



The Bristol Bike Project

www.thebristolbikeproject.org

REconomy Project

Mission

The Bristol Bike Project aims to fulfill three objectives:

- To provide a valuable and empowering service for underprivileged and marginalised groups of people within our community whose lives would greatly improve through the benefit of having accessible, affordable and sustainable transportation.
- To provide an inclusive, non-judgmental, vibrant and supportive workshop environment for volunteers and project-users alike, from all walks of life, that encourages and promotes skill sharing and independence, where new skills are learned in a way that is empowering for all and friendships are made.
- To divert and redirect functional bicycles and their working parts from recycling and landfill. Through doing this, we help to lower the demand for raw materials, promote the ideas of reuse within our community and offer an alternative to simply buying new.

Is there a link with Transition?

There isn't a formal link, although we are based in Bristol, which in 2007 became the first city to join a larger movement of Transition communities. Our objectives and aims are all in keeping with the Transition movement.

Your product or service – how much does it help improve resilience in your local community or elsewhere?

Repairing and relocating unwanted bicycles within our community, primarily through our Earn-a-Bike scheme and aiming to help people from all walks of life get out on two wheels and for it to be an inclusive and empowering experience.

Employees

We have 2 full time employees and 4 regular part time employees, but also offer other paid work to our volunteers when the opportunity arises. We currently have around 40 regular volunteers.

Are you in profit? If not, when do you anticipate being so? How long have you been trading?

Our turnover last year was £105,000. We have been trading, by selling secondhand bikes, since the project's inception at our current workshop space in 2009, as a means of remaining a self-sustainable social enterprise.

What is your company structure and why did you choose it?

We are a not-for-profit, cooperatively-run Community Interest Company. We chose this model as we felt that it most appropriately aligned with our aims and objectives and suited the way in which we work together.

What about financial sustainability? Are you trading or part-trading without money?

We invested a lot of our time and energy voluntarily to start the project with no money. We renovated the current workshop space and as such had 3 months free rent to become more established. Very early on, we also had an anonymous donation of £1500 from a charitable organisation which helped pay overheads for the workshop space. We now have a very established trading arm as part of the social enterprise that directly supports our community work, by paying all of the project overheads.

Are you looking to build more common wealth & ownership and is priority your profit sharing and/or community benefits versus more traditional investor returns?

We are a co-operatively run organisation and invite our volunteers to become members and to have a sense of ownership of the project.

Localisation – are you sourcing, distributing and interacting locally?

We are a totally 'local' project! All of the unwanted bicycles and bicycle parts are donated to us by people living in and around Bristol and all of the bicycles that we relocate, both through our community and trading arm are to those people living in and around the city. We are supporters of the new local currency, the Bristol Pound, and work with 60 plus Bristol-based organisations who refer their clients to us. We engage continuously with our local community and provide free Dr bike maintenance sessions for grassroots events such as the St Werburgh's Farm Fair, Trinity Garden Party and Refugee Week. We also run Family days and wheel decorating workshops. There really is something for everyone here at the project!

Climate impacts – negative, beneficial or neutral?

The climate impacts of the Bristol Bike Project are undoubtedly beneficial. The project always promotes re-use over recycling (which uses a huge amount of energy) wherever possible, and since it started in 2009, has prevented thousands of bicycles from being sent for scrap metal by refurbishing them and putting them back on the road instead. Bikes beyond repair are always stripped for parts that can be re-used on other bikes and only then are the remaining parts and frames sent to be recycled. We support people wanting to lead a more car-free existence, whilst remaining independently mobile in the city. The project is committed to minimising its waste stream wherever possible.

Anything else you'd like to share with us?

We believe strongly in building stronger, more resilient communities and realise the success of the project relies upon working with the whole community here in Bristol. As such, we are committed to making this project open and inclusive to all.

