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Cyclists are about to set off to ride the national Cathedrals Cycle Route relay passing the commemorative bronze baton between the 42 Church of England cathedrals to promote greener travel and mental and physical well-being – and they have the blessing and support of the Archbishop of York.

And they're off: The second national Cathedrals Cycle Route Relay begins – with support from the Archbishop of York.

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, met with the architect of the new 2,000-mile Cathedrals Cycle Route and said:

“I think it was a fantastic idea that Shaun Cutler had in linking up all our wonderful cathedrals in a cycle route. Showcasing the architecture and worshipping communities, raising money for charities and those in need, as well as keeping fit – what’s not to like!

“Whether people are cycling to their local cathedral only, or visiting all 42, I wish them God’s speed and kind weather on their pilgrimages,’ he added.

The new route was first launched last year, raising funds for mental health charities, and this year cathedral teams will be raising funds for Alzheimer’s UK, Cancer Research and other local good causes.

A group will start from Newcastle Cathedral on June 6, to coincide with the start of Bike Week, Cycling UK’s annual celebration of cycling. This year they are tackling the route in reverse and fellow cyclists are expected to return to Newcastle Cathedral 42 days later (weather permitting) bringing back the baton which will have been passed between each of the 42 Church of England cathedrals.

Most cathedrals now have a dedicated cycle champion to improve the cycle-readiness of their building and ensure a warm welcome for visiting cyclists in a bid to increase the number that currently arrives on two (or three!) wheels.

There are stickers or stamps to collect for people’s Pilgrim Passports ([buy yours online here](#)) available at cathedrals, some cathedrals have installed new cycle stands, and help will be available to fill water bottles.

The Cathedrals Cycle Route is a unique partnership between the Association of English Cathedrals and [Cycling UK](#), with the support of [Sustrans](#), the [British Pilgrimage Trust](#) and Northumbria University. Anyone can ride the route, cycling part of the way between one or two cathedrals or attempting the whole of the 2,000-mile loop.

It is the invention of academic, entrepreneur and keen cyclist Shaun Cutler, from Northumbria University, and was designed to help us all out of lockdown with opportunities for short cycle rides between cathedrals, new partnerships and fundraising for activities to support physical and mental wellbeing.

Shaun said:

“The Cathedrals Cycle Route is about connecting our historic cathedrals and enjoying the spaces between them.

“The last few years have seen a lot of change, the Cathedrals Cycle Route is a great way to rediscover and reconnect, supporting people’s mental and physical health and promoting the mission of England’s cathedrals through pilgrimage, wellbeing and heritage.”

Sarah Mitchell, Cycling UK’s chief executive said:

“Bike Week 2022 is all about how communities can benefit from travelling around their local area by bike.

“This year we’re encouraging people to join or organise an inclusive group ride to celebrate the benefits of cycling. Participants can log their ride for a chance to win amazing prizes.

“For anyone looking for inspiration for their Bike Week riding the unique Cathedrals Cycle Route is a fantastic option. This collection of carefully curated routes run across England, offering incredible views of the countryside and connecting cathedral cities.”

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