Welcome to the first edition of the St Helens Pedal Power newsletter.

From learning how to ride to becoming a ride leader or reading about one man’s journey from the couch to crossing the width of the country by bike, this newsletter will hopefully inspire you to join and begin an amazing journey.

Working in partnership with St Helens Council, Pedal Power began the process of developing a programme of work around the idea of promoting a healthier and sustainable community within the borough.

By creating a pool of trained and dedicated volunteers the aim is to offer the local community a range of cycling activities which would enable people to develop their confidence and get them outside on a bike to enjoy the beautiful and often unused trails around St Helens.

BIKES AND HELMETS FREE TO USE

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ABOUT US

St Helens Pedal Power is a volunteer led initiative aimed at getting people out on bikes.

We run a wide range of local activities including regular weekly led rides, learn to ride activities, Dr Bike sessions and a bikeshed (bike renovation) project all with the help of a fantastic pool of dedicate volunteers to help you get on a bike.

CONTACT US

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PedalPowerExperience@gmail.com
@StHelensPedalPower
@StHelensCycling.
SPONSORSHIP

Although all our volunteers give their time for free we do have significant costs for example insurance, consumables, purchase of new bikes etc. We have big plans for the future, including setting up a cafe/community hub and additional bike hubs so we are therefore keen to partner with other groups and are also in need of sponsorship.

1 VOLUNTEERING WITH NICK BELL

How did you get involved with Pedal Power?

I used to go on rides organised by the council but they ended in early 2015. Not long afterwards, I got a phone call from a chap who had been given my number. He got my interest with an idea of getting the hubs up and running again with a volunteer centred approach.

I was in a situation work-wise where I was required to undertake 6 months of voluntary work for four days a week and this fell nicely within those parameters. I then spent the next 6 months working with Stew, and the two of us got the hubs up and running, as well as social media, and getting many new people involved behind the scenes as well. Three years later, I am still here and we continue to grow and move forward...there is only one way to go for St Helens Pedal Power...and that is UP!

What do you get out of it?

I get the satisfaction of seeing how far we have come as a group, from the beginning with just Stew and myself putting in the graft, to where we are now with multiple Ride Leaders, volunteers and riders. Personally speaking, I love the joy of riding, finding new places to go, meeting new people, forming valued friendships with some, people whom I’d never have met without the group, and am grateful to have in my life. I have gained qualifications such as my City & Guilds in Cycle Mechanics...an essential starting qualification if you want a career in the cycle industry, plus I became a trained and experienced Ride Leader.

What is best thing about cycling with Pedal Power?

The friendliness and welcoming nature of the group as a whole. We come from a wide range of backgrounds, but share in the common love of cycling.

If someone was considering joining Pedal Power what advice would you give?

Do it. Simple as that.

Just take the plunge and come along to a ride meet-up at one of our hubs. You have nothing to lose, and so much that you could gain.
2 UPCOMING ACTIVITIES
- Weekly rides x 6
- Learn to ride
- Dr Bike
- BikeShed

ELECTRIC BIKES
We have a small fleet of electric bikes for those who feel they may require a bit of help.

Please get in touch beforehand if you would like to try one out, like octogenarian Roy pictured here!

OVER 200 RIDES A YEAR

MONDAYS:
Four Acre Health Centre
12.00 - 15.00
Burnage Avenue, Clock Face.
WA9 4QB

TUESDAYS:
Bold Miners Comm Centre.
10.00 - 13.00
Fleet Lane, Parr.
WA9 2NH
Sankey Valley Visitor Centre
13.30 - 15.30
Blackbrook
WA11 0AB

WEDNESDAYS:
Taylor Park
13:00 - 3:00
Regent Road.
WA10 3HX

THURSDAYS:
Taylor Park
10:00 - 13:00
14.00 - Learn To ride Activity
(Please contact us to book on)
14.00 - Dr Bike session
18.00 - Evening social ride

DR BIKE WORKSHOP
Have a bike in need of some TLC? We offer a free Dr Bike workshop with bike maintenance by an accredited mechanic.

We check everything on your bike from wheels, brakes, gears and tyre pressure to lights, racks, pedals, saddles and more. By the end, your bike will feel loved and cared for.

Any minor adjustments we can make to the bike we do there and then. Anything we can't fix on site we will let you know exactly what needs doing and a rough guide to what it should cost at a bike shop.
I was soon drawn to ride with them at one of their (now famous) hub rides and found the whole group to be accommodating, smiley and totally fun loving - great company to be with.

I love that the PPE guys all have the ability to laugh at themselves first and foremost - it always makes for a good ride experience, especially when coupled with the excellent quality of their ride leadership and general safety encouragement. It is amazing to see how a simple puncture on a ride can lead to a major “work together” opportunity, with tons of laughter involved in the eventual fix - indeed PPE have their very own Puncture Pete!

I have always loved bikes - my very first bike love was a Winkie, with a massive red tin rear carrier that could take what seemed then like a mountain (& I often did move bricks and general rubble around our garden, driving my mum mad in the process!) I rode and rode it until the tyres came off. (see photo above)

My dad had been a Belgium track cyclist until a huge track crash and the start of WWII stopped him; so I had a family background of biking and eventually got my first Dawes road bike. I loved it to bits - literally! I loved to strip it and clean it and then re-grease anything that moved. (see photo above)

So it seems that I have always had a natural hankering for the work we do at the Bike Shed Renovation Project. Stew & Pete C (indeed all the PPE volunteers) were very supportive and most helpful in getting the fledgling project to actually work.
When new asylum seekers arrive at the Bike Shed for the first time they are usually quite anxious about what they will find or be expected to do. Once we have matched them to a bike to renovate, the work starts with gentle guidance (& lots of elbow grease!) and very soon they become completely absorbed in the task of “fixing” their bike. As the weeks progress they develop good, sometimes new, technical skills, become much more fluent in their communication and also discover ‘teamwork’ - and all the benefits that come from being part of a team that can offer endless advice on renovation problems and great personal support in the doing!

St Helens Pedal Power then comes into it’s own right as a great place for these guys to go and learn the basics of good, safe cycling, with all the benefits of a smashing group of people to share it with - how good is that!!

Peter

Number of bikes fixed and given away so far in 2018

The best part for me is most often when I am privileged to see the look of sheer joy and surprise on their faces when they mount their new bike for their first ‘test run’!

The hours of work, often in very wet and draughty conditions, all fall away to be replaced by the wonder of pedalling their very own bike, under their own steam.

Happy faces at the start of a ‘test ride’!
Do you love cycling and would you like to lead short local bike rides and help people achieve a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle?

At our local cycle hubs in St Helens (Taylor Park, Bold Miners, Fouracre and Sankey Valley) we are committed to getting people out on bikes to help enable them to do short, everyday journeys. We do this through a range of activities and platforms, including social media, travel advice, cycling skills development, learn to rides, puncture repair lessons, bike renovation, Dr Bike sessions and led rides.

We are looking for someone to help us with our current led rides and skills and confidence sessions as an assistant. Going forward you may have the opportunity to lead your own rides depending on your experience, confidence and desire to do so.

Volunteer Ride Leader

Skills required:
- Ability to cycle safely and legally on local roads
- Punctual
- Reliable
- Clear communication skills
- Commitment to sustainable transport and cycling
- Group management
- Appropriate cycle ride leader training can be provided.

Time commitment
Flexible – 2 hours per week minimum preferred.

Training and support offered
- Initial induction session for all volunteers. Health and safety guidelines will be provided.
- Cycle Ride Leader and appropriate related training can be provided.
- Ongoing support from fellow volunteers.

Contact information
Please contact the Stewart at PedalPowerExperience@gmail.com or by calling 07947750982

Any of our volunteer roles can be combined together according to a volunteer’s interests.

Summary of tasks:
- Support ride leader and group management
- Help organise participants
- Help carry out M-checks of bikes
- Support ride
- Log volunteer activities and hours online
Why did you want to get into cycling?

I cycled from an early age as a child (as the photo to the right indicates)

Once I was able to drive cycling became less attractive. In my 40’s I bought a bike and took my boys out for rides in the summer in the evening and weekends. My cycling then came to a halt. I retired last year and saw St Helens Pedal Power (PPE) on Facebook and kept thinking “I need to join them”. I left it for 6 months and then decided to give it a go.

I messaged them and turned up for a Tuesday afternoon ride from the Sankey Valley hub. I was met by such friendly helpful people, now they can’t get rid of me! I met an old colleague from my mining days who I hadn’t seen for 30 years.

What made you decide to do the Coast to coast?

I met my old colleagues for a few drinks in November 2017. One guy is a keen cyclist and when I mentioned my membership of PPE, he suggested we do a ride together which snowballed into a Coast to Coast (C2C). Morecambe to Scarborough was decided upon. I mentioned this to my fellow riders and the numbers soon increased. A route was decided upon, a hotel roughly halfway booked and a backup vehicle organised.

The route from Morecombe Bay to Scarborough. It was some 205 kilometres in total, through some beautiful countryside. An overnight stop at the Bay Horse in Raindon village and finishing in Scarborough with fish and chips before our journey home.
5 COUCH TO 200K - CONTINUED

Did you do any additional training?

The participants did extra rides (in addition to the normal PPE rides) in the run-up to the C2C, especially some hills as early on the C2C route was particularly tough. It was hard and I began to doubt my ability to complete to C2C.

What were the best and worst parts?

The day arrived and we set off to Morecambe in the backup vehicle. We chose the Eric Morecambe statue as our start point. Some of the riders were delayed due to logistical issues, therefore we arranged for them to catch us up en route.

It was relatively easy at first as we headed east in the rain towards Ingleton. We stopped for breakfast in the town and then the fun began. The climb out of Ingleton past The White Scar Caves is particularly challenging and the climb lasts for around 10 miles until you reach the iconic Ribblehead viaduct. It took me longer than the rest to get here but it was worth it and we had a sugar boost break here; we were caught up here by the latecomers. The next bit turned out to be the best for me; after another short climb, the downhill run into Hawes was exhilarating. I touched just over 40mph on the downhill run into Hawes. Another issue was the short thunderstorm we encountered in East Witton. We got soaked. It soon cleared and we were virtually dry in no time at all.

We completed our 77-mile first day at our digs in Rainton. We showered etc, had food and a couple of pints, then it was sleep for me in preparation for the next day’s ride.
5 Couch to 200K - Continued

Day 2

The second day was a lot easier on the legs than the first day; some hills were encountered, especially on the climb towards Scarborough. But again, we were rewarded by the descent into the town towards the north shore. 53 miles completed, 130 in total in almost 11 hours riding time. We had to wait for one member but that’s another (cock and bull) story.

Looking back how did you feel now about your achievement?

Wow, I’ve actually done it. What a feeling! 8 months after joining PPE, I have completed what seemed ‘the impossible’ when the idea was first put to me. I have made great new friends in PPE whose camaraderie and banter helped me achieve this. Indeed, I can’t wait for the next one.

LEJOG anyone?

Word from the Editor

Wheely good news!

I am delighted to bring you our first newsletter. It has been really encouraging to hear all the feedback from the people involved in our activities. We have come so far since 2015 and now have a group of core volunteers who find lots of enjoyment helping others get out on a bike which means a lot!

As always I would ask everyone to spread the word to encourage others to come along. We are always on the lookout for new volunteers and would love some premises to develop the bike shed which can get extremely cold in the winter. We are always seeking sponsorship to build on what we have achieved and would love the opportunity to become self-sustainable and keep this project moving. Stewart
We have grown considerably since early 2017 when we were given full access to St Helens Councils’ hubs. As you can see from the graph below, it gave us the freedom to develop more led rides, volunteer opportunities and create new partnerships.

Throughout 2017, Pedal Power Experience, have shown that they have the drive and determination to succeed in their quest to promote all things cycling. They have one of the largest networks of fully trained volunteer cycle leaders and mechanics across LCR and have made a huge difference to their local community by encouraging people of all abilities to join them for their guided rides, learn to ride sessions and maintenance lessons. The team’s passion for cycling is contagious and has had a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of many. Their regular cycling activities have helped develop confidence, improve fitness and enabled people, usually isolated, to make new friends through the social aspect of cycling. All of which has been achieved on a very limited budget. A remarkable achievement for an organisation still very much in its infancy.”

Chris Alston
Cycling Development Officer, Liverpool City Region Cycling UK.

“In 2017 the local volunteer cycling group Pedal Power formed, with the aim of supporting local people to be active and healthier through the medium of cycling. Pedal Power worked in partnership with St Helens Council to put the local Cycling Hubs and the bikes within the borough to use. Pedal Power have achieved a great deal in the year by not only offering weekly community rides to all, but also supporting a range of projects such as ‘Cycling to the Rugby’, ‘Learn to Ride’, having a presence at a range of local events and even supporting persons who may experience inequalities such as those with Dementia and Asylum Seekers / Refugees”

Matt Davies
Head of Public Health Commissioning
St Helens Council