

Broken Spoke Bike Co-op



Annual Report 2016-17

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.

Registered Society no. 31918R under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014

Registered Address:

178 Campbell Road
Oxford
OX4 3NR

Public Address:

The Gates
42 Pembroke Street
Oxford
OX1 1BP

Contact Information:

info@bsbcoop.org
07551 711 746
www.bsbcoop.org

1 Introduction

This report is a review of what we got up to in the financial year 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. As well as running our awesome community workshop, teaching bike mechanics courses, enabling loads of beginner cyclists, training loads of low-confidence cyclists and building up our team of heroic volunteers, there are a couple of things we did that we want to shout about:

We launched four new courses which teach the core concepts of bike mechanics in a unique way. The courses use a challenge-based learning approach, where students learn through discovery, making them totally different to any other mechanics course out there. Bookings have been up and down so the team is working on more effectively communicating these courses.

We launched a weekly same-day bike repair service. The purpose of this new programme was to improve our cashflow by boosting our income and provide something for people who want to support Broken Spoke but don't have time to engage with our DIY workshops. It has proven successful on both counts. The majority of customers find us through recommendations from friends or colleagues, or through our high rating on Google – looks like satisfaction all around!

We held a two-day festival of 'Women & Bicycles' to celebrate and enlarge the role of women in the cycling movement. This year's show was a collaboration with the Adventure Syndicate and offered a programme of rides, workshops, speakers and socials; it was attended by 150 people and organised by a dedicated team of Team Beryl volunteers. The show broke even financially (when staff costs are not accounted for) and resulted in lots of exposure for Broken Spoke and the Adventure Syndicate.

Now for the fun one... after a long process involving lots of paperwork and changing our primary rules at the last AGM, we successfully de-registered from VAT! This has improved our financial stability no end.

2 Our vision

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 petrol-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

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.

3 Our aims and progress towards them

How we can play a part in turning our vision into reality and how far we got between April 2016 and March 2017.

Recognising structural inequality within our society, we will break down the barriers to bike ownership, maintenance and riding.

We REFURBISH BIKES

- We now rent a storage garage from Pedal & Post enabling us to accumulate bikes and at the same time support another local bike business.
- Kiro continues to coordinate monthly bike refurbishment work on a voluntary basis.
- We sold more bikes in September & October 2016 than ever before - 60!

We work with VULNERABLE ADULTS

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

We have TEAM BERYL

A volunteer working group that 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. At Beryl's Night, volunteers teach 45 minute sessions on all aspects of bike mechanics, culture and riding.
- The team organised a festival of Women & Bicycles, a 2-day event attended by 150 people and covered widely in local press and national cycle media.

We have a SAFER SPACES policy

- Created in collaboration between staff and volunteers as 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. This is part of our volunteer handbook and displayed in the workshop.

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

We deliver BIKE MECHANICS COURSES to the general public

Our mechanics courses are designed to be 'hands-on' and focused on problem-solving and understanding core mechanical principles (discovering the 'why' not just the 'how').

- We launched four new mechanics courses: Go, Shift, Turn and Stop, which take our unique approach to teaching core mechanical principals to a new level using challenge based learning.
- We delivered 35 bike mechanics courses to 178 participants in 2016-17;

- We continue to have volunteer teaching assistants at every mechanics course which improves the quality of the learning experience for students and gives volunteers experience of teaching;

We deliver OPEN WORKSHOP SESSIONS

- Four days a week, 8 lead mechanics deliver open workshop sessions to provide oversight of volunteers and customers to enable DIY repairs to take place; we had 2250 open workshop visits in 2016-17.
- The Volunteer Workshop Team (est. November 2015) continues to meet monthly to ensure the workshop space is a functional and effective learning and doing environment.

We deliver BESPOKE TRAININGS at workplaces and community events

- In 2016-17 we delivered 9 bespoke trainings and had a presence at 8 external events.

We will encourage sustainable behaviours and attitudes: repair, reuse, recycle and ride!

We RE-USE:

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

We RECYCLE:

We 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.

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

We have VOLUNTEERS:

- We have a clear process for people to become volunteers;
- We have working groups, which provide opportunities for learning & practicing teamwork and collaboration, as well as opportunities to shape Broken Spoke's work. Working groups are: Team Beryl, Board of Directors and Workshop Team; They provide a route towards membership of the Co-op;
- We organised our third annual Volunteer Feast in October 2016 where we get feedback about our volunteer programme, Meike introduced us to convergent facilitation and a sub-committee to work on volunteering began organising after the feast.

We have MEMBERSHIP:

- We have processes for people to become members of the Co-op through their work as staff or volunteers;
- Eligibility for membership is checked annually by the volunteer co-ordinator prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) & anyone eligible is invited to join before the meeting happens;
- Members can shape our work through: voting at the AGM, standing for election, proposing motions.

We have STAFF:

- We have a total of 10 staff – 4 full-time fixed, 6 casual;
- We created a new role, Admin, Comms and Advocacy Co-ordinator, and invited applications on the very last day of the financial year;
- Staff team members shape our work by organising and delivering: programmes, strategy, volunteer co-ordination, communications, democratic processes, membership processes;
- Staff meetings provide opportunities for updates, discussion, & collaborative decision-making;
- We use peer management to support the wellbeing of our team.

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

We provide CYCLE TRAINING & BIKEABILITY:

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 2016-17:

- Our cycling instructors delivered 321 hours of one-on-one training, of which 78 hours were to people completely new to cycling;
- Our very own Meike joined the cycling instructor team;
- We delivered 5 presentations on effective cycling;
- We provided free or subsidised training to people through relationships with the University of Oxford, Oxford City Council, Oxford Health, and the Big Bike Revival;
- We brought in on average £1,400/month of income (with strong fluctuations);
- We provided work for 4 instructors;
- We actively used social & print media to raise the profile of cycle training (inc. Facebook posts, printed materials, newsletter feature & website);
- 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 cooperative business.

- 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 casual staff – mechanics and cycling instructors;
- We have an active Board of Directors made up of employee and volunteer members responsible for overseeing strategy.

4 Financial overview

Balance sheet

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
FIXED ASSETS					
Tools and Equipment	406	1,339	2,890	2,890	2,890
Accumulated Depreciation	81	314	892	1,470	2,048
Total Fixed Assets	325	1,025	1,998	1,420	842
CURRENT ASSETS					
Cash at hand and in bank	14,820	14,520	18,779	4,678	5,454
Debtors	414	2,680	1,210	4,528	1,450
Total Current Assets	15,234	17,200	19,989	9,206	6,904
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Loans (short term)	1,605	0	0	0	0
Creditors	0	0	1,522	0	0
HMRC (Corporation Tax, PAYE)	725	1,052	1,251	4,416	2,998
Total Current Liabilities	2,330	1,052	2,773	4,416	2,998
Fixed + Current Assets less Current Liabilities	13,299	17,172	19,214	6,210	4,748
FINANCED BY					
Shares	10,003	10,003	10,003	6,670	6,670
Profit from previous years		3,226	7,169	9,394	-460
Profit/Loss in current year	3,226	3,943	2,042	-9,854	-1,462
Total	13,229	17,172	19,214	6,210	4,748

Profit & Loss

		Actuals	Projection	Actuals/Projection
INCOME	Sales			
	Open Workshop Fees	15,929	15,742	101%
	Public Courses	11,291	11,367	99%
	Cycle Training	16,804	16,505	102%
	Bespoke Courses	16,366	11,766	139%
	Repairs	5,725	6,068	94%
	NEW Stock	33,831	35,583	95%
	USED Stock	15,752	16,227	97%
	Supporter Dues	939	1,162	81%
	Donations	1,329	1,458	91%
	Grants	0	0	-
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Total Income		117,965	115,879	102%
COST OF SALES	Staff (50%)	30,942	30,381	102%
	Casual Staff	13,938	12,166	115%
	Rent, Hall Hire (40%)	4,519	3,504	129%
	NEW Stock	21,778	17,791	122%
	Equipment	414	153	271%
	Sundries	3,390	1,610	211%
	Travel	1,370	365	375%
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Total Cost of Sales		76,350	65,971	116%
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Gross Profit		41,615	49,908	83%

OVERHEADS	Staff (50%)	30,942	30,381	102%
	Training	1,559	272	572%
	Rent, Hall Hire (60%)	6,778	5,256	129%
	Phone, Utilities	1,455	2,381	61%
	Stationery, Postage, Printing	147	75	197%
	Volunteers	103	264	39%
	Professional Fees	515	514	100%
	Insurance	751	727	103%
	Marketing	577	366	158%
	Tax	-329	0	-
	Depreciation (5 year)	578	578	100%
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	Total Overheads	43,077	40,815	106%
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	Total Expenses	119,428	106,786	112%
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	Net Profit	-1,462	9,092	-16%
	Bank Credit Interest	0	0	-
	Net Profit on Ordinary Activities	-1,462	9,092	-16%

5 Looking ahead

As Einstein put it 'life is like riding a bike, to stay balanced you've got to keep moving'. And move we shall (literally)! Here are some of the directions we'll be going in:

- Moving to a new space: this is the biggy! Our workshop will leave The Story Museum (its happy home since January 2013) by February 2018 to allow for the next stage of the museum's development. Everyone knows moving is a big hassle; the first challenge is finding somewhere to go...then there's the actual moving. We'll need to minimise the disruption to our activities, not to mention the impact on our income, by getting loads of help...from you ;) It will be all hands on deck to pack up the spanners and tell the world where we have gone!
- Gaining charitable status: Broken Spoke's mission is all about education ('teaching people to fix and ride bikes...') which is defined as a 'charitable aim'. Converting to a charity is part of a plan to give us more long term financial stability. Charities are eligible for many forms of tax relief including business rates relief which will benefit us in a big way, especially if we end up taking on a commercial lease for a future workshop space. Don't worry, even as a charity, Broken Spoke will follow the co-operative principles and be governed by its members.
- Introducing pensions: yawn. No, wake up! This is important! The government have introduced new rules which state that all employers need to enroll their eligible staff for pensions. Our staging date is July 2017 so it's time for some research and number crunching - look out retirement saving, here we come.
- Campaigning for safer cycling: we are taking on a bigger role as an advocate of cycling in the city. We will be putting more staff resources into improving the state of cycling to make sure it becomes a safe, efficient and enjoyable way to travel for all. This will involve collaborating

more closely with the folks at the Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Cyclox and others.

- Improving our business systems: as we have grown, the amount of things we do has become bigger and more complex. However, our systems for administering and managing our work are struggling to cope with such volumes of incredible bike-action. We plan to free up the time and creativity of our core staff team by streamlining and updating our business systems and out-sourcing our accountancy work.
- Improving our communications: we want to get our website up-to-date and make sure all the channels through which people come to Broken Spoke reflect clearly and concisely who we are and what we do. Time for a revamp!

6 Call to action

This is going to be a big year for Broken Spoke...moving to a new workshop will be no mean feat and we'll need our community to help us make it happen. We can't be specific about dates right now but December-January 2017 is what we are aiming for and we will need all the help we can get to... pack, load, drive, unload, unpack, paint, drill holes on walls, put up shelves, make copious amounts of tea, etc. So please keep in mind to spare a few hours or days for us around that time of year. Drivers, motorised vehicle owners and woodworkers are especially needed.

Broken Spoke Co-op members - we need you to engage with our work to gain charitable status, our ability to make that transition is in your hands. Stay tuned for updates.

Peace and bike grease everyone!