




Ilkley and District Round Table, the organisers of the Ilkley Half Marathon, are going all out to set the pace with an environmentally-friendly event in 2021.

In its inaugural year, 2019, the team worked closely with waste management provider, Biffa Waste Services, to ensure that recycling was maximised. Alastair Little, Yorkshire Regional General Manager for Biffa, stated, "At Biffa we work towards a better environment with all of our customers, large or small. We provided food and packaging recycling services to the Ilkley Half Marathon and all other waste was diverted from landfill. In particular, we worked closely with the organisers and Harrogate Spring Water, who supplied water to the runners, and made a commitment to recycle every water bottle used at the event. In 2021 we will also have the opportunity to send the used water bottles to our new PET recycling plant to be made into new plastics."



Ilkley Round Table made a conscious decision to use paper rather than single use plastic for their goody bags in 2019. This year, in response to Covid-19 goody bags will be removed altogether. In addition, entrants have been offered the choice between a Finisher's Gift and planting a new tree.

 **National Trust** Teaming up with the National Trust team in the Yorkshire Dales, entrants will be able to commit to planting a new tree of British native variety such as hawthorn or oak on the doorstep of the event. These new trees will provide a more natural habitat for wildlife and play a part in flood mitigation. Patrick Wardle, a countryside ranger for the National Trust, approached the Ilkley Half Marathon team with the proposal. "We are delighted to be working in partnership with Ilkley Round Table. Our team are able to plant trees in a naturalistic way, without the need for plastic tubes!"

Matthew Ward, Ilkley Half Marathon Race Director, told us, "We believe we have a responsibility to our environment. Last year we recognised that runners love to receive a t-shirt for their significant efforts but it did not sit well with us when we saw how much plastic we had generated, even if

it was sent for recycling! Every t-shirt unfortunately had its own plastic bag. We know that our runners also care about the environment so we're giving people a choice.

Based on the event's entrant data to date, two-thirds of runners are opting for a tree to be planted instead of a branded sponsor gift. We've found that by offering a choice that the majority of entrants are opting for the greener option."

Trevor Yong, Chairman of Ilkley Round Table, commented, "As an organisation, we recognise the growing importance our runners and spectators place on minimising waste and protecting the environment. At the current take up rate, we are on course to plant 3000 trees in 2021. This is an incredible achievement made possible by the generosity of our participants and something we hope will become an annual tradition, not only reducing plastic waste but leaving a positive and lasting legacy in the local area."

The Ilkley Half Marathon launched its ticket sales in December and expects to raise more than £70,000 for good causes in 2021.

Visit [www.ilkleyhalfmarathon.co.uk](http://www.ilkleyhalfmarathon.co.uk) for more details.

