

Independent Retail Growth Fund - Recipient Report Back

Eight traders' associations and business groups received small grants from the IRGF in July 2022. The reasons for funding were ostensibly intended to boost local economies, promote small independent businesses, and increase footfall.

Each business or organisation has reported on how funding was spent as part of their grant funding agreement, much of which has had a far-reaching impact on the local community, visitors and the businesses themselves. Allocated amounts and their updates are as follows:

Organisation	Amount received
Indie York	£2,500
Bishy Road Traders' Association	£2,500
Acomb Alive!	£2,500
Haxby and Wigginton Traders' Association	£5,000
Goodramgate Traders' Association	£3,965
Micklegate Business Initiative	£3,500
York Wedding Suppliers	£2,500
York Market Traders' Forum	£2,500
Total	£24,965

Indie York (IY) – Indie York Tote Bag Competition: the supply and printing of 2,500 promotional Indie York tote bags

The £2,500 received was matched by Indie York to enable the production of 2,500 IY branded tote bags. At the start of December 2022, IY distributed five tote bags to each of our (230+) members, which were then handed out to staff or customers as part of our Winter tote bag competition. Full details here: www.indieyork.co.uk/offers-events/win-an-indie-york-goodie-bag

This project was seen as a great way to re-engage with members after a difficult few years. It was intended to demonstrate to members that Indie York continues to actively seek out and apply new methods in the promotion of the organisation and its member businesses. It was also seen as an excellent way to continue to spread the message about the importance of supporting the local economy.



A high level of engagement was expected from this competition, along with great geographical reach. The purchase of these bags was also intended to provide Indie York with additional assets which can be used at Freshers' Fairs, industry events and festivals throughout 2023; helping to highlight the unique and vibrant independent business scene here in York.

Activity on Instagram relating to the competition has been slower than anticipated, but nonetheless there has been extensive engagement, with reach exceeding 15,200 people (up 12.1% vs. Sept-Nov '22) in the period between early December 2022 when the competition was launched and early February 2023. The competition deadline has been extended to 28th February '23 so it is hoped that engagement will grow further.

The bags have since been making their way around the world, from New York and Peru, Disneyland and Scandinavia.....





A supply of bags remain which will be distributed over the coming year to continue to raise the profile of Indie York and the City's independent and small business sector. This will be done at various events including Independents' Day in July and at the Food Festival in September.

Bishy Road Traders' Association – *Contribution to the Bishy Road Christmas Market 2022*

On Sunday 20th November 2022 [3-6pm] Bishopthorpe Road Traders Association organised an event for the community with the aims of:

- Turning on the 'Bishy Road' Christmas lights
- Thanking our customers for their continued support to the small independent shops, restaurants, café, and hairdressers on the street
- Creating a festive event for the whole family; live music, reindeer, magic, refreshments etc.
- Offering local businesses the opportunity to raise their profiles within the community

The funding was used in several ways:

- Local artist, Kate Semple, designed a postcard / invitation / thank you to distribute to local households / hand out in the shops [see below]
- A local printer [Fulprint] printed 3,000 postcards and 20 A3 posters which were distributed to over 2,500 homes, from Bishophill to South Bank to Scarcroft Hill. The posters were placed in local shop windows and on community boards
- We designed a trail for children to find 10 hidden festive gnomes in the shop windows and prizes were available to collect from a number of shops. This remained in place throughout December
- A local, well-known band, The New York Brass Band, played a set of festive music
- Two of Santa's reindeer visited for children
- A local magician was on hand to provide free entertainment for the children
- A large Christmas tree was purchased to have on the green [opposite The Swan pub]
- Maintenance and repairs were undertaken on the Christmas lights prior to the 'switch on'.

Despite rain throughout the duration of the event there were a number of benefits:

- The community came together to celebrate the festive season, and it also allowed local businesses to thank them for their support

- Sending 3,000 Christmas cards, serving as a thank you and invitation to the event, was particularly well received, and it was felt that this contributed to a successful festive season for businesses
- The Bishopthorpe Road traders came together as a collective to organise the event

The Independent Retail Growth Funding was a key opportunity to make this event happen, providing huge benefits for all of the small, independent businesses on Bishopthorpe Road. It's been a difficult few years for Independent businesses and these events raise the profile and importance of independent retailers.



bishy rd flyer
front.pdf



bishy rd flyer
back.pdf

Acomb Alive! – *Funding Acomb community Christmas lights*

Monies received by Acomb Alive Traders Association from the Independent Retail Growth Fund were used for the enhancement of the local community by way of numerous streetlight illuminations.

A Christmas lights switch on was arranged which brings the community together and provides much needed footfall for local businesses.

Haxby and Wigginton Traders' Association – *Contribution to Christmas lights, Easter Bunny Hunt and 'Wiggifest'*

Using money from the grant, the Traders Association staged a *Haxby and Wigginton's Got Talent* event. This was held on Small Business Saturday in December 2022, along with the Christmas Tree light switch on in association with Haxby Town Council.

The event was promoted and supported by the businesses of Haxby, some of whom provided prizes for the event, and was endorsed via social media and on YO1 Radio.

The money paid for the staging and sound system, and throughout the event announcements were made to encourage the people who attended to visit local shops and businesses with the intention of increasing overall footfall.

In addition, Haxby and Wigginton Traders' Association have been able to sponsor the staging for the *Wiggifest* community event which is

taking place in June 2023. Local businesses are getting involved by either having stands at the event or through sponsoring different aspects of the festival, again to attract new and existing customers and create additional consumer interest in their businesses.

The Easter 2023 event will use the balance of the fund. This is a family fun event and will once again look to increase footfall through the area and promote local businesses.

<https://york.mumbler.co.uk/event/haxby-and-wiggintons-got-talent/>

<https://wiggifest.co.uk/>

<https://yourlocalink.co.uk/the-wiggy-way-family-festival-returns-for-2023/>

Goodramgate Traders' Association – Goodramgate Christmas Jamboree and social media training for the Goodramgate Traders' Association members

Provision of social media training comprised of in person group training by Pick and Mix Marketing (<https://www.pickandmixms.co.uk/social-media-training/>) to help traders optimise the use of Facebook and Instagram for business, including the use of paid advertising.

Attended by 16 Goodramgate traders, two sessions took place on 11th January 2023 at Bedern Hall, with representation across hospitality, heritage, retail and B2B businesses (<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7019355674249678849/>)

Testimonials from Traders:

- From Bedern Hall

"Medieval meets modern' has always been a motto for us so the workshop was a great opportunity to further our knowledge, particularly from a technical perspective. Rachel's high-energy delivery drove enthusiasm and ideas."

- Nicola, Giant Cycles

"It was lovely to meet you and the other members of the Goodramgate Traders Association last week. Thank you for hosting - it was nice to visit Bedern Hall again."

I really enjoyed the session and found it to be an insightful and high-impact workshop. It's great to have some instant wins and specific takeaways from a session such as this. I really liked Rachel's punchy delivery too. I look forward to being a more active member of the Association going forward."

- Paul, Make your Mark -
"Great night! Came away with a head full of ideas for future reels and posts. If there is funding for the Facebook advertising course - I would be interested."

- Zoe, Ambiente Tapas and Goodramgate Traders Association
"Inspirational training by Pick and Mix to a group of Traders with very different needs and expertise. The big wins for me were that everyone took something away from the training and that we got a chance to network productively and share experiences about trading. Rachel also offered advice as to how Discover Goodramgate that promotes Goodramgate as a whole can optimise it's social media presence and also how communications between Traders can be improved."

The purpose of the *Goodramgate Christmas Jamboree* was to promote Goodramgate as the destination for indie shopping, eating, drinking, entertainment and heritage through a Christmas event which took place on Sunday 4th December 2022 from 12noon - 8pm.

YO1 Radio ran three weeks of regular daily advertising as pre-promotion in the run up to the event. This was supported by video promotion of the *Discover Goodramgate* brand on the screens in the window of their Goodramgate radio studio. A page was added to the *Discover Goodramgate* website to promote the event and became a go-to resource for up to date event information. 1,000 flyers were also produced and distributed around York.

The event was centred around Holy Trinity Church, YO1 studio and outside broadcast van. Satellite events were run by various traders in their own premises, and several venues on Goodramgate staged live music during the afternoon and into the early evening, including a Spanish guitarist in Ambiente and acts in The Golden Slipper, Cross Keys and The Habit.

The Christmas Goodie Bag Giveaway was very well supported by traders, with donations varying from mugs, pens, cookie making kits and models, to vouchers for afternoon tea, meals and discounts. These were 'pre-allocated' for collection on the day, thus driving footfall to the area. A Treasure Hunt encouraged visitors to search for 'Santa's Helpers' hidden in 12 participating businesses.

The giveaway of 200 tote bags was promoted on YO1 radio and via social media, a great means of highlighting the *Discover Goodramgate* brand. Return visits have been encouraged through vouchers, and increased awareness of the diversity of the businesses on the Street as the bags all contained Indie York maps and Goodramgate Heritage Trails.

YO1 Radio's presence on the Street along with buskers and a hired bubble blowing elf stilt walker attracted pedestrians down Goodramgate on the day, and children were also given *Discover Goodramgate* bubbles which was a great visual win.

Holy Trinity Church proved to be an excellent partner for the event including the provision of volunteers for the activities. It provided a covered venue for activities and acted as an HQ while increasing awareness of the Church. We were able to provide Christmas Tree with LED Lights in the Churchyard, attracting donations for York Against Cancer.

Children's Story Telling and puppet making by Hoglets <https://and.org.uk/> was well attended and face painting was popular amongst children and adults alike. We also took the opportunity to make use of the popularity of the Gentleman Jack TV series to encourage visitors to come along and dress up and have their photos taken. The event came to an end with a beautiful candle lit Christmas Carol Service.

The event provided us with an abundance of great images some of which we used on the Discover Goodramgate Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/discovergoodramgate/photos_by) An open meeting was held on 24th February to gather feedback from Traders and to continue planning an event for mid-Summer.

Micklegate Business Initiative – *Micklegate Mingle event, including road closures, security, insurance and traffic management costs.*

This was a longer event than in previous years and gained excellent feedback from both attendees and traders. Given the current economic climate and cost of living situation, the organisers felt that it was important to help the community with a free event, and consequently this was marketed primarily at young families, especially those in the more deprived areas of the ward.

SASH and York Minster Lions were invited to attend and fundraise at the event, and YorkMix were on hand to help with entertainment and promotion. Local small traders we invited to set up stalls, with the event organisers providing them with gazebos and power. Independent traders from the local business community were intentionally invited, rather than larger businesses, and, as in previous years, the local churches were involved.

This year organisers also added a Treasure Hunt with clues dotted around the Micklegate, and a grand prize of tickets to the Theatre Royal Pantomime.

Media coverage helped to drive footfall, examples of which are evidenced through the links below:

[Christmas light switch-ons and market openings guide | YorkMix](#)

[Micklegate Mingle 2022 | Little Vikings - York for Kids \(little-vikings.co.uk\)](#)

[Micklegate Mingle | York | Facebook](#)

York Wedding Suppliers – *Contribution to Winter Wonderland Wedding Event and Christmas Market*

York Wedding Suppliers is a group of local independent wedding suppliers who get together for shoots and networking. The organisation is made up of around 20 local York wedding businesses including photographers, florists, bridal boutiques, jewellery and accessory designers, cake makers, celebrants, discos, wedding favours, dog sitters and even alpacas.

Grant funding allowed York Wedding Suppliers to host a Winter Wonderland Wedding Event and Christmas Market, which took place on

20th November 2022 at Burn Hall, Huby, York. The hotel supported the event by providing the venue room for the displays, greeting all visitors with a welcome drink as well as feeding the suppliers during the day. In return they were able to showcase their venue room, which was especially decorated for them by an exhibiting florist.



The aim of the event was to showcase the work of all the retailers in the group, showcasing their ability to adapt to all types of weddings. The addition of a Winter Wonderland theme and Christmas market ensured it was a family friendly and a positive and enjoyable festive outing for all ages. Funding meant that the Christmas market event that was free to visitors.

The following retailers took part: Bridal Reloved York, Lottie Roberts Flowers, Appletree Cakey, Burn Hall Hotel, The Drum on the Run, Spruce, Unique Hair Combs, Jacis of York, Clare Flint Makeup Artist, Elisa Day Bridal, Claire's Christmas Trains, The Alternative Bride, Nikki Pix Photography, Walkies Down the Aisle/Pet stay, Night Owl Discos, Eleanor Jayne Hair and Makeup, Glyn Lacey Graphics, Here to Eternity Ceremonies, Jonathan Breckin Magician, We Drifters, Bunny Loves Evie, Butterwick Alpaca Retreat, and Essential Extras

The event had an indoor market feel with real life models showcasing wedding dresses. Makeup artists and specialists in bridal hair demonstrated their work on the day with live makeovers.



York Market Traders' Forum (YMTF) – promotional Christmas leaflets

A trifold leaflet was designed by YMTF to promote Shambles Market during the commercially important run up to Christmas.

In November 2022, 10,000 leaflets were distributed throughout York, at the Railway station and in major car parks. The leaflets were well designed and professionally produced, feedback from market traders indicated that they had had a beneficial effect in showcasing the Market.

Due to the success of this leaflet promotion, YMTF propose to repeat this exercise, and are planning further leaflet distributions, probably during the busy summer holiday period.