

# Get cycling with Thistle on their free adaptive bikes

**Thistle Adaptive Bikes run sessions for anyone who wants to cycle at Craigmillar and at Saughton Park – and they have specially adapted bikes for free use.**

Edinburgh-based health and wellbeing charity [Thistle](#) hold adaptive cycling sessions at Saughton Park on Thursdays from 1pm to 4pm and on Sundays from 10am-12noon, and at their Craigmillar base on Tuesday afternoons from 1-4pm. The cycling is not just around a car park – the group leaders cycle with those taking part around the cycle paths in Craigmillar as well as around Saughton Park.

Turn up and join in or email [thistleoutdoors@thistle.org.uk](mailto:thistleoutdoors@thistle.org.uk) for more information.

The activity has been made possible with £71,000 of funding from The City of Edinburgh Council. This money was awarded in November last year after the Edinburgh Cycle Hire Scheme which was run by Serco folded. The scheme is part of a short term range of measures to get people in the community onto bikes.













The council had entered into a three year contract with Serco to run the cycle hire scheme at no cost to the council. When the three years ran out Serco explained that they required

some financial help to renew the contract for a further period. The council reported that it would have required a subsidy of approximately £500,000 each year to keep the scheme afloat. In addition a further one-off investment of £1.172 million would be required to upgrade security for the fleet of bikes. One of the major problems was theft and vandalism which meant the scheme was loss-making for Serco during the three years.

The council decided against entering into a new deal on that basis, despite the fact that this was an award winning scheme which achieved record user numbers. When it was disbanded the scheme offered 600 bikes and 150 e-bikes for hire. More than 70,000 users had registered and more than 500,000 trips had been taken.

The council owns 60 bikes and these will be used in a new scheme which will be the subject of a report to the council in March 2022.

The council had set aside £1.8 million to sustain the cycle hire scheme and the funding for the All Ability bikes comes from that unspent allocation.





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Debra Daly from The Inch and her personal assistant Jeanne Laidlaw enjoying the all ability bikes at Thistle in Craigmillar PHOTO ©2021 The Edinburgh Reporter