

Recyke y'bike

Annual Report

A year in review

2024

Welcome message

Hello and welcome to Recyke y'bikes 2024 annual report.

Thank you for taking the time to read Recyke y'bike's Annual Report for 2024. This past year has been an incredible journey, filled with challenges, achievements, and unwavering dedication from our staff, volunteers, and supporters.

At Recyke y'bike, we believe in the transformative power of cycling—not just as a means of transport, but as a way to bring communities together, improve health, and promote sustainability. From providing bikes to those in need, to empowering individuals through our workshops and outreach programmes, we are constantly inspired by the positive impact we see every day.

This report offers a snapshot of the work we've been doing over the past 12 months. It highlights the stories, people, and programmes that make Recyke y'bike more than just a charity—it's a movement for change. None of this would be possible without the incredible generosity of our volunteers, donors, and partners who share our vision of a greener, healthier future.

As you read through these pages, we hope you'll feel as proud as we do of everything we've achieved together. Let's keep pedalling forward, making a difference one bike at a time.



Introduction

Our Chair's report



Graham Archer
Chair of Trustees

My first year of being Chair of Trustees at Recyke y'bike has focused on learning about the organisation and being supported by the excellent board of trustees. Having joined the board only a couple of months before taking over as chair, I am blessed to be surrounded by a group of trustees with a breadth of experience within the charity and from other charities as well as expertise from outside the world of the third sector.

During the course of the year, we have had some of our very experienced trustees step down and the Board would like to thank Maureen, Craig and Ronnie for their many years of service to the charity. As of this AGM, my predecessor as Chair, Ben, is also stepping down. Ben has been a board member for 8 years and chaired for 5 of those. His contribution to the organisation through many changes and challenging times is greatly appreciated.

We have therefore recruited new members and we were delighted to be able to appoint Matthew Kontarines, who joins us as treasurer, Alan Thompson and Jimmi Nichols who bring a wealth of business experience to the board. Working alongside other more recently joining trustees, some longer term trustees and staff, we have created a strategic plan to help direct us through the next few years. This is not intended to disrupt any of the work we are doing but to help the staff and volunteers to maintain a focus on the important work which we do.

Jack has now been with us for over 18 months and we have changed his job title to Chief Executive Officer to more closely reflect his role with similar jobs in the sector. It has been a great pleasure working with Jack and getting to know him.

Sadly, this year we are saying goodbye to Savi who has helped steady the financial ship through the many storms of the last few years. We wish Savi all success in her future roles.



Introduction

Our CEO's report



Jack Swain
Chief Executive Officer

This is my second annual report now and I'm no less amazed and overwhelmed at the commitment and support from many for such a great charity, than I was when I wrote my first report.

It has been a tough year financially with a cost of living crisis, many bills for us have gone up and spares costing more. This means harder times for us as we navigate and constantly evaluate the work we do, but it also means that our beneficiaries are facing this storm too, and as a result, even more people are in need of a bicycle.

The bicycle really does hold the solution to many problems. Financial, health, social and environmental issues can be solved by having a bicycle, and we are committed to sharing this benefit as far and wide as possible. But we can only do this through continued work, funding and support from donors. Something which we have been blessed with through the years and continue to be thankful for!

We have continued to support staff development through apprenticeships and training, including the trustees supporting myself with a Level 7 apprenticeship in Strategic leadership. This goes hand in hand with our new strategy and vision which we are hoping to launch publicly in early 2025. There has been much hard work and amazing meetings gone into building the strategy and our direction for the future and I'm looking forward to sharing it with you all!

The shops continue to grow and support the charity, with demand for environmentally friendly and sustainable cycling products and servicing required more than ever before, we are seeing a benefit from this by having busy shops! They are a great outlet for us to provide support to keep bikes rolling and allow second hand parts to reduce costs to cyclists and prevent usable parts going to landfill. It's been great to see so many volunteers not only supporting outreach projects but the shops as well.

Over the year we welcomed Fran, Our new community engagement coordinator who has brought a passionate and lively energy to the charity. It's been a pleasure so far and I'm looking forward to working together in the future.

We also said goodbye to a number of trustees and welcomed exciting new ones. I'd like to thank Ben for his time as chair and my line manager and wish him all the best for the future. I'm pleased Graham has stepped up to take the role of chair and have enjoyed my time working with him so far, and again, looking forward to an exciting future ahead together.

I'd like to thank all the staff and volunteers for their efforts and involvements over the past year and can't wait to keep on working hard towards our vision in 2025 and beyond.

Making an impact

Referral bikes

In the last 12 months we've given away **215** referral bikes to people seeking asylum, refugees and families struggling financially.

Funding for this project, which includes replacement parts and staff time to refurbish and check the bikes and coordination of the scheme, came from The National Lottery Awards for All, for Byker, and NHS trust and Durham County Council for CLS. As usual demand has massively outstripped supply. There is a huge need for affordable, healthy, and reliable modes of transport, which will likely increase next year with the raise on the cap on a single bus fare. Our Referral bikes allow individuals to access key services, such as job interviews, school, GP appointments and also allows them to meet-up friends.

Our bikes help provide individuals with freedom, agency, fun and a form of exercise.

Feedback

I am a 7 year old, my family is a refugee family and missed my bike back home in Angola. I am happy once again!

Referral Bike Beneficiary

Making an impact

LGBTQ+ sessions

The LGBTQ+ workshops were set up with help from Cycling UK and the Big Bike Revival.

Their goal is to:

- Inspire adults who don't currently cycle to begin
- Inspire those who have taken a break from cycling to return
- Inspire those who do cycle to start cycling more frequently

We identified a need in the local LGBTQ+ community and so arranged to deliver social and inclusive workshops to build confidence and interest. We hosted 4 workshops and 2 social rides over 4 months. The sessions were a great success and attendance was amazing.

Feedback

Thanks for having us! It was nice to see everyone there and have a space with just queer people in it. Thanks for helping me with my handlebar grips and cleaning some of my bike. I'll definitely be coming to the next one because I cycle every day and I'd really like to know what I'm doing, I think I just need to start off a bit more basic! Thanks for setting it up and see you next time.

Leo, Attendee

Feedback

I had lots of fun being a volunteer! It was great to be able to hold a safe space for LGBTQ+ folks, giving space for them to ask questions that they would otherwise not be able to have answered, and show them how to fix and maintain basic bike bits so they can stay safe on the roads. Aside from the bikes, I felt seen by Recycle y'bike and it was nice to be able to help others feel the same.

Finn, Volunteer

Making an impact

Women's sessions

Feedback

Hi I just wanted to let you know that I had a great session this evening with Fran and Sara in the woman's maintenance session. I learned loads! As a single mum to two little ones with limited funds this session has been absolutely brilliant to make sure my little boys bike is in good safe condition for him what a lovely team you have too. xx

We've delivered women only repair sessions twice a month over the last year with sessions running from both shops. These sessions have provided a safe and supportive space for women to gain the skills to keep their bikes running well so that they can cycle with confidence.



Empowering communities

Street workshops



Our street repair workshops have now been running for several years and have grown to become an important part of summer for families in Byker and Walker where the cost of living crisis is having a significant impact, and alternative forms of transport are not always accessible. Delivered in partnership with Kids Kabin, the sessions enable us to combine the long standing relationships that Kids Kabin have with residents with our expertise, tools and parts.

The project has two main objectives: ensuring that kids' bikes are safe and properly looked after, and teaching children and young people how to maintain their own bikes. Children work out what needs fixed, select and reuse spare parts, and learn how to use a variety of bike tools both confidently and safely. Not only do they develop new skills, they also work together to help each other. The workshops enhance the problem solving and teamwork skills of young bike mechanics, building their confidence and giving them practical knowledge. They can then share this knowledge with others and have skills that will stay with them for life. We aim to leave young people empowered to choose cycling more as an active, healthy, and environmentally friendly way of getting around. Finally, workshops encourage children and families to work positively together in the streets and in parks, leading to stronger local relationships and greater community ownership of our places.

Empowering communities

Young volunteers

This year we've gained a lot of new young volunteers and it's great to see there's high demand from young people. Three members of the young volunteer group have now been coming for a couple of years and have built considerable knowledge and skills. They are now able to provide peer mentoring support for new young volunteers. During each session, Pete and Jen go through a range of tasks with the group and match tasks to participants depending on skill and experience level. A couple of the group are very keen to build their own bikes so we've been working on that a lot. It's wonderful to see them grow in confidence and feel pride in their achievements. In September the group participated in a workshop with Northumberland Wildlife Trust which they really enjoyed and it was good to see them having fun with an activity outside. We plan to take them out on a nature ride before the end of the year!



Sustainability in action

The kingdom of rust

Recycling/salvaging project

It's been a very busy year in the recycling/salvaging department. I'm not sure whether it's down to more people than ever before donating bikes or the cost of living crisis having a knock-on effect of making it harder for people to dispose of used bikes (local council prices making it expensive for households on limited budgets to dispose of bulky rubbish items). This is definitely the busiest year I've known for having to recycle bikes that don't make it for refurbishing.

Firstly, I want to give a big THANK YOU to all the wonderful volunteers that have helped in the task of dismantling bikes - it could not be done without your help. Recycling/scrapping is not the most glamorous of tasks - many think that building bikes is the ultimate job - but recycling is a hugely important part of the whole operation. It is an essential role in the functioning of Recycle y'bike, it's also a great way to begin to understand how bikes are put together and function, for anyone who is just starting out in the world of bikes. The scrapping room is also where some of the best conversations are to be had, everything from the study of yeasts, social clinics in Italy, Spain...ancient Greek earliest versions of the Bible, politics, music not to mention Gordon going on about sport (but I just put my head somewhere else and go to my happy place!)

The recycling of bikes has a few obvious benefits, the main one is providing parts for bike builds and reducing the cost of having to buy new parts from suppliers. I could not begin to put any kind of figure on what we are saving here but it must run into £ thousands per year. Second benefit is providing quality, rare, retro parts for eBay. Hopefully during the quieter winter months eBay selling can be resumed because we now have a nice sized stockpile of valuable bike parts. The third benefit is space management combined with a steady revenue from actual scrap metal prices (£9000/year on scrap metal value). Finally, there is the simple fact that scrapping has to take place in order to free up space in an already crowded environment.

A couple of other facts to mention here. An aluminium frame fully stripped down has a value of around 90p, a steel framed bike has a value of around 10p, these values fluctuate according to scrap metal prices changing all the time. The time taken to strip a bike down is around half an hour, again that depends on the condition of the bike - how rusty it is, if it has been dredged out of a garden pond or just a bike someone no longer has use for. So there is a constant trade-off between value and time taken to dismantle. This only works because Recycle y'bike has some great volunteers happy to give their time.

I'm also going to mention Fran here, after a lot of hard work, searching around, cajoling and persuading she has managed to secure funding for a supported volunteer project, which I'll be doing in the not too distant future, on Tuesdays with people who are seeking asylum. The aim here is to help them feel integrated into the community, achieve some qualifications (Velotech), have somewhere to go and do something creative and absorbing as well as meet other people. Not to mention just for them to get out for a day and put their heads somewhere else, albeit for a brief moment. Thank you Fran for your hard work and dedication to the project!

Nick Janczak
Scrapping/Recycling Dept

Voices of Recyke y'bike

Feedback

When I took early retirement last year I considered several volunteering roles across the north east, and Recyke y'bike appealed greatly. Being a keen cyclist was a good start, but I am also keen to promote cycling, assist in reducing landfill and supporting the socially disadvantaged including refugees and asylum seekers. The team at Recyke y'bike are welcoming and inclusive which makes my volunteering role something to look forward to on the days I work.

Nick, Volunteer

Feedback

More years ago than I can remember, when Recyke was hiding under the Byker railway arches, I offered to assist with bringing donations in from west Northumberland as I was frequently driving into to work from my home in Hexham. It is now ten years since I retired from the work in Byker but I am still bringing bikes on and in my camper van, despite having to negotiate an exemption from the LEZ. Although the exemption was on the basis that mine is a camper van I much preferred the argument that the journeys were to bring in bikes for renovation and reuse. I regularly go to remote corners of the county which I didn't know existed, meet all sorts of wonderful generous people and hear stories, sometimes with tears, about the bikes I collect. When I arrive at Brinkburn street there is always a welcoming helping hand so long may this continue.

Nigel, Volunteer

Feedback

Recyke y Bike is more than just a sanctuary for bikes! Having volunteered for over six years I have come to appreciate the fellowship and learning which grows with each Wednesday. It's really good to know that our efforts as volunteers translate into free bikes and activities for those who need them. The close interaction between volunteers and professional mechanics maintains high standards. So too does Jeff's Velotech course which provides practical training appropriate for volunteers with a wide range of language skills.

Bob, Volunteer

Feedback

I enjoy fixing bikes and learning new skills. I would like to learn how to service shocks and electric bikes. I would love an apprenticeship as a bike mechanic. All the staff are very nice and have helped me a lot.

Lewis, Young Volunteer

Feedback

Taught how to adequately bodge a bike fix from my dad, I sought Recyke Y'bike for the sandbox opportunity to play, break, fix (and usually break again) bikes the right way. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the workshop thus far and hope to keep learning each and every week. I enjoy the relaxed environment of Recyke. Arriving with a smile and a head full of thoughts I know I can chat with other volunteers, or maybe on rainy days find a corner to myself and work away in solitude. I feel a great sense of pride knowing that each bike I learn from, whether it be derailleur mishaps or truing wheels, also has the potential to help someone in need. The mechanics have always greeted me with a smile, bid me farewell and have been great tutors when I have needed their help (orextra muscle).

As a result of being a volunteer mechanic, I have had the opportunity to work closely with Jen and facilitate a safe space for LGBTQ+ cyclists. These events have let me cross paths with a fantastic community of people across the city, which I never would have met without Recyke.

Little did I know that needing to fix my brakes two years ago would lead me to fixing someone else's brakes in a warehouse in Byker, but them's the brakes I suppose....Recyke y'bike has become more than just fixing bikes for me, but a community of like-minded people who can find space for play in their everyday lives. I look forward to continuing to volunteer, and maybe one day i'll index some gears right first try!

Finn, Volunteer

Feedback

I am 15 years old, I play football and need to be there on time after school. My family can not afford transportation and school couldn't help me with the fees. I am glad I have a bike now. I just want to say thank you so much.

Referral bike recipient

Interview with Will

Chatting with Will our apprentice mechanic about his time at Recyke y'bike

Will
Apprentice Mechanic

"How did you first find out about Recyke y'bike?"

"My mam saw a post on facebook about joining the young volunteer project on Saturdays, and contacted Vanessa about it. I actually met Vanessa before we heard anything back, as she was at my dad's work, and I got introduced to her."

"What's the best part of your job?"

"All of it. Getting to work on bikes everyday, and getting to ride them everyday. Getting to wind up Chris!"

"Why do you think bikes are important?"

"Bikes are important because they can be reliable means of transportation, which for the times we live in is appropriate due to the current cost of living crisis and riding a bike means we are not contributing to global warming. Bikes can also be important as a way to get exercise and explore new places."

"What's the most valuable thing you've learnt during your time at Recyke? "

"Expanding my skills and knowledge on fixing and maintaining bikes. Giving me a career."



A year in numbers...

Key stats from 2024

215

Referral Bikes given away for free to those in need

3766

Servicing and repair jobs completed

893

Passed on to partners and individuals for free

Future plans

Looking ahead to 2025

We're looking at different ways of generating income which align to charitable objectives. One of these is providing alternative education for young people who are struggling with mainstream education and need alternative routes to formal accreditation. We are re-starting our support volunteering work to enable people seeking asylum to volunteer, gain new skills and a supportive network.



Thank you for your support over the past year. Together, we've achieved so much, and we're excited to continue building on this progress in the year ahead.

HUGE thank you to our volunteers without whom we simply couldn't function.

Thank you to our hard working staff team who continue to go above and beyond to keep the wheels spinning!

Thanks also to Sara Bateman, Veerle Noben, Marie Mcathey and Paula Soeiro for enabling the women's bike nights.

Many thanks to our many funders and supporters:

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| Sage Foundation | Peter Harrison Foundation |
| Sir James Knott Trust | NHS Health Improvement Fund |
| St James Place Foundation | National Lottery |
| Wellbank Foundation | RW Mann Trust |
| Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland | The Hedley Foundation |
| LGA Foundation | Hunter Pemberton Trust |
| County Durham Community Foundation | Cycling UK |
| Procter & Gamble Employees Charities Fund | SOS Group |
| Newcastle City Council | Zyrofisher |
| Durham County Council | Altura |
| William Leech Charity | Cade Media |
| Byker Community Trust | Yes We Can |
| Hadrian Trust | |

Recyke y'bike

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