

York Bike Belles CIC

Environmental Sustainability Policy

February 2023

Section 1 – Environmental Sustainability Principles

York Bike Belles is committed to tackling the joint climate and nature crises. We have a responsibility to ensure that our work does not have a negative impact on the world around us and protects, benefits and enhances the people we work with and places we work within.

York Bike Belles recognises that our climate is changing. Globally, temperatures are rising as a result of greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity. Greenhouse gas emissions from road transport make up about a fifth of the UK's total emissions that contribute to climate change ([ONS 2019](#)) Science tells us that we have just a few decades to prevent an unpredictable and dangerous future.

In addition, our natural world has never been under such intense pressure. Species are declining at an alarming rate and habitats are being degraded. 41% of UK species have declined since the 1970's and 15% are threatened with extinction ([RSPB State of Nature Report 2019](#)).

If we want future generations to be able to enjoy and benefit from our world, we must make responsible environmental choices **now** about how we live, work and care for it.

York Bike Belles consequently values environmental sustainability as a priority. This underpins two key objectives in our [Strategy 2023 - 2028](#), namely that "we increase walking and cycling, reduce car use and tackle the climate crisis" and that "we tackle the nature crisis".

Section 2 - How York Bike Belles puts Environmental Sustainability into practice

York Bike Belles prioritises programmes of work that tackle the climate and nature emergencies.

We encourage and enable York residents to walk and cycle more and reduce their car use, through our Cake Confidence start cycling scheme, Cycling Without Age Rides, Nature Time Walks and Rides and Car-Lite Living work.

We connect York residents to nature as part of a walking and cycling lifestyle, and encourage and enable them to value, protect and enhance nature and green spaces around York through our Nature Time activities and communications. Connecting people with nature is of crucial importance as it has been found to increase positive nature conservation behaviours ([Finding Nature 2020](#)).

We ensure that Environmental Sustainability is embedded in our work - in our communications, activities, resources, other policies and procedures, partnership-working and purchasing.

We inform all our team (Directors, paid staff, volunteers) about their responsibilities under this policy to apply good Environmental Sustainability practices in their work for us. This includes:

- walking and cycling where possible. If not possible, using sustainable transport
- connecting all those we work with to nature where possible
- sourcing environmentally sustainable products
- carrying out sound sustainable office practices, including using renewable energy, reducing paper, reducing waste and recycling

We make it a requirement in paid staff contracts to apply these practices in their day-to-day activities and include guidance in new staff inductions. We signpost our wider team to relevant environmental sustainability information and/ or training if appropriate, including training in 'Nature Connectedness' and Sustainable Lifestyles. If required, and where available, we offer free bike loans to our team from our community fleet.

We collect and monitor data on our Environmental Sustainability on a yearly basis to inform what, if any, steps need to be taken to set off our Carbon Footprint and/or improve our Environmental Sustainability performance the following year.

Review of policy

This Environmental Policy is freely accessible to all, and is published on our website. It will be reviewed on a yearly basis.

Section 3 – Actions and Sign Off

Agreed Actions 23/24

We will continue to prioritise and deliver work that tackles the climate and nature emergencies as above. We will continue to seek funding to sustainably deliver and develop our key projects outlined above, and for our new Take the Green Route! project which will develop new work in increasing biodiversity in green spaces in York. We will seek and respond to further opportunities to address the climate and nature crises.

We will continue to embed Environmental Sustainability in all our work and encourage all those we work with to do that same, in particular:

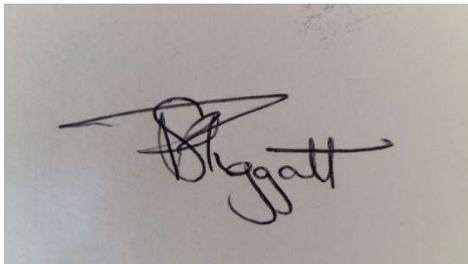
- We will make enquiries about the Environmental Sustainability practices of partners and potential partners and will prioritise working with those who can show evidence of good practice in this area.
- We will inform potential suppliers that evidence of sound Environmental Sustainability practices is one of the criteria for supplier selection, and ask to see their Environmental Sustainability Policy.
- We will encourage participants to travel by sustainable transport to our activities. We will encourage our online community to travel by sustainable transport to any routes and events promoted online. We will provide good information to enable them to do so.

We have identified that we do not take sufficient environmental action in the relevant work areas of Resources and Materials, Energy, Tree Planting and Waste. In 2023/24, we will look to embed the following good practices:

- Reduce paper consumption by all our team only using electronic documents, email and our shared Google Drive. If it is absolutely necessary to print, using only recycled paper and recycled printer cartridges.
- Reduce the amount of waste we produce from our main home office base and activities by reusing or recycling materials as much as possible. Ask that any members of the paid team who work from home also reuse or recycle materials as much as possible.
- Ask that any members of the paid team who work from home also have a renewable energy supplier if at all possible.
- Ensure any refreshments provided at activities are vegetarian, ideally vegan, sourced from local, environmentally-sound suppliers, and use plastic free, biodegradable plates and cutlery. Have a read about [why meat is bad for the environment](#).

- Ensure that any products purchased are ideally recycled, plastic free, sourced from local, environmentally-sound suppliers, produced using sustainable principles, and suitable for long-use, reusing and/ or recycling.
- Use local cycle deliverers where possible.
- Assess our [Carbon Footprint](#) for 2023/ 24 in March 2024, and arrange to set off any carbon generated with an in-house local tree planting activity or a donation to a local tree planting project. All trees will be from biosecure planting stock.
- Regularly promote our environmental sustainability practice on our communications channels.
- Incorporate any learning into our work and organisational development by March 2024.

Signed: Sheridan Piggott (Programme Manager)

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored surface. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Piggott'.

Dated: February 2023

Date of next review: February 2024