

COMMUNITY WALKING & CYCLING FUND

2023

The Community Walking and Cycling Fund was set up by Waltham Forest Council in 2019 to provide financial assistance to community groups who are working to encourage and facilitate residents of Waltham Forest to walk and cycle more, as well as discover other modes of sustainable transport and recreational activities to support healthier lifestyles. With walking and cycling being proven to improve physical health and mental wellbeing, increase social cohesion and reduce loneliness, the aim of the fund is to develop and support the work of community groups to reach more residents than the council would ordinarily be able to, and to ensure as many people as possible enjoy these benefits.

After four proceeding rounds of projects which saw over 2,500 more residents walking and cycling across the borough, a further 8 unique projects were selected to offer a range of free, active, and social activities to residents between May and October 2023. The projects sought to build stronger communities, promote sustainable transport options, and support healthier lifestyles among our residents, alongside helping to tackle social isolation and loneliness.

The community groups and community interest companies (CIC) were awarded up to £4,420 to deliver their projects. All projects were unique and aimed to reach a wide variety of ages, abilities, and demographics and reached over an estimated 400 beneficiaries. A summary of the projects can be seen below along with participant feedback and photos.

The 8 community groups awarded funding in 2023 were:

1. [Age UK Waltham Forest](#) - Learn to ride cycling courses for those aged 60 and over
2. [JP Fix and Ride](#) - Dr Bike 'DIY' Cycle Maintenance courses
3. [CarryMe Bikes CIC](#) - Family cycling advice and equipment lending libraries at Lea Bridge Library
4. [JoyRiders Britain CIC](#) - The 'Big Family Cycling Summer' (Learn to ride cycling and led rides for families)
5. [Everyone on Boards](#) - Skateboarding lessons for children
6. [Life after Cancer](#) – Walking peer support group for adults recovering from cancer.
7. [Cycle Sisters](#) - Group cycle rides
8. [Salaam Peace](#) - Walking groups and group cycle rides

9. [Age UK Waltham Forest](#)

Age UK Waltham Forest ([Age UK WF](#)) hosted six cycling courses for older people in Chingford and Leyton. Depending on the participant's level of ability, they could join either a 'learn to ride' (level 1) or 'confidence building' (level 2) course. The learn to ride course aimed to take participants from being unable to ride to balancing and pedalling comfortably. The confidence builder course aimed to enable those who could already cycle to feel more confident in cycling independently, using gears, and cycling on the highway. Both courses were devised to provide an opportunity for older adults to socialise, meet new people and exercise simultaneously with a goal of improving physical health and mental well-being.



Participant feedback: *"I have made many attempts to learn to ride a bike. I have balance issues as well as a huge lack of confidence. It's small steps but I now feel more confident balancing on a bike and have even managed to move forward without my feet on the ground. There is a long way to go to be able to ride a bike properly, but I am inspired to keep trying. The teachers were extremely professional, amazing, so thoughtful, patient, caring, adjusting to my needs".*

"I enjoyed the sessions. The coaches were very good and took us at our individual pace".

"I really appreciated being able to do this course and gaining more cycling skills and confidence from very experienced, helpful coaches".

10. [JP Fix and Ride](#)

JP, a cycle mechanic of over ten years established a community cycle maintenance workshop, equipping residents with the skills to service and maintain their own bikes and empowering some to even become cycle mechanics themselves. The project saw 15 beginner-style cycle maintenance workshops take place in Leyton and Chingford.



Participant feedback: *"I am a regular commuter-cyclist and I often need to do maintenance on my bike, but I don't always feel I have the confidence or the skills/right tools for it. I recently attended a couple of the JP Fix and Ride bicycle maintenance workshops at the Pastures Centre and they were very useful. The second one in particular involved hands-on experience with adjusting gears. After the workshop I felt more competent to adjust my gears (or at least to try). Unfortunately, due to work commitments I did not manage to attend more workshops but I definitely would have done otherwise and I would like to attend more in the future. Also Jon and his teaching partner were very welcoming and knowledgeable".*

"I attended the free cycle session on brake maintenance, it was excellent, the information and help offered to sort bike niggles and meet fellow cyclists and have a safe warm space to go to access this course was brilliant, will definitely attend more and bring others, it's a great way of keeping cyclists safe on the road and encouraging earth friendly means of transport, so important at this time in our story, being part of a making history and legacy we can be proud of! Thank you".

"I would like to say that this training was completely invaluable, and much appreciated. I really need some more sessions with JP Fix and Ride as the protocols do take a bit of time to learn and practice. A wonderful initiative and thank you Waltham Forest".

11. [CarryMe Bikes CIC](#)

CarryMe Bikes help families and businesses find cycling solutions, aiding them to switch from car or van to cycle for leisure and logistic instead. This year, they teamed up with Lea Bridge Library to host three monthly workshops during the summer and hosted a stall at the Council's biggest annual cycling event, Tour de Waltham Forest.



Additional participant feedback: *"I often sought out how to get a bike seat for my son but to no avail. My family all have bikes and always just had to leave our 2 year old with grandma, or maybe one of us just had to walk sadly. Not only did this project show me child seat possibilities they offered me a trial and fitted the seat for me. They have given us the ability to travel together as a family to parks, cinemas and ice skating rinks in all this great weather. I am truly thankful and now educated on what seat to get when I give back this bike seat."*

"First I borrowed a trailer, but I didn't feel confident having a very little toddler in there so next I borrowed a bike with a front bike seat which was amazing, great fun to ride as I was more confident and the toddler loved it!"

"It was fantastic. Such a great opportunity to try out a trailer as we have been thinking about how we will continue cycling since the arrival of our little one".

"I learnt what type of bike seat would fit on our bike and also additional extras that are useful for the bike".

12. [JoyRiders Britain CIC](#)

JoyRiders' 2023 project comprised of 10 family cycle rides hosted in the summer months and school holidays. The project offered led rides to families in the local area who didn't yet feel confident enough to cycle on their own or who didn't own bikes but wanted their family to learn and draw the benefits of cycling. Additionally, the rides aimed to showcase local infrastructure and 'safer routes' for local families to access and explore the borough's green spaces and amenities.



Participant feedback: *"I have lived in Waltham Forest for over 10 years but never felt as connected or familiar with the Borough as I have since cycling with Joyriders. Joyriders has given me and my family the opportunity to explore and venture this beautiful part of London and discover its hidden gems up close. The varied cycle routes with bikes available to borrow coupled with skilled and professional ride leaders makes it a literal joy to cycle!"*

"It was great to see so many families out together cycling. I think when families cycle together, you get change. They (the ride leaders) knew and use the infrastructure and have access to bikes that they can use without the cost of ownership or hiring. It was lovely to see such a positive scheme which is exceptional in my experience as a ride leader and cycle instructor".

"I have been taking my grandson and nephews on the family rides and we really enjoy the ride as its lovely to be able to ride with the kids safe in the knowledge that we are safe and well looked after by our leader and back stop. I am not a very experienced rider yet and this is ideal for me to take the kids and as I feel safe with a group, I can really enjoy riding as a family safe in the knowledge that we are in safe hands especially when we are on the road with the kids. I am not very confident on the road yet so this really helps with gaining confidence and knowing that the kids will be safe too. Totally recommend this for the families. Not only are the kids in fresh air they are also exercising without realising it as they enjoy the family ride so much as they are together that they don't realise how good it is for them. I realise this and really appreciate the family rides and enjoy them a lot and am happy they are out about enjoying themselves".

13. [Everyone on Boards](#)

Everyone on Boards (EoB) are a skateboarding community that run regular 'skate jams' at some of the key focal points for skateboarders and young people from diverse backgrounds in the borough. Their project was specifically aimed at children, hosting 4 skate jams (lessons) at Cann Hall Skate Park in Leytonstone and Priory Court in Walthamstow.



14. [Life after Cancer](#)

Life after Cancer offered a guided monthly walking peer support group between May and September to allow adults who have finished cancer treatment to meet, walk and talk for one hour with people of a similar lived experience and support worker in the Walthamstow wetlands. Their project aimed to have the following benefits for attendees:

- Improved mental wellbeing:
- Reduced social isolation and increased social connection:
- Improving an individual's confidence
- Building physical activity into daily life



Participant feedback: *"I really enjoyed the walk today and it was so good to be able to chat about the challenges that cancer treatment with others who have experienced the same. It was great to walk and chat in a beautiful location. It has done wonders for me and I feel energised and am looking forward to the next walk".*

"I've met some great people who I now consider friends through doing these walks as hard as it's been to get out sometimes I've never regretted it afterwards".

"Having tried several different types of therapy to try to help with the aftermath of cancer, I think that the Wellbeing Walks are the thing that helped me most. Getting outdoors with people who just get it is really quite special. Going through cancer treatment in the thick of the pandemic when you weren't allowed to mix, I was always a bit envious of those people who seemed to have made strong friendships with people they met through treatment. I'm not envious anymore as I feel like I've made friends for life through this initiative - I've found my tribe!"

15. [Cycle Sisters](#)

Cycle Sisters aim to make cycling more accessible for Muslim women and teen girls. They offer free Bikeability one-to-one or small group cycle skills training with female instructors to develop cycling skills and confidence whilst cycling in green spaces and on the highway. Their CW&CF funding specifically supported led cycle rides from October through to



Participant feedback: *"I joined Cycle Sisters to help my mental and physical health as I was going through a lot in my home and family life. Cycling out each week with the Cycle Sisters has been a lifeline for me. It is the highlight of my week and a chance for me to do something positive for myself. I love the rides, I feel like I am connected with people and get a chance to be away from all life's stresses. It is the one time of the week that I feel looked after and supported. And we have fun and we laugh and we share stories at the coffee stop".*

"Cycle Sisters has been a breath of fresh air. At a time of uncertainty and personal challenges, it has been a unique and beautiful experience to engage in cycling with like-minded individuals and feel uplifted by a group of resilient women. Cycle Sisters is an incredibly important initiative. A simple idea and message, with massive impact at the

community-level. It is timely, and needed, for there to be a group championing Muslim women in sports and fitness! There is a freedom and sense of empowerment attached to cycling which cannot be found elsewhere”.

“Since joining Cycle Sisters I have become more active. When I have errands to run I always think can it be done by bike. I barely use the car for short journeys. I have met so many lovely ladies and have made lots of new friends”.

16. [Salaam Peace](#)

Salaam Peace is a community engagement programme that uses sports and social education to bring people together from diverse backgrounds. Their CW&CF project focused on delivering weekly walking groups and group cycle rides with separate sessions for children and adults.



Participant feedback: *"I now can choose if I want to take the bus to school, or if I want to cycle. I like this because sometimes when I'm running late, the bike gets me to school quicker. Sab has given me a lock so now I can leave my bike in school and not worry that it will get stolen".*

"I really enjoyed the walking sessions that took place. I got to meet some ladies that live nearby, and I looked forward to these sessions as we got to catch up and talk about life. We attend other SP sessions and still talk over the phone".