



# Welland Valley Cycling Club

**Club Centre**  
Market Harborough, Leicestershire

**Website**  
[www.wellandvalleycc.co.uk](http://www.wellandvalleycc.co.uk)

**Affiliated to**  
British Cycling  
Cycling Time Trials  
Northampton Cycle Racing Association  
Northampton & District Cycling Association

British Schools Cycling Association  
Cyclists' Touring Club  
Trail Cyclists Association

## Supporting Young Welland Valley CC Riders

Welland Valley Cycling Club has a track record of producing good young racing cyclists through Whizz Kids.

In 2018 the Club Committee wanted to better understand why young riders often step away from cycling and the Club and whether there are steps the Club can take to better support and mentor riders as they progress from Whizz Kids through the juvenile, junior and into the U23 category.

Following discussions at the 2018 AGM, Rowland Summerlin consulted with a range of members and riders to understand:

- What are the key reasons as to why young riders (defined as juvenile and junior riders) don't necessarily progress with WVCC?
- What is good practice in terms of Cycling Clubs elsewhere supporting young riders?
- How can the general cycling experience and the specific racing knowledge held by club members and others best be utilised to support young riders?
- What sustainable investment options are available to the club to support the progression of young riders?

These discussions highlighted a range of reasons why riders don't progress, either with WVCC or more generally in cycling. Where the interest to kick on is there, WVCC needs to help young riders achieve their goals.

The discussions both through Rowland's work, and at the March 2019 Club Night (Let's Go Racing!), pointed towards the need for greater mentoring support to be given to young riders as they progress from Whizz Kids. This includes:

- Advice on training (formally from club coaches, and informally from role model senior members)
- Advice on race programming (formally from club coaches, and informally from role model senior members)
- Active encouragement to engage in training rides and events (such as Chain Gangs, Club Runs and TTs, as well as local skills sessions), supported 'in the saddle' by experienced club members where possible.
- Engagement, where merited, in wider support, funded in part by investment in youth development from the Club.

To take this forward, the Committee has agreed that the Club should trial a **youth development programme** for the 2020 season. This would involve:

- Recruiting and supervising a small group of senior 'role model' racing mentors across the cycling disciplines to work alongside Club Coaches to provide advice on training and racing and riding opportunities.
- Identifying a small group of supportable juvenile and junior riders who would benefit from and would agree to work with coaches and senior 'role model' mentors. All young riders would be eligible for mentoring support.
- For outstanding and committed juvenile and junior riders, brokering an arrangement with external expertise to provide a structured programme of support. This takes the form of providing 50% of the funding required to join the Bryan Steel Youth Academy. This Academy received excellent feedback from one of our juvenile club riders in 2019. The Club anticipates supporting three such riders as a guide but would be open to supporting more if merited.

Regarding supporting outstanding and committed riders through the Bryan Steel Academy, the Club will open a call for applicants for support to:

- Submit their cycling CV; and
- Either a covering letter or a short vlog demonstrating their commitment to the club and to their development, and setting out why they should be supported, and;
- A supporting letter from a parent or guardian

To benefit from this support, riders should be juveniles or juniors as defined by the WVCC Club Calendar.

The deadline is the end of November 2019, and applications should be sent to Club Secretary Stuart Dawkins by email ([secretary@wellandvalleycc.co.uk](mailto:secretary@wellandvalleycc.co.uk))

Following this, a sub committee consisting of Rowland Summerlin (Chair), Kevin Nicholls, Lorna Marlow and John Welsford will meet to make recommendations to the Committee, with a view to riders selected to receive external support starting in January 2020.

In addition, the Committee is always open to approaches to supporting young riders on a case by case basis.

The Committee recognises that riders may naturally progress to join bespoke racing teams, and it is not the Club's intention to go down this route, but to ensure talented riders progress with WVCC as far as it make sense for them to do so, and are not lost to the sport along the way.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this discussion.

**Rowland Summerlin and Jon Durnin**  
November 2019.