



## How we set up Bishopthorpe Road Traders' Association

Johnny Hayes, Chairman



It all started four years ago when we had our first Street Party. We were asked by a 'Car Free City' conference that was held in York in 2010 if we would like to trial an event on Bishopthorpe Road. The idea was to close our busy road to traffic and hold a community event on the road and see what the impact would be. The Traders all agreed and worked together to arrange the Street Party. We did not know what to expect but within minutes of the road being

closed to traffic thousands of people had filled the streets. We were amazed. It made us realise how much people wanted to be part of our community on 'Bishy Road' and what could be achieved by working together.

So we decided to form the Bishopthorpe Road Traders' Association and to commit to working together to make our community an even better place to live and work.

First of all, we set up our website [Bishyroad.net](http://Bishyroad.net). We wanted to get the public involved and decided from the beginning that using the internet and social media was really important for the businesses and the community to communicate with each other.

I had found an example of a Traders' Association constitution online and I changed it to make it more relevant to us. Our constitution sets out information about our aims and objectives and also logistical things like how we will run our meetings, how we will vote, and what the various different roles are. To work together, you don't need a formal constitution, but we really valued having a proper structure for our group and to have clarity about how we were going to work together.

For our first meeting 30 people attend. I presented the constitution and it was agreed we should adopt it. We then elected our Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. We also agreed to open a bank account as a Local Association – we still operate under that heading. We charged £30 annual membership fee – it still remains at that. For that £30 our members get a place on the website, inclusion in the publicity and free stalls at any of our events. In our meetings we mainly discuss events or pressing local issues but sometimes we have speakers. We also set up some sub-groups to lead on particular issues. However a lot of our work now goes on via email.



Initially our income was fairly minimal- just the membership fee. But as we started to put on more events, it grew and grew. We had a massive party when the Tour de France came down Bishy Road, with well over 10,000 people attending. Last Christmas 3000 people came to our illuminations event. The lights had been paid for by the Traders and through crowd-funding – we raised £4,500 from the local community. We give a minimum of 20% of our income from events to charity. Last year that was more than £2,000. And now merchandising, sponsorship and donations are also really important income streams.

The Traders' Association started as a small number of local people agreeing that they wanted to work together. But four years later we now have 74 members. We have recently appointed an auditor to make sure our records and books are well kept. We've built a really big following on social media and we run regular events that our community love.

I'm so proud of what we have all achieved in such a short period of time. Bishy Road really is the heart of our community and we got there by working together.

