

Disability no barrier for Dalby bikers

Nearly 50,000 bikers are set to enjoy Dalby Forest's 55km bike network in its first year — but hardly any have disabilities.

That stark fact has prompted the Forestry Commission to stage a first ever demonstration day in the 8,600-acre wood, near Pickering, North Yorkshire, to showcase bikes adapted for disabled people or special needs.

The free event — which is part of the Active Woods health-push — takes place on Sunday March 16 and includes a chance to test drive a variety of professionally customised machines. Off-road biking may seem physically demanding, but given the correct equipment, it can be a highly accessible pastime. Not only does it open new avenues of mobility and independence, but it promotes both mental and physical wellbeing.

Members of the Whitby Disabled Action Group (DAG) and Ryedale Special Families have been invited to saddle up at the event, which is also open to the public and runs from 10am to 2pm in the Dalby Courtyard.

Demo bikes, including hand-pedalled models and others with side-by-side seats, are being supplied by specialist company London Recumbents. Electric bike dealer Steve Punchard will also bring along conventional bikes fitted with small motors to provide added propulsion.