

# Julian's Story

Identifying and supporting the needs of an individual working to improve health, wellbeing and economic prosperity



# Supporting an individual through a community engagement approach

The work of the Doncaster LDP and its approach to addressing physical inactivity is built upon community engagement.

This approach ensures that local communities are empowered to become part of the sport and physical activity system and help shape provision aligned to the needs of them and their locality.

Julian's story is an example of how engaging with a Well Doncaster Officer can rapidly grow into something bigger with support of a wider partnership. The approach has supported him to grow a small business aimed at improving health, wellbeing and economic prosperity – key pillars of the LDP.

It also shares learning on the value of collaboration and community connections across the LDP, Well Doncaster and Get Doncaster Moving – and the parts they all play in a complex system.

# The beginning

Julian Pike began repairing bikes whilst on furlough in 2020 as a way to keep busy and give something back to the local community. This progressed into a small business – **Yorkshire Bike Shack (YBS)** – that repairs donated bikes and redistributes them to residents who cannot afford them.

# 2. Building a profile

The **Well Doncaster Officer** in Bentley helped Julian publicise YBS and connect him with other groups in the area (with similar aims) who could use refurbished bikes. Julian is also part of the **Community Wealth Builder (CWB)** network which facilitated more connections.

# 3. Funding

The **Well Doncaster Officer** supported Julian to apply for funding from the **VCFS** and **Barrier Buster**. The funding enabled him to buy tools and equipment to run free bike repair sessions.

# 1. The base

In need of a base for Yorkshire Bike Shack, Julian asked **Well Doncaster** if they could help. They met to discuss options and Julian was put in touch with Bentley Urban Farm, and the business moved to this community premises with space for a workshop.

# 4. Networking

At a **CWB partnership event**, Julian met Laurie Smith from Flourish Enterprises. They have a large site with a park and space for a new workshop in Balby.

# 7. Further funding

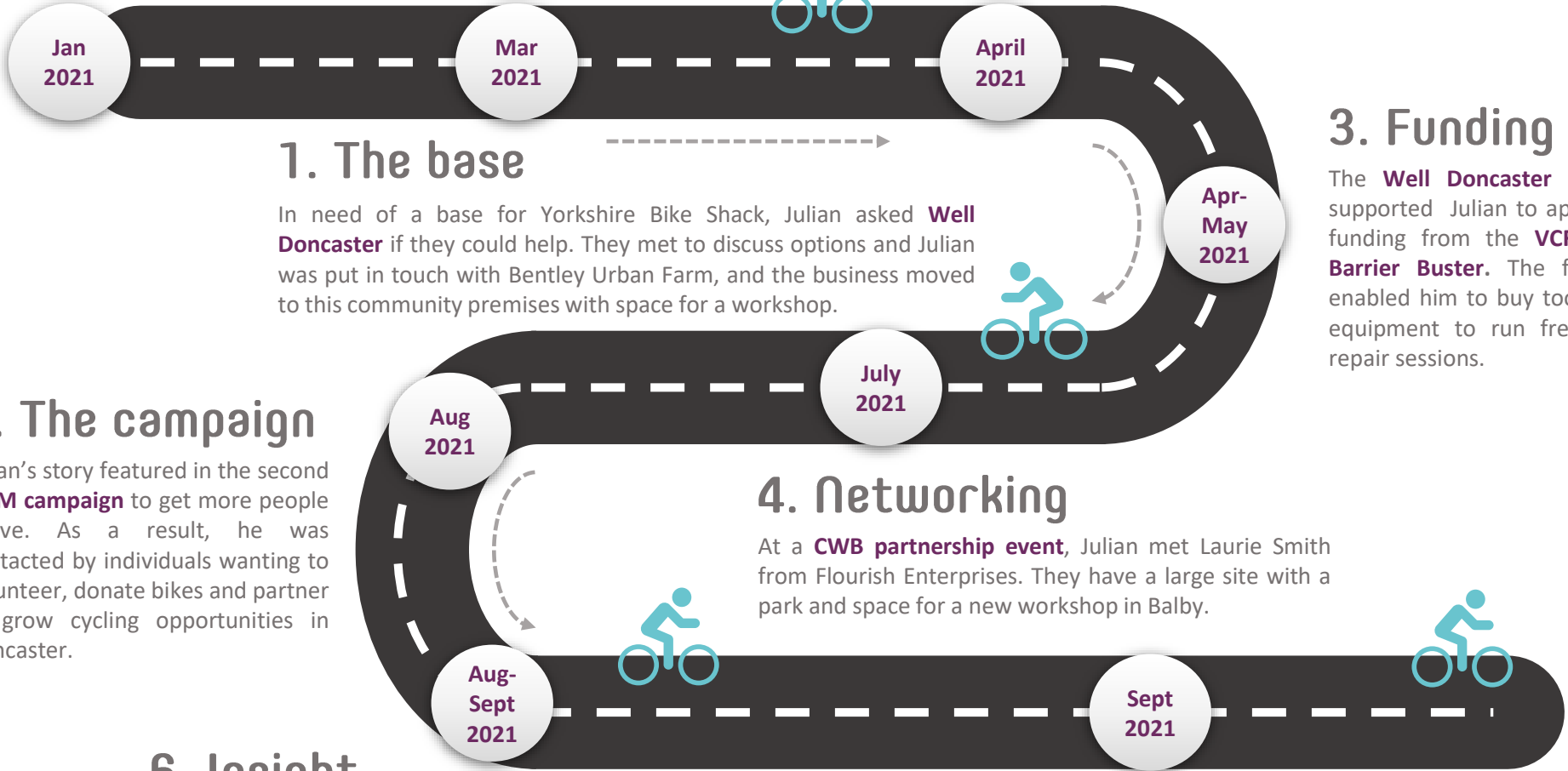
Julian pitched to secure £10,000 for YBS through the Well Doncaster **'Dragons Den' event** with Flourish Enterprises. They were successful and will use the funding to set up a permanent workshop.

# 6. Insight

Well Doncaster Officers undertook **Appreciative Inquiry** sessions in their communities. One of these sessions identified bikes owned by residents which were in disrepair in a particular community. Julian secured another Barrier Buster grant to run bike repair workshops in this area.

# 5. The campaign

Julian's story featured in the second **GDM campaign** to get more people active. As a result, he was contacted by individuals wanting to volunteer, donate bikes and partner to grow cycling opportunities in Doncaster.



# 1 & 2. Support of Well Doncaster and WDOs

**Well Doncaster** is an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach to shaping more effective health, care and welfare services in Doncaster, led by the Public Health team. It has a focus on improving health by being part of a vibrant and connected community, rather than a deficit-model of tackling specific health issues in isolation. There are four **Well Doncaster Officers (WDOs)** covering the borough, working in twenty targeted communities identified as having low health outcomes and low levels of physical activity. The LDP part-funds these posts as physical activity and health are inextricably linked and consolidates the relationship between the LDP and Well Doncaster. The WDOs have the dual aim of improving both health and physical activity in the local areas to learn more about the communities. WDOs support the development of community centred approaches and co-design health and physical activity interventions across the Well Doncaster areas. In order to do this successfully, WDOs need to have an understanding of the different organisations, groups and charities in the community they work to be able to link residents and groups together.

In March 2021, Julian was introduced to the Well Doncaster team and asked if they could help him find a venue to host Yorkshire Bike Shack. The WDO in Bentley, James, knew of Bentley Urban Farm, a community project with the potential for a workspace in their grounds. Julian moved to this location shortly after and was able to offer bicycle repair workshops to individuals and groups as well as continue repairing and refurbishing donated bicycles. Warren, who runs Bentley Urban Farm, is also well-connected in the community and in turn put Julian in touch with the Big Picture Learning School which led to YBS delivering bike repair sessions to children from the school. WDO James continued to support Julian to grow and reach more of his target audience for the Yorkshire Bike Shack. Through being integrated into the local community, James was able to put Julian in contact with other groups in the community who could benefit from receiving donated bicycles, let him know about funding opportunities, and give advice on growing the business sustainably.

### 3. Supporting funding opportunities for the VCS

The **Community Wealth Builder (CWB)** project is funded by the European Regional Development Fund and provides support to social enterprises, cooperatives, Community Interest Companies and charities across South Yorkshire. The project complements the work of Well Doncaster by taking a person-centred approach to local economic development, and provides opportunities for networking and partnership building across the Voluntary and Community and Faith Sector (VCFS). CWB offers social enterprises tailored support and access to funding to support their growth, and small businesses in the area are offered networking opportunities across the borough. Several pots of funding are available to local small businesses. WDOs support this work by spreading the word about available grants and supporting applications.

Julian had little experience in writing funding applications prior to starting the Yorkshire Bike Shack. WDO James and Vicky from CWB supported Julian to apply for funding. James helped him to write his first application, for £750 from the **Doncaster VCFS** fund, aimed at supporting activities which address social and health inequalities. This application was successful and used to set up his workshop at Bentley Urban Farm and purchase tools and parts to run free workshops for the local community. The workshops enable residents on a low income to service their own bikes and keep them useable. Julian then made an application for the CWB **Barrier Buster** fund, a pot of funding to help overcome a particular barrier faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, again with the support of WDO James. This application was for funding to purchase cycling safety equipment (helmets, lights, high visibility vests and locks) to support people on a low income and refugees to start or continue cycling during the pandemic.

## 4. Get Doncaster Moving partnership working

WDOs work with partners in the Get Doncaster Moving network to create a **more joined up approach** to increasing physical activity, health and wellbeing across the borough. The network is increasing in size year on year and Well Doncaster, CWB and the LDP host networking events and encourage partners to link up with each other for the benefit of the local communities. A priority aim of the GDM network is to create a more joined-up approach to community engagement and improving health, wellbeing and physical activity levels.

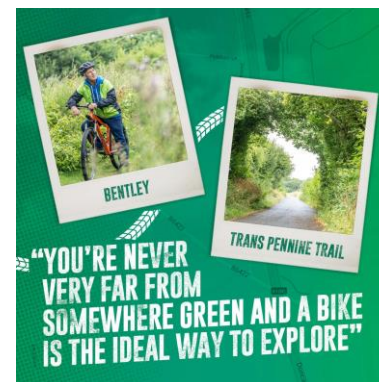
On a CWB networking Zoom call, Julian met Laurie from Flourish Enterprises, the creative and community arm of Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH). The RDaSH site has a large park with woodland trails, play areas and a cafe. Flourish would like to create a well-being hub on the site and encourage the local community to come and enjoy the park. It is located in Balby, one of the priority areas for Well Doncaster and the LDP. Julian visited the site and saw the potential for this as a permanent base in the centre of the community, and they worked together to apply for funding to set up a permanent workshop at the site (see 7).

Further funding has been secured through other areas of the GDM network. Dean a Sports Development Officer and part of Get Doncaster Moving, has supported Julian to train new volunteers in bike maintenance through the Sports Volunteer Grants.

## 5. GDM campaign to increase physical activity

Get Doncaster Moving launched the second round of their **communications and marketing campaign** in August 2021, following an initial launch in March 2021. The campaign is one strand of the LDP work, but also runs through all of the other activities. The August campaign highlighted the benefits of physical activity for health and wellbeing. It focused on Doncaster residents and used the real-life stories of local people and groups to inspire others to get active. The stories were shared through local social media, featured in newsletters sent out to residents (both digitally and in hard copy) alongside gaining press coverage.

Julian was one of the residents who featured in the campaign (images below). His story was chosen as this encapsulated what Get Doncaster Moving was all about – a Doncaster resident who can showcase the benefits of physical activity as an opportunity for exercise and travel, and focused on the support available in the local natural environment. He also embodied a sense of community through his work and personal life. A number of people responded to social media posts and the newsletter who were interested in volunteering their time at YSB, building a partnership or donating bikes.



## 6. Appreciative Inquiry

The Well Doncaster approach to community engagement centres around a four-stage **Appreciative Inquiry (AI)** process. AI is designed to support change by focusing on doing more of what is already working, rather than looking for problems and trying to fix them. The four stages are:

1. **Discovery:** engagement with residents to find out what is working well in the community. Responses are themed to allow the priorities of the community to be established.
2. **Dream:** Residents and key stakeholders are invited to a workshop to discuss what ideas they have for their community and how these will meet the priorities highlighted in the Discovery phase.
3. **Design:** All individuals involved attend a second workshop to develop an action plan to direct work for their community.
4. **Delivery:** Collaborative working and resource investment to deliver the action plan.

The Well Doncaster team led the process in their areas. They have a permanent presence within the communities which helps to gain trust and react quickly to opportunities for change (identified through the AI). The findings from AI are used to inform local plans (through the process above) but also feed into the wider LDP and strands of work (e.g. Doncaster Future Parks).

The AI work in the Highfields area of Doncaster highlighted that some residents owned bikes, but these were often in a state of disrepair and not used. This was communicated to Julian by the Well Doncaster team. He decided to apply for further Barrier Buster funding to offer repair workshops and training in this community at the local boxing club. The application was successful and the £500 will be used to cover the cost of tools and parts. Yorkshire Bike Shack is running workshops during October half term 2021, and Julian hopes through this he will also be able to recruit more volunteers to help the business grow in the future.





## 7. Dragon's Den

In an attempt to be innovative with funding and harness the interest of the local communities, WDOs worked together to develop a plan to hold a series of **Dragon's Den** style events where constituted groups would pitch their project idea to the local community and a panel to try to secure the £10,000 on offer for each of the localities. Four events were held – North, Central, East and South – and successful applicants were shortlisted and invited to their respective Dragon's Den for their locality. At each event, the shortlisted community groups had ten minutes to pitch their idea to a panel consisting of residents, a cabinet member from outside of the locality and a CWB representative.

By this time, Julian had been in discussion with Flourish Enterprises about opening a permanent base for the Yorkshire Bike Shack on the RDaSH grounds at Woodfield Park. Together they prepared a pitch and a business plan as to how the funding would be used. This included plans to turn a shipping container into a workshop, and the purchase of tools and parts to continue running workshops and bike repairs. Their pitch was chosen as the winner and Yorkshire Bike Shack and Flourish Enterprises are working together to prepare for the opening of the new workshop by the end of the year.

Julian will continue to use the Bentley Urban Farm base two days a week to deliver workshops and repairs in that community, but the permanent base at Woodfield Park will allow him to offer more sessions as well as after school clubs, bike hire and access to the workshop at a minimal cost. Julian plans to allow groups to hire out the workshop space for private sessions and have particular days reserved for those who may feel uncomfortable accessing open sessions such as women or refugees.



# Key learning from the approach

- WDOs are a critical part of the LDP. They are intrinsic to the LDP and share their local knowledge to bring the strands of the LDP together (e.g. Julian featuring in the communications campaign). This also allowed Julian to access support from those in the GDM network. There are numerous opportunities for developing partnerships and linking groups and individuals together who can support and benefit each other to improve health and wellbeing.
- The WDO played a crucial role in forging the initial contacts for Julian. The peak of their support was in the early stages, supporting Julian to link to other partners, potential volunteers and sources of funding. The initial contact was not about *directly* supporting physical activity but about needing help to grow a local business that aims to improve health, wellbeing and physical activity.
- WDOs understand the communities they work in and have developed networks with partners in the areas. WDO knowledge and awareness of local communities and key individuals in these communities makes this support possible – this is a combination of embedding themselves in communities and undertaking AI.
- Sharing the findings from AI with the local community ensures they are empowered and part of the system. In this example Julian saw a ‘need’ and was able to apply for funding himself to support the local community.
- Funding is pivotal to growth and reaching more people. Support with funding applications can be invaluable to those with no experience of this – just signposting to opportunities may not be enough as funding applications can be difficult for those with little or no experience.
- WDOs designed the Dragon’s Den approach to funding which was seen as innovative and allowed residents to have a voice over who funding was given to. The LDP are trialling different funding methods to see how they work and the impact they can have.
- Research identified the need for the communications campaign to feature ‘real people’ in Doncaster (see the communications campaign output). Using Julian showcases this as he was someone in Doncaster who residents could identify with and offer support to.