

‘PEDALL LIFTS HOW EVERYBODY FEELS’ – A VOLUNTEER’S STORY

PEDALL – New Forest Inclusive Cycling is about ‘companionship’ and ‘purpose’ for volunteers, riders, and support networks. That’s as well as supporting wellbeing and fostering a close relationship between people and nature.

That’s according to a volunteer of six years, project trustee, and lifelong cyclist, Caroline, who said she jumped at the ‘ideal opportunity’ to join after seeing PEDALL at the New Forest NPA’s Volunteer Fair.

‘PEDALL gives everybody a place to go where they can feel like they’re with their tribe – their community,’ she said. ‘What matters to me is that it’s not just a passing ‘here’s your bike today’ interaction.

‘For me, it’s really important to build a longer-term relationship and to take an interest in riders and what they want.

‘I’ve seen changes in people and got to know them really well, so you do end up forming a bond, and it’s really nice to see them.’



‘PEDALL GIVES EVERYBODY A PLACE TO GO WHERE THEY CAN FEEL LIKE THEY’RE WITH THEIR TRIBE.’

Caroline has seen the growth of PEDALL – New Forest Inclusive Cycling in recent years to become a charity that runs from two bases and has a large fleet of specialist bikes, enjoyed by a growing number of riders with additional needs.

She said volunteering with PEDALL is a ‘really important’ part of her life and that going on to become a trustee on the project’s board offered her a position that can demonstrate a ‘really different perspective’.

She said: ‘PEDALL facilitates the right environment where conversations can happen and people can hear experiences that others only talk about in these environments.

She added that, on a personal level, her involvement with PEDALL has helped her find purpose and build resilience, allowing her to support others and bring her personality to the role.

'PEDALL FACILITATES THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT WHERE CONVERSATIONS CAN HAPPEN.'

Caroline previously worked in a healthcare environment and said she understands how activities like cycling with PEDALL in the New Forest can help boost people's connections to nature, their own wellbeing, and means they can get back to basics to think about what truly matters to them – all while getting 'mucky on a bike'.

'It really lifts how you feel, mentally and physically.'

'I bounce out of bed early and get on the bike with a mission if I know I've got a PEDALL day. PEDALL gives me that structure,' she said.

'For me, it's about providing a sociable environment, having people around, and giving them something we can all enjoy together.'

'The joy of seeing other people cycle a couple of miles when your worries are about something completely different, something like silly office politics, it puts it all into perspective.'



She concluded there's something special about riding on the safe tracks of the New Forest National Park surrounded by nature and said: 'Everyone comes along and it really lifts how you feel, mentally and physically, just by being there.'



"PEDALL is about connection. Bonds form between families and some of the others who cycle with us because people are going through some of the same challenges. People talk to each other through meeting at PEDALL."

Caroline, PEDALL Volunteer

