exercise was important for physical and mental health, the Healthy Rides felt more valuable than ever.

Bruce Lynn, Healthy Rides Co-ordinator. 9 Nov 2020