envision

The Envision Cycling Challenge 2023

Thursday 21 – Sunday 24 September

Overview

Who:
At Envision we empower young people from less-advantaged backgrounds to develop essential skills and confidence through tackling social issues affecting their community.

What:
This is a 3-day charity bike ride from **Swansea to Henley** via the stunning Brecon Beacons. It's a chance to raise money for a great cause, challenge yourself, meet new like- minded, interesting people and of course, have fun!

When:
Thursday 21st – Sunday 24th September 2023

Why:
This event is our main fundraising event of the year and will enable us to reach and empower more young people.

How:
To sign up, email **ella.howard@envision.org.uk** – info **here**

What is the Envision Cycling Challenge?

2023 will be the sixth year of this popular cycling event, and our wonderful organising committee – who kindly took on the baton from our Chair Simon Lough last year - will be: **Andrew Bacon, Emily Bacon, Clive Meek, Chris Stephenson and Rob Toguri.**

The aim of this year's Envision Cycling Challenge is for riders to get fit, take on a personal challenge, make friends, have fun - and in the process raise money for Envision.

Last year the ride went from Bristol to Guildford meeting the Envision team from the Bristol and London offices along the way. You can read about the ride **here**.

This year we will again do a 3-day bike ride but will be taking on a new route, from Swansea along the Gower Peninsula, through the beautiful Brecon Beacons and Cotswolds before finishing in Henley. This route has been designed by our route expert, Clive, to keep the popular feature of meeting the Envision team along the way whilst also taking advantage of the stunning cycling in Wales and the Southwest.

Who are Envision?

Young people from less advantaged backgrounds are twice as likely to be out of work, school or training in the future. Academic attainment only accounts for half of the gap. Envision is committed to changing this by empowering young people from less advantaged backgrounds, who are under-represented in the world of work, to develop the essential skills and self-belief they need to succeed in later life.

We do this by empowering them to take social action to tackle real life problems in their local community and to raise money for a local charity. So, there's a double benefit – the young people develop their own skills and employability, and the projects and benefit their local communities.

Envision has featured in a research paper on character education and social mobility **"Life Lessons"** published by the highly influential Sutton Trust.

Click **here** to see some of the work we do!

A detailed Cabinet Office funded trial has shown that the Envision programme develops some of the most critical skills for life and work, and so levels the educational playing field.

The Route

What is the route?

On our first evening (**Thursday 21st September**) we will stay at The Grand Hotel in **Swansea.** We will leave bright and early on Friday morning after an early breakfast and a safety briefing.

Day 1

Day 1 sets out along the coast, skirting the Gower Peninsula, climbing up through the stunning Brecon Beacons and stopping over in **Crickhowell.**

Day 2

Day 2 takes us down to Chepstow, across the Severn Bridge and through the Cotswolds before arriving at our hotel in **Wroughton** where we will be joined by some of the Envision Bristol team.

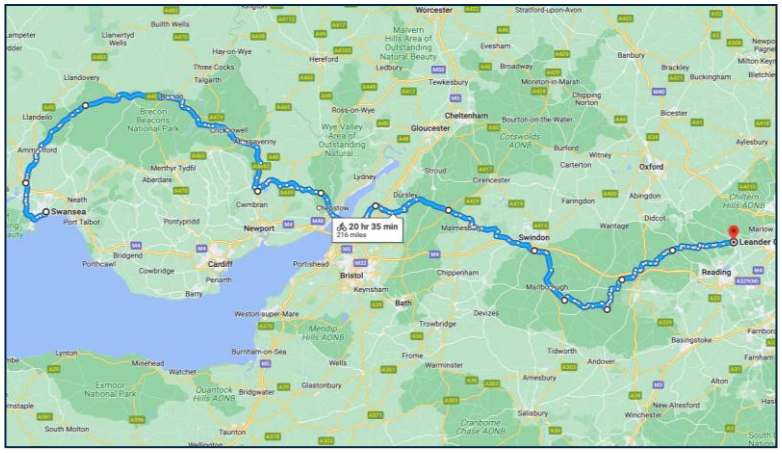
Day 3

Day 3 gives us the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful North Wessex countryside and a Thames Valley finale in **Henley**. Here we will have a big celebration with friends, family and the Envision Team!

How long is the ride and how hilly are we talking?

The route will be about **220 miles.** As with any Envision ride there will be some challenging hills to overcome (most of which are done and dusted by the end of the first day), which may even make it easier to raise sponsorship!

But don't worry, you can take it at your own pace and we always have a range of abilities, you can find your people and ride with them. The average anticipated elevation for each day is approx. 1000m – think of the views!



This is a first draft of the route map but please note it is subject to change.

What are the logistics?

How will I get to Swansea and back from Henley?

To Swansea:

- As long as you can get your bike to Fulham on (or before) the night of **Wednesday 20th September**, we will take it to the start point by van.
- We will be travelling by train from London to Swansea, you are of course very welcome to make your own way there if the travel arrangements do not work for you.

Back from Henley:

- You will need to make your own way back from Henley, however we can take any bikes and bags back to London to be collected from Fulham in the following days.

Where will I be staying?

Night 1 – **Swansea** – The Grand Hotel (www.thegrandhotelswansea.co.uk)

Night 2 – **Crickhowell** – The Manor Hotel (www.manorhotel.co.uk)

Night 3 – **Wroughton** – Alexandra House (www.swindonalexandrahouse.co.uk)

We will be doing route and hotel recces well in advance. Whilst the accommodation may not be the ultimate in luxury, it will be comfortable. Both The Crickhowell and Wroughton Hotels have pools so feel free to bring swimming gear!

What about food?

All meals are included in the price - dinner and breakfast will be at the hotels, and packed lunches and snacks will be provided on route.

The support van will be used to take your bags between the hotels where we are staying and to the finishing line.

We will also have two support cars which will provide packed lunches and copious refreshment stops. We can promise you won't go hungry!

The Fundraising

How much do you expect me to fundraise?

This is Envision's main fundraising and promotional event of the year and so we are looking for riders who will commit not just to riding but also to raising money pro-actively from family, friends, colleagues and employers.

We are looking for riders who will commit to trying to raise a minimum of **£1,000** (on top of the registration fee which we hope riders will pay personally). On average riders in the 2 previous rides have raised between **£3,500 and £4,000**. The brilliant team at Envision will provide materials and support to help you with your fundraising.

We understand that some people who will want to ride will prefer to make a personal donation. We welcome riders on this basis, but we hope they will consider a donation of more than **£1,000** as we do not then get the benefits of increased awareness of Envision and our work. Please contact Ella Howard if you would like to ride on this basis and we will be very happy to discuss this with you.

The impact of the ride

In each of the previous 5 years we have raised over **£100,000!** This has allowed us to give more young people the opportunity to do the potentially life-changing Envision Programme. We would love to get close to this in 2023, particularly as the need for our work is greater than ever.

Li'Ana's Story

Li'Ana is a Year 10 student from Deptford Green School in London who struggles with severe anxiety, therefore she was eager to join Envision to push herself out of her comfort zone. Working within a team of other students as well as adult mentors she had never met was a daunting experience for her and she was initially very hesitant to get involved.

Li'Ana and her team decided to raise awareness around the topic of mental health, planning interviews with students and teachers in order to create support resources and signpost other young people to appropriate mental health services

At the final event, Li'Ana and her team presented in front of a large audience of other teams, including their mentors from Glennmont Partners. Not only was she proud of herself, but her team had also secretly voted for her to be awarded the Jack Petchey award for Outstanding Achievement on the programme, which she received with a beaming smile (and a few tears!)

Signing up

How much will it cost me to take part?

The registration fee is:

- **£450pp** for double or twin accommodation
  we are offering a 20% discount for under 30s! (twin room rate only)
- **£600pp** for single accommodation

This fee covers all the costs of the event, meaning all sponsorship goes directly to benefit Envision's work. More specifically it includes:

- Accommodation
- All meals - breakfast, packed lunches, copious snacks and a sit-down dinner each night
- The cost of transport from London if you travel with us to Swansea
- The costs of the van which will pick up bikes from Fulham on Wednesday 20th September, take them to the start, and move bags between overnight stops.

Only the following is not included:

- Personal cycling insurance
- Drinks over lunch and dinner

I'm in! How do I sign up?

Please email **ella.howard@envision.org.uk** to confirm your participation.

Places will be filled on a first come, first served basis on payment either of the registration fee or of a deposit of £100.

Payments should be made by bank transfer to The Cooperative Bank
Sort Code 08-92-99 / Account Name Envision / A/c No 65075999 /
Reference BIKE and your surname.

Paid rider numbers are strictly limited to 40.

Your deposit or registration fee is fully refundable in the event we are not able to proceed with the ride for any reason.

FAQs

Is this a big charity bike ride with lots of participants and marshals?

No – that isn't Envision's style at all. We believe in a challenge! We put a lot of preparation into the ride, taking every step we can to ensure the ride is both safe and fun.

This will include a ride-through of the entire route shortly before the main ride; fully preparing electronic route maps (GPX files) which you can follow via Garmin (strongly recommended); a Health and Safety briefing before the ride and ahead of each day and recruiting experienced riders who can help with navigation and simple mechanical issues.

As in previous years this is still deliberately a "boutique ride", with a maximum of 40 paying riders (on top of Envision staff etc) and you will need to use your initiative: there won't be physical route signs or a group of marshals at every turn. But there's no need to worry - in previous years the peloton has naturally split into 3 or 4 smaller groups, who have worked together to follow the route and then basked in the Strava Kudos!

Will I get a chance to see Envision's work and meet Envision students?

Yes absolutely. There will be lots of opportunities. Every year Envision graduates and/or employees have taken part in the ride - this typifies the commitment of our young people and the Envision team. You will be encouraged to attend some student events in the spring too, to aid your understanding of Envision and kickstart your fundraising and cycling momentum!

I've never done anything like this before. How fit do I need to be?

One of the great things about the previous rides has been the mix of riders: young and old, male and female, experienced cyclists and relative beginners. We welcome experienced cyclists, but for many of the participants the ride was the first serious cycling endurance challenge they had done. We love converting people to cycling!

Any bike ride of 200-250 miles in 3 days requires you to be reasonably fit, but as long as you are healthy and most importantly train in advance you should be absolutely fine. One of the best ways of training, and one of the most popular and distinctive features of the ride, is the practice rides which we will organise over the spring and summer in and around London

These rides are an opportunity to get hours in the saddle, meet other people and learn more about Envision. We encourage riders to take part in at least one practice ride if possible.

Will the ride be on busy, crowded roads?

No – the exact opposite! We stay well clear of busy roads wherever possible. Most of the route will be on minor roads and even off-road cycle paths in places. Our amazing route planner Clive Meek is an expert at finding quiet, cycle-friendly roads.

Still unsure?

Check out this feedback from previous riders....

The cycling is important, but we like to think this is more than just another charity bike ride!

This event is a tremendous experience for those taking part, and not only from the satisfaction of helping the young people involved in the charity.

It requires commitment, belief in yourself, good humour and large doses of three of Envision's key skills: communication, determination and teamwork. It's all well-worth the effort!

Feedback from regular rider

Awesome! It was complete freedom having the route planned and the support throughout. The team were incredible. It has also been great to connect with the charity and the children too.

Feedback from a new rider

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Ella Howard.

Ella Howard
Envision Trusts and Philanthropy Manager

ella,howard@envision.org.uk
07414161622

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Working in partnership with:

Envision is a register charity number 1095328 based at
CAN Mezzanine Borough, 7-14 Great Dover Street, London, SE1 4YR