

Julian's Story

**Sharing learning on the value of collaboration across the
Doncaster Local Delivery Pilot, Well Doncaster and the Get
Doncaster Moving networks**

**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 inactivity is built upon continual engagement with local communities. The Doncaster LPD has a unique approach to community engagement: part-funding Well Doncaster Officers to link with local communities, understand their needs and wants, and support them to address health and inactivity in ways that are meaningful and relevant to them.

Julian's story is used here as an example of how this community engagement approach has worked in practice to support an individual to start and then grow a small business aimed at improving health, wellbeing and economic prosperity – pillars of the LPD. Julian's story is not unique, but demonstrates how a starting point of engaging with a Well Doncaster Officer can rapidly grow into something much bigger with support of a wider partnership.

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 people who can use them.

2. Building a profile

The **Bentley Well Doncaster Officer** helped Julian publicise YBS and connect with other like-minded groups in the area who could use refurbished bikes. Julian was also part of the **Community Wealth Builder (CWB)** network which facilitated more contacts.

3. Funding

The Well Doncaster Officer supported Julian to apply for funding from the **VCFS** and **Barrier Buster** funds, 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.



Jan
2021

Mar
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April
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July
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4. 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.

5. Networking

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

6. Insight

Well Doncaster Officers have been undertaking **Appreciative Inquiry** in their communities. One of these identified a lot of bikes owned by residents but in disrepair. Julian secured another Barrier Buster grant to run bike repair workshops in this particular community.

7. Further funding

Julian put in pitch 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.

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. The LDP part-funds these posts to ensure that the community engagement undertaken by the WDOs to have the dual aim of improving health and physical activity. The aim of the WDO is to support the development of community centred approaches and co-designed public 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 in 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 Bentley Well Doncaster Officer, 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 then 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 UCS

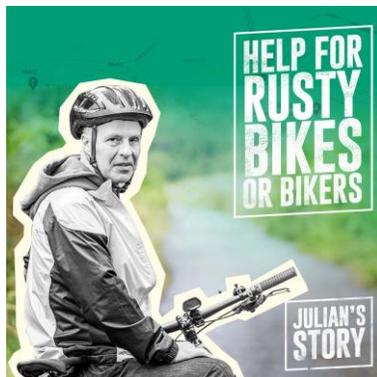
The **Community Wealth Builder (CWB)** project is funded by the European Regional Development Fund and provides support to social enterprises, cooperatives, Community Interest Companies (CICs) and charities across South Yorkshire. The project complements the work of Well Doncaster through taking a person-centred 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. Well Doncaster Officers 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 CWB Vicky advised Julian to apply for funding through CWB. James supported 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 Bently Urban Farm and purchase tools and parts to run free workshops for the local community. The workshops are designed to enable people on 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 they have 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: 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 throughout all of the other activities. The August campaign was to highlight the benefits of physical activity for health and wellbeing by focusing on Doncaster residents and used the stories of local people and groups who backed the campaign to inspire others to get active. The stories were used in the local media and featured in newsletters sent out to residents.

Julian was one of the local residents who featured in the campaign (images below). His story was chosen by the LDP communications team 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 opportunities available in the local natural environment. A number of people responded to social media posts and the newsletter who were interested in volunteering their time, building a partnership or donating bikes.



5: Get Doncaster Moving partnership working

Well Doncaster officers 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 café. 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 base at the site (see 7).

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

6: Appreciative Inquiry

The Well Doncaseter approach to community engagement centres around a four-stage **Appreciative Inquiry (AI)** process that takes place annually. AI is a four stage process 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 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 Dream 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 lead the process as they have a permanent presence within the communities which helps to gain their trust and react quickly to opportunities for change.

One outcome of the Appreciative Inquiry work in the Highfields area of Doncaster was some residents owned bikes, but often these were in a state of disrepair and therefore not in use. This was communicated to Julian by the Well Doncaster team and he then applied 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 three 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 Community Wealth Builder 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 delivery 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

A number of key learning points can be taken from this example.

- Well Doncaster Officers played a crucial role in forging the initial contacts. 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 and wellbeing.
- 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.
- 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.
- The wider GDM partnership and its links to the VCF sector can also support this type of growth through other strands of work. 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.