

BIKE CYCLE

Bikes 4 All, Leicester



Source: Bikes 4 All

Bikes 4 All is a project where unwanted bikes are recycled and distributed to children and young people in the most deprived areas of Leicester. This project encourages cycling as a safe means of transport, and as a way to get fit and have fun. It provides reconditioned bikes for those who cannot afford them.

Tim Hudson, the Project Manager of Bikes 4 All, talks about the project.

What was your thinking behind setting up Bikes 4 All?

We started out about two years ago as a project recycling bikes and giving them away to people who couldn't afford them, such as refugees and unemployed people across Leicester. We donated over 400 bikes in our first year. Anyone who receives a bike through the project also has training from a professional instructor to ensure that they are safe on the road.

We worked with the Youth Inclusion Project and did a 10-week training course in cycle maintenance and safety for people excluded from school. As part of a City and Guilds qualification in Cycle Maintenance and Repair we did a project training refugees how to repair bikes. We've just started a project with Connexions for socially excluded 16–19 year olds.

The free bikes come from Biffa Leicester Community Recycling centres and also from public donations. [The project saves these bikes from landfill and refurbishes them to a high standard.](#) Recently we had a bike 'amnesty' where we arranged to collect people's unwanted bikes. We now offer this service on a permanent basis.



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What have been some of your successes?

There's been a whole host of things. We had one single parent with four children aged 7, 11, 12 and 14. They all had bikes on their Christmas list but four bikes was beyond their mum's budget. She called us and we were able to give her the bikes. Knowing that we made four children very happy and stopped the bikes going to waste is a great feeling, especially at Christmas.

Another milestone was a Bike Recycling Conference we held in early 2006 for all the cycle projects in the UK and those who are thinking of setting up projects. Karen Overton from New York Recycling Bikes came over and spoke and that was a real high point.

And the challenges?

Because we're a voluntary organisation we have to look at delivering targets at the same time as we keep the project running. We also need to look for money for future projects which means thinking ahead.

What does the future hold for Bikes 4 All?

We're looking to purchase a building so that we can set up a cycle academy. We've already worked with five schools in deprived areas supported by the local council's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. **We taught the students about recycling and repairing bikes, and at the end of the project they got to keep a bike.** The project aims to reduce air pollution in the city by encouraging more children to travel to school by bike instead of car. Fewer cars on the roads means less pollution in the atmosphere. So we'd like to take that to more schools across the city.

What message would you give to people thinking of taking up cycling or setting up a similar project?

It's amazing how many issues you can address with cycling and recycling bike projects – recycling, reuse, sustainable development, community cohesion, children, health and involving excluded groups.

Facts

- 88% of school children own a bicycle. 45% would prefer to cycle to school. Only 4% do.
- 19% of girls and 18.3% of boys between the ages of 0-15 years are obese.
- Driving the average car for 1 hour uses the same amount of energy needed to manufacture the average bicycle.
- 56% of all car (driver) trips are less than 5 miles. 23% are less than 2 miles.

Further Information

- For help setting up cycle groups, check out www.cyclenetwork.org.uk.
- For safe cycle routes near you, visit www.sustrans.org.uk. The National Cycle Network is now 10,000 miles long and 75% of all people in the UK live within 2 miles of its routes.
- If you want to save energy and get financial assistance as an employee or employer by cycling to work (or other forms of energy efficient transport), find out more from the Energy Saving Trust (EST) at www.est.org.uk or phone their transport help line on 0845 602 1425.
- Free information sheets on things such as “The right bike for you”, “Cycling with children”, “Bike Security”, “Cycling clothes”, and many more are available for at www.sustrans.org.uk (click ‘info and resources’, then ‘publications’ then ‘info sheets’).
- If you or someone you know want some one to cycle with, visit the Bike buddies website at www.bikebudi.com, and for further assistance on cycling to school, you can get school travel plans from www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk.