

Pedal for Scotland's last ride enjoyed by thousands

Over 8,000 people got on their bikes yesterday to take part in Pedal for Scotland's last ride.

The youngest participant was a nine-month-old on a tag-along and the oldest an 82-year-old. All of the riders together cycled more than 325,000 miles.

This was the 20-year anniversary of Pedal for Scotland, which has grown from 400 participants in 1999



Pedal For Scotland...More than 8,000 people from around the world got on their bikes on Sunday to celebrate Pedal for Scotland's last ride. PHOTO Jeff Holmes

Since then more than 110,000 people have taken part in an

initiative that has grown to three different events:

1. The 45-mile closed-road Classic Challenge between Glasgow and Edinburgh.
2. The 100-mile Big Belter sportive starting in Glasgow and finishing in Edinburgh.
3. And the 10-mile Linlithgow-Edinburgh Wee Jaunt for riders of all abilities.

Organisers of The Pedal for Scotland closed-roads Glasgow-Edinburgh ride – its flagship event – has created a legacy for cycling in Scotland including:

- Health impact: thousands of people have been inspired to take up cycling or cycle more often in training for the event.
- Charity fundraising: participants have raised millions of pounds for good causes, most recently tackling child poverty. This year, event organiser Cycling Scotland joined forces with the British Heart Foundation (BHF), SAMH (the Scottish Association of Mental Health), Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity and the STV Children's Appeal in an effort to encourage friends, families and colleagues to get on their bikes and set a *new* fundraising record.
- Funding impact: large amounts of value-in-kind and sponsorship to the sector, for example advertising on STV that helped to promote cycling nationally.
- Diversity of participants: people of all ages and abilities have pedalled for Scotland, including celebrities, Government Ministers, refugees and charity fundraisers.
- Inspiring cycling events: across Scotland there are now more mass participation cycling events of different types with greater public awareness than ever before.

· More people cycle: cycling has become more popular since the first Pedal for Scotland in 1999, at least doubling. In Scotland, more people now cycle than play football.

From 2020, Pedal for Scotland will change how it works. It will evolve into shorter, local and free events in an effort to help more people enjoy cycling.

Events are already being planned for Falkirk and Arbroath, using existing and new cycling infrastructure, and Cycling Scotland will soon release details of how communities and councils can register their interest in hosting other events.

Cycling Scotland chief executive, Keith Irving, said: "After 20 years, it's the right time to take a new, community-focused, Scotland-wide, approach to encourage cycling and remove barriers to taking part in cycling events.

"Pedal for Scotland has inspired tens of thousands of people in Scotland to cycle, as well as paving the way for cycling events to become more mainstream."

He added: "We would like to thank everyone involved in the Pedal for Scotland Glasgow-to-Edinburgh ride over the last 20 years, including the main grant funder, Transport Scotland, our sponsors, charity partners and supporters.

"We'd also like to thank the many communities and volunteers who have supported the Classic Challenge over the years, and all those who joined us on Sunday for the end of one era and the start of another."

Brian Curtis MBE, one of the organisers of the first Pedal for Scotland, said: "Having been involved in every event, it's amazing to see how the germ of an idea in 1997 developed into Scotland's largest charity bike ride, raising millions of pounds for various good causes and introducing many people to a more sustainable way of transport, a healthy pastime and a family leisure opportunity."