

NGB CLEAN's tyres and tubes recycling scheme set to be a game changer

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A commercial cleaning social enterprise which helps prison leavers rebuild their lives has launched a green initiative to drive recycling of bicycle inner tubes and tyres.

NGB (No Going Back) CLEAN is ready to roll out the scheme across the country after learning that many of the discarded inner tubes and tyres dumped in office bike stores were being thrown out with general waste.

NGB CLEAN launched their groundbreaking initiative – called ‘Ride, Recycle, Repeat’ – at The Ray, Farringdon, the London headquarters of global social networking site, LinkedIn, on March 12.

The social enterprise – based in Kennington, South East London – has joined forces with waste management firm Velorim, which will co-ordinate the recycling of the tyres and inner tubes at its Staffordshire processing centre as part of the National Bicycle Tyre Recycling Scheme, which comprises over 600 collection sites across the UK. Velorim’s recycling process includes shredding the tyres and recycling them into materials such as non-slip flooring, cycle paths and construction materials.

NGB CLEAN’s scheme is the brainchild of its Chief Operating Officer, Sam Worden, who is arranging the placement of recycling bins in bike stores across London where cyclists can place worn tyres and tubes for collection.

Taking up the story, Sam, who has worked in the commercial cleaning sector for 25 years, explained: “At one of our contracts, we received a complaint that a bicycle inner tube was left on the floor of a bike store. When actioning this complaint, instead of simply disposing of the inner tube in the waste, we stopped and questioned what happens to it”.

NGB CLEAN's plan to implement the recycling of inner tubes and tyres in London office buildings will be followed up by road shows in other locations – including Cambridge – where the scheme is set to be rolled out.

Sam, who hopes to recruit a prison leaver to carry out collections, added: "We want to engage with the London cycling community and further afield to raise their awareness of the option to recycle these items.

"Given that most medium to large buildings across London have bike stores and a large number of cyclists, NGB CLEAN believes it can make a huge impact. We are not driving this project with an expectation to make a profit but instead create something that will raise awareness and reduce waste going to landfill, and by utilising our access to property management companies we can really make a difference".

Bicycle shops and retailers have no direct methods for the disposal of scrap tyres, inner tubes and other cycle-specific waste through standard waste collection routes. Standard waste collection services refuse to take them as they are considered complex waste. In the UK over 10,000 tonnes of bicycle tyres and inner tubes go to landfill every year.

Sam said that In order to launch the project and create as much attention as possible it has won the support of leading Real Estate Consultants Knight Frank.

Endorsing the scheme, Mike Tuohy, Director, Regional Head at Knight Frank, said: "Knight Frank have been proud to work with and support the work of NGB CLEAN, as a social enterprise making a difference in the industry and we are really looking forward to incorporating this incredible recycling initiative in our managed buildings. Office buildings across the UK have improved their facilities available to the thousands of cyclist community and we look forward to seeing the impact this NGB CLEAN initiative will have".

Founders of Velorim, Richard Lawrence & Russ Taylor, said: "We are delighted to be working in partnership with NGB CLEAN in developing this groundbreaking recycling service in the corporate and commercial environment and working to recover and recycle the estimated 10,000,000 kilos of inner tubes and tyres currently going into landfill every year. We are dealing with cycling's last dirty secret!"

Edith Velasquez, Building Manager at The Ray Farringdon, said: "I came across this initiative when Sam Worden presented at our Knight Frank Promise quarterly FM meeting and instantly knew this would be an initiative that my tenants, LinkedIn and Better Space, would be very enthusiastic about, as well as be a great addition to our existing recycling processes".

Ollie Harper, Operations Officer at charity Onwards & Upwards and Bike Mechanic at its initiative, XO Bikes, said: "At XO Bikes we service, recycle and refurbish hundreds of bikes, giving them a new lease of life and preventing needless waste going to landfill. Sam from No Going Back reached out to XO Bikes, told us all about her brilliant plan for recycling tyres and tubes all across London and we jumped at the chance to get on board!"