

2018 Annual Report

Introduction	2
Administration, Organisation, Strategy	3
Comms Group: Communications	5
Comms Group: Marketing	7
Events Group	8
The Strategy Group	11
Better Infrastructure Group	13
Outlook for 2019	16

Introduction

The York Cycle Campaign has had a very successful first year after its relaunch in September 2017. Its membership has almost quadrupled from the 36 York residents who showed faith in the Campaign's relaunch at its AGM, to over 140 members at the time of writing. Almost two thousand hours of members' time have been invested into over one hundred representations to the City of York Council on cycling issues, events, blogs, media interactions, meetings and more. Its followers on Twitter have more than quadrupled, its website has attracted several thousand views, and it has kept its membership informed about its activities with well-received, monthly newsletters.



Cyclists at YCC's highly successful 'Cycle to Freedom' event



Dr Rachel Aldred giving her talk 'Cycling City: Why aren't we there yet?'

The purpose of this Annual Report is to report these efforts to all those interested in what the York Cycle Campaign membership got up to in 2017/2018. These include its current membership, other interested parties, but perhaps above all, the 36 York residents who gathered at Cycle Heaven on a dark autumnal night in September 2017, and without whom the Campaign's relaunch wouldn't have been possible.



YCC Cycle count on Lendal Bridge

Administration, Organisation, Strategy

- The Campaign is run by a flat Committee structure;
- Work is taken forward by four working groups;
- YCC Strategy is developed after consulting dozens of local experts and YCC members;
- Views and skills of YCC membership are increasingly used to formulate policy and deliver YCC activities

After several years of dormancy, the Campaign's relaunch came about through an upsurge of activity on the Campaign's Facebook group. During these discussions not only was there widespread agreement about the need for a wholly independent group lobbying for better facilities and infrastructure for cyclists in York, but it was established that there was a core of people willing to organise and lead it. Meetings were called, discussions had, and the Campaign's first AGM for several years was held at Cycle Heaven. 36 people gathered, paid membership fees, debated and voted on the proposed Constitution, and voted in a new Committee.

Yet the Campaign wouldn't be able to get off the ground without the resolution of several key questions. What would its objectives be? How should the Campaign communicate with its members and the outside world? Was a rebranding necessary? Further work therefore continued on the Constitution, and the amendments voted in at an EGM.

The Campaign's overall goal was agreed: **to make cycling the main mode of transport by 2032**, and to do this by **making cycling in York 'safe, convenient and accessible'**. The Campaign was also to be strictly independent of any political party and the City of York Council, whose Councillors and Transport team employees were expressly forbidden by the Campaign's Constitution to be Committee members.

As the Campaign would depend on the goodwill and skills of volunteers, not contractual obligations or financial incentives, a number of questions need to be resolved.. How to ensure the Campaign used the resources available to it in the most effective fashion? How to appropriately respond to the demands on it at any one time, thus ensuring that it stayed on track to achieve its long-term goals? How best to organise the Campaign to meet these objectives?

At this first meeting Andy Shrimpton, Managing Director of Cycle Heaven, was elected as Chair of YCC along with a committee. From the beginning the group decided upon a flat structure for the Committee, ensuring that each member could bring their energy and leadership to driving YCC forward, rather than have all decisions rest with the Chair. Andy built on this by suggesting that the Campaign's work be taken forward by interested

members in working groups, each led by a Committee member, with high-level decisions reserved for the Committee. Thus it was that YCC rapidly formed four working groups:

- **The Strategy Group**, headed by Andy Shrimpton, responsible for developing a short, medium and long-term strategy for YCC;
- **The Events Group**, headed by Kate Ravillious, responsible for organising events for YCC's members which would raise the profile of YCC;
- **The Comms Group**, headed by Robyn Jankel, responsible for communicating YCC's message to the world through communication and marketing;
- **The Better Infrastructure Group (BIG)**, headed by Peter Sheaf, charged with co-ordinating YCC responses to planning proposals while trying to pivot on to the front foot with infrastructure proposals of its own.

The remaining members of the Committee either made key contributions in these groups or via YCC-wide positions e.g. as Secretary, Gavin Welch introduced organisational, branding and IT flair, while also making major contributions to BIG's work. It is through the efforts of these groups that YCC has managed to deliver the output that it has, and introduced further organisational initiatives to enable yet more of its members to make their voices heard by decision-makers at CoYC.

An important organisational development over the year has been the drafting of YCC's strategy. This was carefully put together after consulting the views of dozens of members, CoYC councillors past and present, experienced cycle campaigners, and managerial and transport professionals. Finalised mid-way through 2018, the strategy gave the Campaign's remaining working groups a coherent structure to which to anchor their work. Most crucially it provided a valuable reference point when grappling with the common dilemma of how much importance to give short-term pressures vs long-term goals. It also proposed the consolidation of the four working groups into two main groups: the Engagement group (comprised of the former Events and Comms groups), and the Better Infrastructure Group. Now centered around the strategy, YCC is well-positioned to have much bigger impacts in the 12 months to come.

Comms Group: Communications

- Conducted several TV and radio interviews, including with BBC Radio York;
- Wrote and promoted 21 blog posts reporting YCC activities and policy statements;
- Co-ordinated articles in the local press, securing access to senior decision-makers;
- Quadrupled the number of YCC's followers on social media

Although less formally structured than the other two operational working groups of the Campaign, members of YCC's Comms group have been extremely busy in conveying the YCC's message to the outside world in a variety of different media.



In Robyn Jankel, YCC has found an ideal spokesperson. Over the 12 months since the Campaign was reinvigorated Robyn has brought YCC's perspective to interviews with TV (That's York TV), radio (BBC Radio York, Two Rivers Radio), panels on planning at the University of York, YCC-hosted events (e.g. the World Bicycle Ride, and the *Bellevue Rendez-vous* film night) and meetings with CoYC. She regularly represents YCC at York's council-backed Walk Cycle Forum. Robyn's engaging and approachable style, whilst retaining good grasp of

the key issues, has enabled her to present an alternative face of the Campaign and of cyclists, counter to the lycra-clad, middle-aged male stereotype perpetuated in the media.

Robyn and Gavin have also overseen the establishment and maintenance of YCC's email, website and social media channels. Under their stewardship these have grown substantially: YCC's long-dormant Twitter account had 95 followers when Robyn and Gavin took over; at the time of writing it has 420.

Similarly, YCC's new website was launched in December 2017. It has gone on to be an important, easily-accessible online presence, publishing 21 blogs about YCC's activities and viewpoints, attracting several thousand views in the process. A further measure of its worth can be seen through the unanimous decision of the 2017/2018 Committee to approve the upgrade of the website to give it more features and functionality.



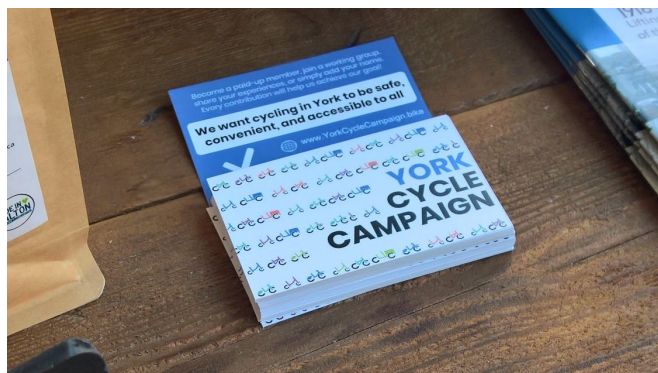
YCC members gather outside CoYC's West Offices on World Bicycle Day to deliver a letter calling for York's cyclists to receive a fairer share of funding

The Campaign has also released a number of press statements, often in conjunction with other community groups, co-ordinated by Kate Ravilious. These press statements have been highly successful in attracting interest from local press and in raising the public profile of the Campaign. Often leading to meetings with key decision-makers, they have allowed YCC to push its case at the highest levels in York.

Comms Group: Marketing

- Created an accessible brand and logo;
- Used this logo to create YCC-branded hi-viz vests and business cards

Look at YCC material, online or offline, and given its impressive branding you'd be forgiven for thinking YCC is a much larger organisation that it currently is. The branding, developed by Gavin from the Campaign's previous logo, gives it a modern twist, and allows the Campaign to immediately project its values. The simple logo, use of the Yorkshire shade of blue, and inclusive branding is all his work, and has enabled the Campaign to present a professional image in all its outward communication, from emails and social media, to its website and merchandise.



From these raw materials Robyn created the striking yet disarming and informative YCC business cards. These are handed out by our members at events, and displayed on counters of York businesses. Robyn and Kate also created the distinctive YCC-branded hi-viz vests that are for sale and used by YCC members at Campaign events.

Events Group

- Staged the 'Cycle to Freedom' 50 km ride to Selby and back, attracting 40 cyclists, many of whom were disabled; Rachel Maskell MP attended and referred to it in a statement in the House of Commons;
- Organised the 'What makes a good cycle ride?' ride as part of the public engagement process for MyYorkCentral. Several councillors attended, later referring favourably to the ride in Council meetings;
- Arranged for two disabled members of YCC to take York Outer MP Julian Sturdy for a cycle ride



Setting up YCC's stand at the Walk Cycle Festival 2018

If you're reading this as a member who joined YCC throughout the year, chances are you did so at an event organised by the Campaign's Events group. Under Kate's leadership, the Events group has staged seven events for members and non-members, including cycle rides, a film night, and recruitment initiatives. The group has also organised seven highly successful talks on cycling topics by experienced speakers. These events have raised the profile of YCC and have been followed by a surge in new members.

Some events, like our talk from Professor Tony May, esteemed former Director of the world-renowned Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds, provided vital knowledge and evidence to use in cycle campaigning. Others, like the highly entertaining talk by Professor Peter Thompson about the creation of the solar system cycle ride, gave us heart about what it is possible to achieve with willpower and resourcefulness.

Many of our events served as a campaigning tool as well as a fun activity. The Cycle to Freedom event, in collaboration with the charity Empowered People, was a case in point. Over forty riders, many of whom were disabled, enjoyed a super day out cycling to Selby and back. A number of councillors from City of York Council plus local MP for York Central, Rachael Maskell, came along too and were able to see first hand the freedom that cycling can bring to someone with a disability. Evidently the conversations that were had on the ride had a

real impact, and just a few weeks later Rachael Maskell raised the issue of disabled cyclists in a House of Commons debate, saying the following:

"We need to build a cycle industry for everyone. EMPOWERED Cycles, which I went out with a few weeks ago on a ride, is inspirational in the way that it adapts bikes to enable anyone who wants to cycle to do so. Labour wants every child to have the chance to ride and to access cycling—and, for that matter, we will extend that enjoyment to all, taking away the multiple barriers faced by disabled people who want to cycle. Making cycling accessible for them will make it accessible for all."



Similarly our 'What makes a good cycle route?' ride, led in conjunction with MyYorkCentral, allowed members of the public to cycle alongside local councillors and share their perspectives on good and bad cycle routes. In this case the discussions evidently struck a chord with Cllr Andrew Waller, who has mentioned this experience in council meetings and has been vocal about the need for good cycle provision on the new York Central development.

Not all of our events are open to all members as we feel it is sometimes useful to focus on a specific issue and encourage in-depth conversations between a small group of people. One example of this is a recent cycle ride into the centre of York with York Outer MP, Julian Sturdy. Accompanied by two of our disabled members, Julian learned about the access issues that face people with disabilities when trying to reach the town centre, and they chatted about the need for disabled cyclists to be able to take their cycles (which are often also their mobility aids) on trains. It was a very positive meeting and we hope that Julian Sturdy will be able to exert some influence on these issues at a national level.

Our most popular events this year were the talks we held as part of the York 'Festival of Ideas'. Hosted and co-publicised by Cycle Heaven, we were delighted to welcome two fantastic speakers. The first, Dr Rachel Aldred, an eminent transport researcher from London, gave a talk entitled 'Cycling City: Why aren't we there yet?'. A few days later, mother and adventure cyclist extraordinaire Josie Dew told us about her mad-cap expeditions, and her transition to family cycling (of a somewhat more extreme nature than most of the rest of us!). Meanwhile, a film night, held in conjunction with the Southbank Community Cinema, also drew a big crowd. YCC's communications officer, Robyn, gave a lovely introduction to the film (*Belleville Rendez-vous*) explaining that whilst the film appeared to be about the Tour de France and its cyclists, in actual fact it was a film about the day-to-day preoccupations of love and loyalty between a woman and her grandson. Robyn thought that such parallels applied to cycling too: that for many people, the word 'cycling' evoked images of



Demonstrating the current inaccessibility of cycle routes into York Central on the 'What makes a good cycle ride?' event

lycra-clad men whizzing past in a blur, but the real story of cycling for most people is simply using it as means to get around.

And so, with this message in our minds, and with the successes of the past year to inspire us, the events team are busy planning a similarly wide-ranging and inspiring series of activities, with the aim of being bigger, better and even louder than last year.



Riders take in the sights on the way to Selby during our Cycling to Freedom ride

The Strategy Group

- Narrowed down the ultimate aims for the Campaign;
- Helped establish what to avoid as well as what to prioritise;
- Created an overarching strategy for all future Campaign activities

The strategy subgroup's aim was to map out the path for the Campaign to realise its key purpose of making *York a city where cycling is safe, convenient and accessible for all*, and to achieve its key goal of *making cycling the most popular mode of transport in York by 2032*. The plan was to have something in place for the upcoming AGM.



How can York enable the high levels of safe, convenient and accessible cycling found in Copenhagen (pictured)?

Running from January until July, our group explored the societal and political background to cycling in York through open discussion, interviews with local representatives of the major political parties and an internal (SWOT) analysis of the group itself. We brainstormed an exhaustive list of *all* YCC's conceivable aims and activities, before narrowing it down to a clear set of categories and priorities. These were then divided into 'nice to have' and 'must have' activities.

It was soon established that most of the 'nice to have' activities involved promoting participation; something already catered for by many other groups in York, from traditional cycle clubs, to community groups including Bike Belles. Keen not to repeat the work of existing organisations, it was quickly agreed that behavioural

changes shouldn't be our focus. We also understood that YCC is not in a position to create infrastructure, but rather convince others to do it. Finally, we accepted that whilst cyclists get an undeservedly bad press in York (as everywhere!), we are in a good position to influence that narrative.

What emerged was a twin-pronged strategy:

- A) Winning the public debate; and
- B) Winning the policy debate

These fundamentals will underpin all of YCC's future activities. The *Better Infrastructure Group* is working on policy, and a newly-formed *Engagement Group* (a happy marriage of Comms and Membership) is dealing with the public side. With a plan in place, the work of the Strategy Sub-Group is now complete, and the group has disbanded. It will be up to BIG and the Engagement Group to complete the finer details.

Winning the Public Debate: Engagement Group

- Building a large, noisy, influential group by engaging in vigorous membership recruitment and morale-boosting activities
- Creating a compelling YCC vision of cycling in York (e.g. The York Cycle Story)
- Conduct campaigns and interventions aimed at generating local media coverage and/or positive debates around cycling issues
- Stage events and campaigns aimed at directly influencing the public's view of cycling in York

Winning the Policy debate: Better Infrastructure Group

- Building relationships with council staff and designers by offering advice, sharing resources and information, and promoting the best design guidance
- Offering a better policy alternative by creating a tangible vision of a safe, convenient and accessible cycle network for York, to present to policy makers and to the public

Better Infrastructure Group

- Influenced CoYC's design of the Scarcroft Road/Bishopthorpe Road junction;
- Secured the widening of the barrier at Hospital Fields road, sparking praise from York residents and cycling businesses;
- Successfully lobbied for York Central's Design Guide to require the provision of safe, separated, accessible cycle infrastructure;
- Helped shape a new cycle route through the Castle Gateway area of York



YCC's BIG proposed redesign of the Scarcroft Road/Bishopthorpe Road junction, that CoYC have promised to consider incorporating elements of in their eventual proposals

From a challenging start of having to generate a detailed response to CoYC's Local Plan proposals in a very short timeframe, BIG's membership, activities and impact have steadily increased. Over the 12 months, BIG has coordinated 16 statements or responses to CoYC proposals, steadily building its knowledge of cycling in York and its barriers, and meeting CoYC officers to make changes happen.

The resulting work on the Local Plan was an early achievement. Faced with having to absorb documents hundreds of pages long, BIG drew on the expertise of its members and forged links with other like-minded transport community groups in York, submitting highly-detailed responses at both consultation stages. York's Local Plan proposals are yet to be examined in public, and it is not clear whether BIG will be called to give

evidence. Nevertheless, YCC now has a much stronger understanding of CoYC's ambitions for transport and planning in York.

BIG has ensured that YCC's members have been represented at every relevant transport decision taken since YCC's refounding. One such example is CoYC's decisions on the designs of the newly widened Monks Cross roundabout on the outer ring road. CoYC's original designs had no provision to protect cyclists, but BIG's response convincingly argued for such provision, pointing out that it would complete a largely off-road cycle route paralleling the northern half of the outer ring road. CoYC amended its designs in response, and following representations from YCC at CoYC's Decision Session, Cllr Peter Dew pressed his officers to reassure him that sufficient land would be acquired to provide safe infrastructure, an option that a BIG survey had shown was supported by over 90% of YCC members.



The newly widened Hospital Fields Road barrier, allowing easier access through it

But BIG's members have also worked on building their understanding of the main (sometimes literal) barriers to higher cycling levels in York. Following a Committee-agreed priority to focus on improving the accessibility of York's off-road cycle network, BIG members identified a number of barriers on off-road paths that prevented people using non-standard cycles or with mobility issues from passing through them easily. CoYC officers agreed to consider relaxing barriers if YCC conducted cycle counts to establish usage levels. BIG members subsequently carried out a count of cyclists using Millennium Bridge in the morning rush-hour. The results showed that the vast majority of cyclists passed through the Hospital Fields Road barrier. In response, CoYC officers agreed to relax the barrier, rotating it outwards to give cyclists more room to navigate it safely. The response has been highly positive, with dozens of cyclists taking to social media to hail the changes.

"Such a huge improvement. I got to experience the new gate position for the first time this morning after 14 years of cycling through it on my daily commute. The new position makes such a difference - particularly when struggling up hill. Thanks to all involved in getting this changed."

-Local resident

Keen to ensure that BIG's responses to the council reflect the views of as many YCC members as possible, the group has increasingly surveyed YCC's members. As such, YCC representations at CoYC Decision Sessions are able to refer to the strength of feeling amongst members with accurate statistics.

Another emerging preoccupation has been how to ensure that their work extends beyond the reactive, to advancing YCC's own preferences. This has already started, with BIG putting forward infrastructure proposals of its own. One that caught the attention of CoYC officers, councillors and CoYC's Executive Member for Transport & Planning, Cllr Peter Dew, was BIG's proposed design of the junction at Bishopthorpe Road and Scarcroft Road. Impressed with the proactive, positive design that provides safety to cyclists while not impeding motorists, he has instructed his senior officers to look at how elements of BIG's proposals could be incorporated into CoYC's final proposals.

The adoption of YCC's strategy consolidated this switch for BIG from the reactive to the proactive, bolstered by its swelling ranks of professionals. With York's local elections in May 2019 as its focus, BIG has spent the last few months putting in place a plan and resources to develop a proposed network of cycle routes that would enable safer, more accessible and convenient cycling in York. If BIG's proposed designs have already sparked so much interest, can they help YCC repeat the trick with a proposed cycle network in time for York's local elections?

Outlook for 2019

After a strong first 12 months, York Cycle Campaign is well-placed to build on this in 2019. Its working groups are well-established, growing, and have plenty of forward momentum, honed by a Campaign-wide organisational refresh. Increasingly, the working groups are being bolstered by the addition of experienced professionals from a number of different spheres. The adoption of its strategy gives the Campaign a series of ambitious targets to aim for in its quest to meet its long-term goals. In particular, to make cycling York's main mode of transport by 2032, by making it safe, accessible and more convenient.

The focus of YCC's Better Infrastructure Group (BIG) will be the development and promotion of a safe, accessible and convenient cycle network for York. It will also continue to identify impediments to accessible cycling, conduct cycle counts, and push CoYC to relax such barriers. BIG is now well-resourced and run on an increasingly methodical footing, which we hope will in turn attract further professionals to its ranks.

YCC's newly formed Engagement Group, comprised of the former Comms & Marketing and Events groups, will be core to the Campaign's success in the next 12 months. York's residents can expect to be made more aware of the Campaign's existence and activities through a series of well-publicised, engaging events, press articles and other marketing initiatives. The Engagement group will also lead on YCC's collaborations with like-minded organisations.

Above all, we want York Cycle Campaign to continue as the voice pushing for the change that so many of York's cyclists want. However well-intentioned CoYC's emphasis on behavioural interventions over the last ten years may have been, it is clear from subsequent evaluations that they have not resulted in the hoped-for increase in cycling levels.

It is therefore time for a determined push towards the creation and funding of joined-up and coherent cycle infrastructure to enable safe, convenient and accessible cycling in York. This is the one intervention that DfT-published research shows makes the biggest difference to people's willingness to cycle, particularly by underrepresented groups such as women and disabled people.

We believe the problem is not a lack of available funding, but thus far a lack of political priority. As we also made clear in our open letter to CoYC on World Bicycle Day, cyclists in York do not receive anywhere near the levels of capital funding that their share of traffic on York's roads merits. The funding is there: proportional allocation is not.

It is the goal of York Cycle Campaign to change political priorities in York by capturing the public imagination, offering a set of cycle infrastructure proposals, and building support for it as the local elections loom. The ever-worsening congestion, air pollution, carbon footprint and levels of inactivity caused by the failure to prioritise cycling in York, demand it.