

Cycling towards a healthier future

The Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC) has a cycling club which is transforming the way people in Edinburgh and the Lothians engage with cycling according to Lothians MSP, Foyso Choudhury.

Mr Choudhury is Chair of ELREC and he explained that the club offers a range of fun and engaging classes and workshops, and has become a vital community resource for those looking to improve their fitness, learn new skills, and embrace a more sustainable mode of transport.

The club's activities include led rides through scenic routes, weekly cycling classes at both beginner and intermediate levels, and a drop-in bike repair service known as 'Mr Bike'.

He said: "Regular bike maintenance workshops also ensure that participants gain the confidence and knowledge to keep their bicycles in top condition. Best of all, the club is completely free and open to everyone, making cycling an accessible option for all members of the community.

"The Edinburgh Cycling Club surpassed all their key targets for 2023/2024, having taught 80+ how to ride a bicycle for the first time. Their annual report for 2023/2024 indicates that all participants "are more confident cycling or maintaining their own bikes, with many now undertaking additional journeys

by bike, reducing car use and therefore carbon emissions.”

“Beyond just being a recreational initiative, the Edinburgh Cycling Club has had a significant impact on the health and well-being of its participants. Many individuals join the group because public transport is either too expensive or takes too long, and cycling provides a cost-effective and efficient alternative. By encouraging more people to take up cycling, the project is breaking down transportation barriers while promoting an active and healthy lifestyle. With cycling becoming an increasingly essential part of sustainable urban mobility, initiatives like this club play a crucial role in fostering a culture of active travel.

“By supporting this project, ELREC is ensuring that more people have access to affordable, healthy, and environmentally friendly transportation options. Whether you are a beginner looking to build confidence or an experienced cyclist eager to connect with like-minded riders, the club has something for everyone.

“Organisations like these need to be celebrated. Community-led initiatives like this lead to greater connections within the community, all the while increasing sustainable transport and promoting active travel.

“For 2024/2025 ELREC hopes to expand their services and upgrade their fleet, providing female-only rides, lessons, and maintenance classes. Join the movement today, get a cycle in, and be part of Edinburgh and Lothians’ community that is pedalling towards a healthier and more accessible future.”

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