Industrial and Provident Society registered in England no. 31918R

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178 Campbell Road
Oxford
OX4 3NR

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The Gates
42 Pembroke Street
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Our mission

The Broken Spoke Bike Co-op is a social enterprise that aims to create an inclusive and environmentally aware cycling community in Oxford by teaching people from all backgrounds to become self-sufficient and proficient in bicycle maintenance and riding.

“Some 28 years since I last put foot to pedal I wobbled off down High Street on a sleek, black, newly-restored bicycle made-for-one, ‘Freedom’. This was the culmination of the Build a Bike project, and a great project it is. Tearing down and rebuilding two bikes and riding away on one of them! You re-learn things you know about and quite a few that you thought you knew about. I’ll never look at a bicycle the same way again. So thank you Broken Spoke. That was astounding. What a great team. You guys are amazing. Very special.”

– Andrew Parker, Build-A-Bike Graduate
This report is a review of what we got up to in the financial year 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016. We have achieved some milestones and, at 3 and a half years old, we experienced some growing pains. In addition to all our usual activities like helping folks fix their bikes at our open workshop sessions, delivering our uniquely awesome mechanics courses and teaching people to ride bikes with our cycle training lessons, we have:

- gained Bikeability accreditation
- piloted a school cycle training programme with d’Overbroeck’s College
- held ‘Women & Bicycles’, an event attended by over 100 people which aimed to celebrate and enlarge the role of women in all aspect of the cycling movement
- revisited our vision, aims and objectives with the help of Seeds for Change

Go us! However it’s tough out there for social enterprises like us. Though we are doing our darndest to bring in diverse streams of income, we have also increased our outgoings through the expansion of our staff team. This resulted in ongoing cashflow problems from December 2015 and raising questions about the viability of our business model. The combined creative energies of the Board of Directors, the staff team and our incredible volunteers have been put to the test to overcome this challenge and work towards financial sustainability. We believe we have strong potential for growth, especially with our cycle training programme, and we are super proud of everything we have achieved in the last year despite the financial difficulties. It goes to show you can’t keep a good idea down.
The world we want to be part of creating has...

Living streets
Roads are re-imagined as genuinely shared spaces with cooperation between all road users; reliance on fossil fuel-powered transport is reduced and people-powered transport (cycling and walking) becomes a fundamental part of our transportation system.

Active communities...
...based on a culture of cooperation and the sharing of skills, resources and ideas between business, government and grassroots communities.

A culture of making and fixing
People are connected to values of sustainability and this informs their relationship to material objects in their lives; Material culture is not constructed solely by corporations. People are empowered with the skills and resources needed to fix, make, reuse and repair the things they use.

A culture of teaching and learning...
...based on curiosity, enquiry and real understanding rather than testing and ticking boxes.

The opportunity for everyone to own, maintain and ride a bike...
...so that people are no longer excluded from the health and well-being benefits of cycling due to structural inequality and prejudices within our society, for example, income, age, race, gender-identity.
Recognising structural inequality within our society, we will break down the barriers to bike ownership, maintenance and riding.

Our aims: how we can play a part in turning our vision into reality and how far we got with them

We REFURBISH BIKES

In response to the waste problem created by abandoned bikes and to local people’s need for good quality, affordable bikes, we collect and refurbish used bikes for sale.

We started renting a storage unit enabling us to accumulate more bikes;

Volunteer mechanic Kiro coordinates bike refurbishment work (overseen by Sam) including running monthly sessions for volunteers;

Improved quality with re-designed bike repair worksheets and improved tracking;

Sold more bikes in 2015 October bike sale than ever before.

We work with VULNERABLE ADULTS

We have a long-standing relationship with Crisis Skylight Oxford (national homelessness charity). Since summer 2013, we’ve delivered a Build-a-Bike course to their homeless and vulnerably housed members.

We have run four 11-week courses with each participant completing a bike to keep.

We have TEAM BERYL

A volunteer working group which aims to increase access to cycling and bike maintenance for women and trans* people (trans* is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender identity spectrum).

Beryl’s Night - a monthly bike mechanics evening for women and trans* people has continued with good attendance and a diverse range of topics;

Team co-organised Women & Bicycles, a multi-speaker event attended by 100+ people and covered widely in local press and national cycle industry media;

Introduced women-led sessions - team volunteers paired up with female lead mechanics to deliver open workshop sessions with a women-friendly vibe.
We have a SAFER SPACES policy

A code of behaviour for the workshop in an effort to make everyone welcome and not to replicate structural inequalities and prejudices which could exclude some members of our community.

We deliver OPEN WORKSHOP SESSIONS

We provide a community workshop where people with any level of experience can do their own bike repairs under the supervision of skilled mechanics and volunteers and the use of professional tools and equipment.

We had 2138 open workshop visits in 2015-16; We have nine mechanics, four of whom were trained through an in-house process in the summer of 2015.

We established the Workshop Team in November 2015 - a volunteer working group which aims to ensure the workshop space is a functional and effective learning and doing environment. Their work includes:

• developing the new day group volunteering system,
• improvement of organisation of secondhand parts,
• regular check and repair of tools,
• feedback opportunity for workshop users,
• better communication of open workshop externally.

We deliver BIKE MECHANICS COURSES to the general public

We offer accessible bike mechanics courses which are designed to be ‘hands-on’ and focused on problem-solving and understanding core mechanical principles (discovering the ‘why’ not just the ‘how’).

Delivered 34 bike mechanics courses to 167 participants;
Introduced regular volunteer teaching assistants to up-skill volunteers and increase quality of learning experience for course participants, now have active team of 7 volunteers;
Reviewed participant feedback in September 2015 and began process of re-designing course curricula in response.

We will create positive learning spaces which enable people to acquire skills in mechanics, bike riding and cooperative organising.

We deliver BESPOKE TRAININGS at workplaces and community events

We get out into the community taking bike mechanics skills to the people at local events. We also tailor trainings to suit the needs of any group or any person who wants to come and learn with us.

Updated webpages communicating services we offer;
Made new bike trailer in Winter 2015 and fully stocked mobile repair kit;
In 2015-16 delivered 1 bespoke training and had a presence at 13 external events (including 5 DIY bike repair stalls).
We will encourage sustainable behaviours and attitudes: repair, reuse, recycle and ride!

We RE-USE
Accept donations of unwanted bikes and collect abandoned bikes from the City Council, which we either refurbish, use for our build-a-bike programme or store for parts.

We UP-CYCLE
Teach people how to turn bike parts into jewellery, decorations, wallets, etc. Hosted a Festive Craft Night for the second year running; Held up-cycling stalls at Tandem Festival and Pegasus Theatre open day.

We RECYCLE
Separate our waste into metal (aluminium separated from steel), compost, tyres and tubes and general recyclables. All these items are recycled.

We practise ‘FIX IT, DON’T THROW IT AWAY’
Open workshops give people access to resources and skills needed to repair their bikes which may otherwise have been impractical to fix. All those folks who came to our open workshops fixed their bikes. That’s a few saved from the scrap heap. We also sold £8,200 worth of used parts which would otherwise have gone to waste (and we have plenty more in the store room guys!)

We will create opportunities for people to give their time & energy to shape the work of Broken Spoke

We have VOLUNTEERS
Our volunteers are a vital part of our Co-operative playing a role and taking a lead in many aspects of our work. We have volunteering working groups, which provide opportunities for learning & practicing teamwork and collaboration, as well as a route towards membership of the Co-op.

We have MEMBERSHIP
We have a process for people to become members of the Co-op through their work as staff or volunteers. Members can shape the Co-op’s work through voting at the Annual Members’ Meeting (AMM), standing for election and proposing motions.

Eligibility for membership is checked annually by the volunteer co-ordinator prior to the AMM and anyone eligible is invited to join before the meeting.

We had our first AMM with open elections for the Board of Directors with 8 candidates and 5 were successful.

We have STAFF
Staff team members shape our work by organising and delivering programmes, strategy, volunteer co-ordination, communications, democratic and membership processes. Staff meetings provide opportunities for updates, discussions and collaborative decision-making.

We currently have a total of ten staff – 4 full-time, 6 part-time.

We introduced peer management and annual reviews in summer 2015 to support the wellbeing of our team.

3037 volunteer hours were donated this year;
We organised our second annual Volunteer Feast in October 2015 where we got feedback about our volunteer programme.
We introduced changes based on volunteer suggestions such as workshop day groups.

We have WORKSHOPS
Open workshops give people access to resources and skills needed to repair their bikes which may otherwise have been impractical to fix.

We’ve recycled untold (and uncalculated) amounts of tyres and metal this year.
We hire a van and do this all by hand.

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We will work to transform our streets into better shared spaces for walkers, cyclists and drivers.

We provide CYCLE TRAINING

This programme offers routes into cycling for those who lack confidence and experience of cycling in an urban setting, opening the potential to get around by bike to people for whom it would otherwise have been inaccessible.

In 2015-16 our 1-to-1 tuition trained 143 people of whom 28 were completely new to cycling;

We delivered 6 presentations on effective cycling;

We attained Bikeability accreditation (the only organisation in Oxford with this status);

We delivered our first Bikeability course to d’Overbroeck’s college from February to April 2016;

We provided free or subsidised training to people through relationships with CycleBOOM, University of Oxford, City Council, Oxford Health, CTC’s Big Bike Revival;

We ran a cycle training summer school the second year running to members of Crisis Skylight;

We began working with Cyclox (local pressure group) and iCycle West Oxfordshire (another Bikeability provider) to introduce effective cycle training in Oxfordshire schools;

We maintained 2 training bikes (Betsie & Lightning) which we can offer to students who don’t own a bike.

We will build a financially sustainable co-operative business.

We recognise the challenges of running a small business with a social mission in the current economic climate. We’re focused on having a good impact on our community, however, we have growing costs which we need to cover. We’re on a journey to find the right balance of activities that ensures that we thrive both financially and in terms of our social impact.

We employ 4 full-time staff for 35 hours per week, each paid a living wage (as set by the Living Wage Foundation);

We employ 6 part-time staff – mechanics and cycling instructors;

We have an active Board of Directors made up of employee and volunteer members responsible for overseeing the strategy;

A subgroup of the Board did a profitability analysis of each of our programmes;

We increased our income from mechanics courses and open workshops by increasing our teaching and opening hours;

We set up a subgroup of the Board to work on securing long term premises;

We developed a pricing structure and criteria to help us prioritise who we will work with and which events to attend.
## Balance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIXED ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools and Equipment</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>1,339</td>
<td>2,890</td>
<td>2,890</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accumulated Depreciation</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>1,470</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Fixed Assets</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>1,025</td>
<td>1,998</td>
<td>1,420</td>
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<td><strong>CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash at hand and in bank</td>
<td>14,820</td>
<td>14,520</td>
<td>18,779</td>
<td>4,678</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debtors</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>2,680</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>4,528</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Current Assets</td>
<td>15,234</td>
<td>17,200</td>
<td>19,989</td>
<td>9,206</td>
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<td><strong>CURRENT LIABILITIES</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Loans (short term)</td>
<td>1,605</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creditors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,522</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMRC (Corporation Tax, PAYE)</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>1,052</td>
<td>1,251</td>
<td>4,416</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Current Liabilities</td>
<td>2,330</td>
<td>1,052</td>
<td>2,773</td>
<td>4,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed + Current Assets</td>
<td>13,229</td>
<td>17,172</td>
<td>19,214</td>
<td>6,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less Current Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FINANCED BY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shares</td>
<td>10,003</td>
<td>10,003</td>
<td>10,003</td>
<td>6,670</td>
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<tr>
<td>Profit from previous years</td>
<td>3,226</td>
<td>7,169</td>
<td>9,394</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit/Loss in current year</td>
<td>3,943</td>
<td>2,042</td>
<td>9,854</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,229</td>
<td>17,172</td>
<td>19,214</td>
<td>6,210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Copies of our full accounts are available on request.
### Profit & Loss

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>Projection</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>Projection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sales</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Workshop Fees</td>
<td>8,253</td>
<td>8,490</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Courses</td>
<td>8,497</td>
<td>11,314</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle Training</td>
<td>12,650</td>
<td>19,778</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bespoke Courses</td>
<td>10,789</td>
<td>5,916</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repairs</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW Stock</td>
<td>24,483</td>
<td>30,518</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>USED Stock</td>
<td>8,201</td>
<td>11,904</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporter Dues</td>
<td>1,503</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td>126%</td>
<td>126%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>1,273</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>203%</td>
<td>203%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>10,626</td>
<td>10,397</td>
<td>102%</td>
<td>102%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>86,292</td>
<td>100,133</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost of Sales</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>Projection</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>Projection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff (50%)</td>
<td>27,588</td>
<td>27,181</td>
<td>101%</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Staff</td>
<td>6,546</td>
<td>12,776</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent, Hall Hire (40%)</td>
<td>3,654</td>
<td>2,880</td>
<td>126%</td>
<td>126%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW Stock</td>
<td>14,287</td>
<td>18,883</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>- 36</td>
<td>3,598</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sundries</td>
<td>2,442</td>
<td>1,133</td>
<td>215%</td>
<td>215%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>283%</td>
<td>283%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cost of Sales</strong></td>
<td>54,986</td>
<td>66,629</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Gross Profit | 31,306 | 33,504 | 93% | 93% |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overheads</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>Projection</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>Projection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff (50%)</td>
<td>27,588</td>
<td>27,181</td>
<td>101%</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>4,313</td>
<td>2,958</td>
<td>145%</td>
<td>145%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent, Hall Hire (60%)</td>
<td>5,481</td>
<td>4,320</td>
<td>126%</td>
<td>126%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone, Utilities</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>115%</td>
<td>115%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery, Postage, Printing</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Fees</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>114%</td>
<td>114%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>224%</td>
<td>224%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation (5 year)</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Overheads</strong></td>
<td>41,175</td>
<td>42,436</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Expenses | 96,161 | 109,065 | 88% | 88% |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net Profit &amp; Loss</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>Projection</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>Projection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Profit</td>
<td>- 9,870</td>
<td>- 8,932</td>
<td>110%</td>
<td>110%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Credit Interest</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Profit on Ordinary Activities</strong></td>
<td>- 9,853</td>
<td>- 8,932</td>
<td>110%</td>
<td>110%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In spite of ending the year with loss overall, growth did feature in two of our programmes - our open workshop and our bespoke work, both performing either as projected or well above.

With the help of a 'Build-It Award’ from the Oxfordshire Social Enterprise Partnership (OSEP), we were able to invest in training four new mechanics and renting additional storage space to increase our workshop’s productivity. This allowed us to increase our open workshop opening hours in July 2015 from 18 hours per week to 29. Compared with the year before, this resulted in an extra £1000 coming in, even after 20% was syphoned off in VAT.

Our newly trained mechanics also allowed us to increase our provision of the Build-a-Bike course to Crisis Skylight, the piece of bespoke work that brings in the most income. With the addition of another mechanic tutor on the course, we were able to bring the course fully in-house, review and increase the pricing, and increase the frequency of the course too, hence the doubling of the income in comparison to last year.

A 10% increase in income from supporters and a doubling of income from donations shows increased engagement from our customers, most likely down to the increased opening hours.

Shrinkage was most apparent in our cycle training programme, with income reduced by 17% compared to last year, and with only 64% of the projected income coming in. This was down to introspection during the Bikeability application process, coupled with a lower frequency of 1:1 lesson bookings than the year previous. Other programmes that under-performed (public courses and used stock) represented a lower performance than expected during the Autumn/Winter quarter. These programmes brought in almost exactly the same income as the year previous.

Outgoings for the organisation were far higher than projected in some areas as a result of the aforementioned Build-It Award. Marketing costs was another area that performed unexpectedly over the projection as a result of the unexpected costs of attending the Freshers’ Fair of the University of Oxford, which has been free in previous years. The negative outgoing for equipment is the result of a refund for equipment purchased the year previous.

The lack of profit at the end of the year means that for 2015-16 we won’t pay any corporation tax to HMRC. However, more than our fair share of tax has been paid to HMRC in VAT (over £6000). The aim for the next financial year to de-register for VAT is clearly a high priority.

Finances

It’s been a challengingly eventful financial year for Broken Spoke. As a result of the organisation’s continued growth, our income crossed the VAT threshold. Registering for VAT and submitting quarterly VAT returns hit our books quite drastically. Additionally, we invested our reserves built up from previous years into Broken Spoke’s staff by committing to paying four full-time staff at the Living Wage (as set by the Living Wage Foundation). Finishing the year with a loss of £9,853 was a scenario we had budgeted for in 2015-16. However, it set the following year on a challenging course.
Broken Spoke wouldn’t exist without its volunteers; they are an integral part of the Co-op. This is easily said or written and then not really noticed or taken in. I fully mean it that way. As much as Broken Spoke wouldn’t exist without its staff team, or its customers for that matter, those of you who are giving their time and energy without financial remuneration play an essential part in keeping everything going and ultimately working towards our vision.

The number of people we are able to support each week and the quality of this support is increased with every open workshop volunteer. The number of bikes that get refurbished or recycled - to be honest - would be negligible. There would be no monthly Beryl’s Night, providing a safe space for women and trans* people to learn and share bike mechanics skills. Through our teaching assistants we are able to provide an inspirational learning environment in evening bike mechanics classes to way more people than otherwise possible. Less people would know about Broken Spoke and how great we are ;-) if it wasn’t for volunteers representing us at local events, writing blog posts, contributing to the newsletter, tweeting and not to forget their word-of-mouth publicity. On top of all that (and all the things I forgot to mention here) comes the energy, enthusiasm, passion, curiosity and knowledge that our volunteers bring to our Co-op, which is inspiring and also a constant challenge to provide fertile ground for.

As of today, we have roughly 35 volunteers who help out as Greeters or Assistant Mechanics at our open workshop sessions. On top of that we have about 10 volunteers who purely help out in non-open workshop roles, such as bike refurbishment, teaching assistance, marketing and serving on the Board of Directors.

My hope for the future is that we continue to grow our practice and skills in collaborating and empowering every volunteer to contribute to our common vision and that we have lots of fun along the way!

- Meike Clever, Co-director and Volunteer Coordinator
Being a co-operative to us means giving everyone involved in the organisation, be it staff or volunteers, the opportunity to collaborate with others to shape what we do and how we do it. One way of making this possible is by getting together in working groups with a specific scope. In 2015-16 the following working groups have been active:

**Communications team**

Jamie Blomfield  
Sam Chappell  
John Chadfield  
Meike Clever  
Kate Evans  
Charlie Game  
Kiro Hadjiev  
Verity Powell  
Eleanor Smith

*After helping out with blog writing, newsletter editing, marketing strategising and lots more related to words and how to get them out there, the team is currently taking a hiatus since January 2016.*

**Cycle Training team**

Sam Chappell  
Jamie Clarke  
Clare Farley  
Kiro Hadjiev  
Kelly Murray  
Jamie Smith

*Cycling instructors uniting to further this programme of our Co-op. In particular, the team has been a major support in realising our goal of become a Bikeability accredited cycle training scheme. This team is also currently taking a hiatus.*

**Mechanics**

Sam Chappell  
Meike Clever  
Johnny Fili  
Kiro Hadjiev  
Mike Homes  
Tim Hunt  
Tom Martin  
Eleanor Smith  
Jamie Smith

*The team of mechanics who lead open workshop sessions and teach evening mechanics courses grew considerably in 2015-16 through the training and subsequent accreditation of four new mechanics: Meike, Johnny, Kiro and Mike.*

*The team infrequently gets together to support each other in their practice of running these sessions, as well as just to talk about bikes and cycling.*
Stephanie Angus
Hannah Baines
Meike Clever
Cat Gunn
Camen Lei
Calista Meinert
Karen McCallum
Eleanor Smith
Sara Valdez
Kat Young

Team Beryl

Team Beryl is one of the oldest and most self-managed teams at Broken Spoke. In 2015-16 its members restarted Beryl’s Night, our women and trans* people only workshop session, which has since gone from strength to strength. It was the organiser of “Women & Bikes 2016”, a hugely successful event organised for International Women’s Day to inspire more women to get into cycling and mechanics.

Mark Adams
Sam Chappell
Jonathan Darby
Courtney Dean
Meike Clever
Johnny Fill
Kiro Hadjiev
Ben Hudson
Jannu Jõgeva
Karen McCallum
Eleanor Smith
Alex Smith
Bernard Soubry

Workshop team

The Workshop Team is our youngest working group, re-established in November 2015 by Jonathan, one of our regular open workshop volunteers. It has a broad scope: support the delivery of open workshop sessions, courses and bike refurbishment; identify and implement improvements; address any problems identified; reduce demands on time of staff.

Among other things, the group is responsible for the introduction of the volunteer day group system, changes made to the representation of the open workshops on the website, a feedback system for workshop users and it helps look after bike stands, trueing stands and tools.

“...I’ve been riding bikes every day since I was 12, and I’m now 36. I used to know practically nothing about bike mechanics, and learning to fix one seemed too complicated since I had neither the necessary space, nor the tools & know-how. I wasn’t even sure I would manage. But when I moved to Oxford and heard about the Broken Spoke, it suddenly seemed within reach, so I gave it a try.

The team has been very supportive and I have to admit that I now have two sources of addiction to bicycles: riding and tinkering.”

– Yvan Schulz, workshop user

Board of Directors

Read on to learn more about this working group.
Broken Spoke’s Board of Directors oversees our strategic direction. They met four times in 2015-16 to talk business planning, finance and generally keep an eye on the big picture. They have been working on things like looking for new workshop premises, VAT registration (and de-registration), staff pay, assessing profitability of programmes and reviewing organisational structure.

The Board is made of both employee and volunteer members, no more than five of each. Employee members are nominated by the staff team. The employee members nominated at the 2015 AMM were:

Meike Clever - volunteer coordinator;
Sam Chappell - cycle training coordinator;
Eleanor Smith - workshop coordinator.
Volunteer members are elected from the membership. Last year all volunteer members stepped down and we had our first open election at the 2015 AMM. These wonderful individuals were elected and have served the Co-op diligently over the last year:

Mark Adams – workshop volunteer, expert cake maker and retired social housing professional;
Tony Perry – finance director at Oxford Brookes, Brompton rider and Board Secretary;
Elise Benjamin – former Green city councillor and active Green Party campaigner;
Gavin Killip – researcher at Environmental Change Institute, coffee lover and Board Chair;
Simon Pratt – head of network for south England at Sustrans, Birdy owner with a long history when it comes to co-ops.

In line with our Co-op’s rules, this year two volunteer members of the Board will step down to allow for an election in which every Co-op member has an equally weighted vote. This means our members decide who joins the Board and makes key decisions about our future. Any Board members who step down are eligible to stand for re-election.

We are excited to see which brave cyclists within our membership put themselves forward to take this role at the helm of the Co-op and look forward to working with the new Board.

To the volunteer Board members who served this year - thank you for all the effort, energy, patience and joy you have poured into Broken Spoke. You have seen off many challenges and helped the staff to cope with the rough and tumble of running a social enterprise.

“The Broken Spoke has become an incredibly valuable part of my life. It’s not just a fun place to hang out, it’s pushed me to have new experiences, meet new people, and learn how to do things I couldn’t have approached before.”

– Cat, Workshop & Team Beryl Volunteer
Looking ahead

If you read the intro you’ll already have realised that the road ahead might be bumpy but we are sure that, just like a good off road ride, whilst it may be challenging and messy, it will be exhilarating, bring new perspectives and that we’ll end up feeling stronger (if a little worn out). The objective ‘build a financially sustainable co-operative business’ will take centre stage in the coming year.

Some things which we are planning to work on:

Changing our organisational structure
Broken Spoke’s mission is all about education (‘teaching people to fix and ride bikes...’) which is defined as a charitable aim and we are investigating the setting up of a charitable arm because of the opportunities this status would give us for fundraising and growth.

New mechanics courses
One of our key strengths is the quality of our teaching. We believe anyone can learn mechanics. We are all about cultivating true understanding and curiosity, learning the ‘why’ as well as the ‘how’, even if this results in more mistakes along the way. With this in mind, we have been working on a new programme of bike mechanics courses which we will launch in January 2017.
Looking for a new home
The search for new workshop premises will be stepped up a gear as our tenancy at the Story Museum draws to an end. We’ll be calling on our supporters to keep their eyes peeled and report any promising opportunities. In the meantime we are crowd-funding our way to getting a sink plumbed in at our current workshop.

Cycle training
We are seeking funding to train new cycling instructors and increase our work of offering cycle training in schools. We think it’s a real shame that secondary school students in Oxford don’t get the chance to have proper cycle training with Bikeability-accredited instructors. We want to change that by working with schools to train the cyclists of the future.

Women & Bicycles 2017
Building on the outrageous success of this event last year we have teamed up with the Adventure Syndicate (a group of outstanding women cyclists) to put on a full weekend festival-come-conference. It will seek to challenge gender disparity in cycling and inspire women with a programme of speakers, practical workshops, rides and panel discussions.

Work towards financial sustainability
We will write a three year strategy and financial projection, complete the VAT de-registration process, develop a bike repair service, increase our delivery of bespoke mechanics work and sell more refurbished bikes.

“I moved to Oxford to join my husband a few months ago. We don’t own a car, so he bought two bikes for us, and some super cool gear to carry our daughter around. One of the first things he told me when I arrived was, ‘You have to go to Broken Spoke to fix your (very old) bicycle, that place is awesome!’ I hesitated at first, as in our hometown places like Broken Spoke are a bit elitist - if you’re not considered as part of the “pack” you may be stared at in a not very friendly way - but as soon as I set foot in Broken Spoke I felt at home. My ignorance regarding bike fixing was not mocked, on the contrary, everybody was very helpful and supportive. I loved it and I can now change brakes and fix a derailleur. How cool is that?”

– Christina, workshop user
Call to action

Just like a bike – we are the sum of our parts. Our outstanding volunteers make us what we are. We’re changing Oxford (and the world mwahaha) for the better: training people to fix and ride bikes means more people cycling and fewer cars on the road and that’s good for everyone!

Broken Spoke needs your energy and skills to help with running our bike repair workshops, going out to community events, spreading the word about what we do, and much more.

You can get involved:
become a volunteer,
become a supporter,
book a cycling lesson,
or simply come and fix your bike.

www.bsbcoop.org/get-involved