

Thanks to a donation from a kind philanthropist in 2021, Spokes was able to offer 3 grants of £1000 to Spokes members to assist purchase of a family cargobike. One was Julia; her report is below.

This is the second time we've had a similar kind donation, so if you may want a cargobike in future, make sure you're a spokes member in case another philanthropist comes along!

These grants are quite separate from the grants which we offer to community organisations, which are continuing. www.spokes.org.uk/documents/advice/cargo-bikes

Julia's report, December 2012

Having had my eye on a cargo bike since my older two were little I never really had the courage to get one for our family. First there was a third pregnancy, then baby, then the pandemic. A kind friend who rides an Urban Arrow made me aware of a grant given by a generous anonymous donor awarded by Spokes so this summer we finally decided to give it a go.

I had opted for a three wheeler because I wanted the bike to be stable, and with two wriggly kids in it, I feel like I made the right decision to go for a Nihola cigar. Without having had a test ride we ordered the bike from David at Laidback Bikes as I was so sure about my choice, and we weren't disappointed. David kindly let us use his demo bike first and it was easy to get the hang of. As promised our own beauty arrived 8 weeks after we ordered it and we were good to go.

Not having ridden a bike for years I was a bit nervous to ride on the street but they still turn out to be the easier choice as bike paths such as the one along the canal can sometimes be a little narrow. With my wide bike and thanks to the e-assist I'm a visible participant on the road that has to be taken seriously by car drivers and my confidence increased fast. The radius of our journeys is no longer limited and we get to places in half the time it takes to go there by public transport. The biggest advantage by far is the school run though, whereas it formerly was a tedious exercise for me and the wee one to bring and fetch the two kids now we are there in a flash.

There are not only upsides to riding a bigger bike - I've become more aware of some of the disadvantages that people with disabilities face when it comes to getting onto pavements or getting around other obstacles. The streets are in dire need of fixing and avoiding potholes is difficult with a three wheeler which makes for a bumpy ride for myself and my passengers. Nonetheless we are thrilled we finally took the plunge and were able to widen our radius drastically, all thanks to this donation and the help of Spokes and David. The kids as well as my grown-up passengers love to ride in my bike, as much as I enjoy riding it.