

York Bike Belles' Press Release

28th September 2021



Goodbye, four walls. Hello, wind in my hair!

After a pandemic pause of 18 months, York Bike Belles' Cycling Without Age Rides for care home residents are back!

Cycling Without Age Rides are a simple but brilliant idea. With a special electric-assist rickshaw called Trixie, trained York Bike Belles volunteers offer care home residents free and comfortable Rides out and about around the city.

Passengers hugely enjoy reconnecting with the world outside their usual four walls. The Rides open a door to the outdoors, green spaces, the bustle of the city and the friendly York community. The Rides bring back memories, freedom, companionship, and community contact. And, of course, the wonderful feeling of the wind in their hair!

The Rides have been on hold since March 2020 due to the pandemic. York Bike Belles are now able to restart, thanks to funding from The Feoffees of St Michael's Spurriergate, Ruth Jennaway from local IT business Skiweb Ltd, Cycle Heaven, and enthusiastic local volunteers.

Sheridan Piggott, Programme Manager of York Bike Belles CIC, says:

"We're so excited to be able to restart Cycling Without Age Rides again and help our care communities recover from the pandemic.

Care home residents have had an extremely challenging time during Covid-19. In the words of a July 2021 Age UK report, the pandemic has left "deep physical and emotional scars on a significant proportion of our older population".

The Rides bring better health and wellbeing to everyone involved through the simple act of getting out and about in the fresh air with friendly companions. The Ride experience reconnects passengers with everyday life – as they glide along the riverside, parks and city streets of York, enjoying York landmarks like the Minster and Rowntree Park, the buzz of outdoor community life, and the sounds of birds and the wind blowing through the trees.

Wheeling along, passengers can sit back, relax, look at the sky, chat and feel part of life again. Many are even inspired to burst into song! 😊"

Ruth Jennaway from Skiweb Ltd says: As a local business, it's wonderful to support such a positive and uplifting project, and make a genuine difference to people's lives in my local community."

Libertee Hull, Wellbeing Coordinator, Chocolate Works Care Village says: "The Rides are amazing. They give the residents the opportunity to get outside which, since the pandemic is the most important thing. Our residents get mentally and physically stimulated on the bike which helps them keep healthy in general, and with all sorts of mental health. We are all very keen and excited to have the Rides back."

If you are interested in Rides at your care home, independent living scheme or retirement community, please email Julie Kay, Rides Coordinator, at julie.yorkbikebelles@gmail.com.

Finally, we urgently need financial support to continue this extraordinary initiative in 2022. If you would like to donate, go to www.yorkbikebelles.community/donate or to express an interest in sponsoring the project, please email yorkbikebelles@gmail.com.

More information at www.yorkbikebelles.community/cyclingwithoutage.

Editor's Notes:

York Bike Belles CIC

- For further information, please contact Sheridan Piggott, Programme Manager, on 07900 977990, york-bikebelles@gmail.com
- York Bike Belles is an award-winning charitable organisation, incorporated as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company. We support people of all ages and abilities to walk and cycle as the natural way to get around York. Our charitable work improves the wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable groups in the city.

www.yorkbikebelles.community.

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www.twitter.com/yorkbikebelles

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Chocolate Works Care Village is part of Springfield Healthcare Group

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Ruth Jennaway from Skiweb Ltd

- Skiweb Ltd is a local IT business "With help your company can make the most out of Teams, SharePoint, Workflows & Office 365! Call me for online training, mentoring, troubleshooting or consulting. (Or free-lance contracts)"
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