# Welwyn Wheelers Annual Report 2024

**Date for 2025 AGM: 24 February at 7:30pm at Gosling Sports Stadium**

**Introduction**

The undoubted highlight of the year has been the restoration to full working order of the velodrome at Gosling. Though it seems a long time ago, at the 2024 AGM the track was out-of-action and had been since July 2023. At the time we were hopeful, but by no means certain, that the contractor Colas would restore the surface in time for the start of training in April. In the event Colas delivered commendably, and we enjoyed a full season of training, Track League, and Open Events. The last two years have been a reminder of how integral Track and Track Racing is to our club and our roots at Gosling. At present, the track surface is weathering well and appears to have improved on the quality of the previous (2019) surface coating. We can now, hopefully, look forward to many more years’ track racing before further works will be required.

**Committee &** **Facilities**

At the 2024 AGM the Committee from 2023 remained unchanged except for the addition of Henry Barker as Youth representative. Committee meetings continue and have been held in the PA Hut office at Gosling with an open laptop and Google Meet connection for anyone unable to join in person. The committee met seven times since the 2023 AGM. We have nine members on the committee, out of a possible twelve Committee positions, and we urgently seek new members to come onboard. In particular, we need a Volunteer Coordinator and someone to take on posting on the website and social media, both of which are lacking at present. Support with the clothing stock would also be greatly appreciated.

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The big expenditure this year has been the installation of a waterless Kazuba toilet (actually 2 toilets!) alongside the track. Originally the Gosling track had twin Men’s/Women’s toilets at the back of the stand, but these have not been available since the closure of the stands, which continue to be out-of-bounds. The next closest toilets have been in the Sports Hall building, but the conversion of that to a Police Training centre has meant these toilets are often also unavailable at times when our training and racing sessions run. The new toilets were installed at the end of summer 2024: they were funded with contributions from GLL, the Herts Phoenix Athletics Club, and a grant from the Roger Thompson Charitable Trust, with the remainder coming from club reserves. They greatly improve the experience of anyone participating or spectating our events, many thanks to Francis for his perseverance in seeing this complex project through to a successful conclusion.

Alongside the toilet there have been a long list of upgrades, including a new fleet of Dolan Pre Cursa Track hire bikes, a new Public Address system for the Velodrome and improvements to signage, security shutters, office and catering facilities and more. A further thank you to all the volunteers who have freely given time to improve our club. Finally, we commissioned and installed a Memorial bench, inscribed to Peter Waghorn, positioned at track-side next to that for Karl Gough, and much appreciated by spectators on a Friday night.

## Racing

In 2024, WW again delivered our two big non-Track Open Events: The Good Friday Hilly 50km time trial, and our cyclocross event in October at Stanborough, the latter as part of the Eastern Cyclocross League. Thanks to our regular Hilly 50 organiser, Andy Porter, and Francis G who took on the role of promoter for the CX. We hope to be able to announce a new promoter for the Open CX event at the AGM this year. We welcomed a new promoter in Chris Paley-Menzies for both our summer Dusty Devils and winter Muddy Monsters series. These both continue to be a great introduction to racing for young riders, especially CX and MTB.

Track League was organised as in recent seasons in partnership with Verulam CC, and enjoyed a full season of racing after the curtailment of racing in 2023. We were again able to support a Dernyfest (organised by Graham Bristow) and three Open Meetings. The last of these, which was the finale closing Friday of Gosling racing, was in Memorial to Peter Waghorn, our former chair and organiser of TL for many decades. We have acquired new trophies for this event and plan for it to be a regular fixture in future years. A hugely welcome return was the Welwyn round of the National Youth Track Omnium, held at Gosling in June 2024 and organised by Jenny Bone assisted by Joel Stewart. We look forward to a repeat of this event in 2025.

Alongside 2024 racing achievements in Welwyn colours, which will covered by Francis at the AGM, 2024 was notable for a long list of riders formerly of our club, making their mark in national- and international-level racing. Highlights were Louis Sutton in the Tour of Britain (top 10 overall after several of the stages & in the break with Alaphilippe – see stage 2!). Oli Stockwell moving up to a full WorldTour contract with Bahrain and Louis Sutton with Eustkatel, and Euan Woodliffe joining the Israel Premiertech Conti squad, after several years struggling with health problems. Also, Archie Peet winning in the national U23 series, Henry Hobbs, Calum Moir, Leon Atkins and Iona Moir representing BC at the European Championships on the track. This is a reflection of the outstanding coaching and nurturing of young cycling careers that Welwyn have established over many years. The list is not exhaustive and congratulations to the many other successful former wheelers.

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**Finances**

Finn Clawson, our treasurer, will present the full 2024 Accounts at the AGM. Welwyn Wheelers CC continue to hold a strongly positive financial position. Income for 2024 was £108k, which included a very generous bequeathment from Peter Waghorn’s estate of £40k and grants totalling £16.5k. Expenditure was just over £80k, which included several significant one-off costs for the Kazuba toilet, Security CCTV and Alarm systems, and PA equipment. The concession for club members to purchase quarterly parking via the club and through GLL, which was negotiated with GLL last year, has been running smoothly and continues to operate. We increased the discount offered to club members on session fees for training to 30% and continue to look for ways to reward the loyalty and dedication of our members. Participation at Track League has been somewhat reduced in adult ranks but stronger from Youth – the overall effect of which is to reduce income from entry fees. To compensate we’ve provided a small subsidy to allow the Track League to continue paying points prizes and maintaining entry fees at competitive levels, as we regard TL as integral to the club. Club membership fees for 2025 are maintained at previous levels, but we are hoping to review and overhaul management of the membership, potentially moving away from the BC-managed system and introducing new categories of membership. We hope to introduce these changes over the course of 2025 and will announce through Facebook, on the website and through email to members.

## Looking Forward

Our strong financial position allows us to consider further improvements to the Gosling infrastructure. Our preference will be to seek match-funding rather than covering all costs ourselves. For several years we have been considering new LED lighting on the trackside stanchions to illuminate the CX banking area. This was not achievable this year due to the huge effort required to bring the new toilet to completion; however, we plan to seek quotes from a new potential contractor and move forward based on those. One of the sheds that we use for storage beside the road to the track is also urgently in need of regrade and this is another possible project to initiate in 2025. As always we thank Francis Gallacher for all the facilities work, in addition to Coach coordination.

## **Andrew Brown**

Chair