



Len Priest, organiser Mick Treanor, Pete Morris, Jane Bisiker who started the group, Pat Malone, volunteer Joanne Green and John Williams.

GEARING UP FOR ACTION

SPECIALY ADAPTED BIKES ARE HELPING TO GIVE STROKE SUFFERERS IN WOLVERHAMPTON SOME INDEPENDENCE WHILE ENCOURAGING THEM TO KEEP FIT. **CATHY SPENCER** REPORTS

Jan Morris struggled to hold back the tears when she first saw her husband Pete riding a bike around the park.

Pete had owned a building business until a stroke just after his 60th birthday caused paralysis on the right side of his body and also left him unable to talk.

However, a cycling group at West Park has given him a new lease of life and Jan says she will never forget the first day he peddled around the leafy paths.

"When occupational therapist Jane Bisiker first suggested the cycling group, I thought 'he can't walk, so how is he going to cycle'," says Jan, 59, who lives in Rylands Drive, Penn. "But when Pete got on the bike it was amazing."

The West Park Stroke Cycling group meets every Tuesday and uses adapted bikes which cost between £3,500 and £4,000. The bikes allow the cyclist to use one side of their body and their paralysed leg is strapped to a pedal, which means it is exercised at the same time.

Jane who works at West Park Rehabilitation Hospital, says the group

started seven years ago.

"Some of the bikes we use belong to the Stroke Support West Midlands group and when I had a patient who used to be a long distance cyclist, I decided to make use of the bikes," she says. "The patient loved being on the bike and so I thought I might as well take a few people out."

The group is free but NHS funding has been withdrawn and so the team is hoping to raise as much money as possible.

TESTIMONIAL

Jan Morris used to be a Wolves landlady, meaning players would come and stay in their house – and Matt Murray was once one of their lodgers.

"When Matt heard about Pete's stroke he thought it was awful, so as this year is his testimonial year, he is going to give the group £10,000," says Jan.

Jan, who is a training consultant, says their lives changed when Pete had his stroke. She recalls what happened: "The phone rang early in the morning and when Pete answered it he seemed very confused

and his speech was totally incoherent," she says. "I called the paramedics and he had suffered a mild stroke, but when he went to hospital he had a massive stroke. It was a huge shock which changed our lives completely and at the time we didn't know if he would survive."

Pat Malone, 76, is another member of the group who says she loves being outdoors and meeting other people.

"It is nice to get out and I love the fresh air as well as the social side," says Pat, from Wednesfield, who is married to John and has three children.

Another member of the group is John Williams, 79, from Penn who has been enjoying cycling for two years.

"The cycling group is great because it gets you out and stops you getting down and thinking bad things about the stroke you've had."

Anyone interested in being a volunteer can call Jane Bisiker on 01902 444286 or Eleanor Morris on 01902 694111.