



Mass Participation Cycling Events

Women on Wheels are women's mass participation bike rides, an opportunity for communities, towns and districts in Suffolk to encourage more women and girls to cycle and get active whilst raising money for local charities.



Why women only mass participation



Cycling participation in Suffolk has grown significantly in recent years, influenced by the success of the British Cycling team in the 2012 Olympics, high profile cycling events such as the Tour of Britain and Women's Tour, along with a variety of local initiatives and programmes, which aim to get more people active on their bikes.

However, there are fewer females than males cycling, a discrepancy that women's mass participation bike rides seek to address. For example, Sport England Active Lives data 2016/17 shows that whilst nationally 18% of males cycle twice a week for leisure and sport, only 11% of females do the same. When looking at cycling for transport the picture is quite similar with 10% of males cycling twice a week compared to 4% of women.

According to Sport England data, cycling is also one of the top two sports that adults want to do most.

How can we work together to change this?

Mass participation events have been proven to inspire people to get active and to take up new activities and we believe "Women on Wheels" has the potential to get more women and girls in Suffolk cycling on a regular basis.



In May 2014, Cycle Suffolk successfully worked in partnership to deliver Women On Wheels, a women's charity ride in Bury St Edmunds to coincide with the Women's Tour of Britain finish. This event saw 100 women and girls take part, with a significant number of participants being new or returning cyclists.

Since that first event WoW has grown to 5 events across the county with in excess of 450 women and girls taking part each year.

Women on Wheels is always seeking new locations and partners to roll out the concept across Suffolk and will provide the expertise and support required to help local partners to deliver their own event.

WHAT CAN WoW DO FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?

- Bring the community together
- Support local good causes
- Engage local businesses
- Attract support and funding for a local community event
- Develop regular cycle rides in your community
- Support women and girls to get active
- Provide a feel good factor



What's involved?

The first step is to identify a local organisation to lead on the planning of the event, whether that be a local charity, district or town council, local cycling club or just a group of enthusiastic and committed volunteers from the local community.

A steering group will need to be established, with volunteers from relevant organisations and groups.

The steering group will need to consider a variety of aspects, including:-

- Route planning
- Volunteers
- Start/finish infrastructure
- Signage
- Risk assessments
- Sponsorship
- Promotion
- First aid and mechanical support
- Rider mementos, goody bags etc

There may be opportunities to link into existing cycling initiatives, such as British Cycling's Breeze programme of local rides for women. Local Breeze Champions may be able to join your steering group.

Women on Wheels will be there with you each step of the way to support the steering group and offer expert advice and guidance to ensure your event runs as smoothly as possible. Support will include the following:-

- Attendance at the initial steering group meetings to help shape the event plan and share expertise from previous events
- Telephone and e-mail support
- Provision of 'how to organise charity ride' guides
- Use of Women On Wheels marketing material, including name and logo
- Women On Wheels branding, including feather flags and Hi-Vis vests
- Links to British Cycling, cycling clubs and local cycle retailers

What will it cost to deliver?

An event of this nature will incur some initial costs, for things like promotion and infrastructure. Women on Wheels can support you to develop a budget plan and consider how you may raise funding. For example, sponsorship can be sought from local and regional businesses, and grants may also be available to help underwrite any deficit in the first year.

If planned effectively, organisational costs can be recouped from patronage and entry fees, with participants then encouraged to raise sponsorship money for an organising charity or a charity of their choice, for example. Ideally, a local event of this nature will raise funds for a local charity. Experience of previous events suggests that organisational costs may be around £2500.

It is hoped that events will take place on a regular basis, for example annually, and will therefore become more and more sustainable over time, as the number of entries grow and sponsorship becomes easier to attract and costs reduce.

In order to give communities confidence to stage the first year, Women on Wheels has partnered with Adnams to agree to underwrite the financial risk of staging a WoW event to a maximum of £500.00, should organisational costs not be covered via entry fees and sponsorship.

ADNAMs.
SOUTHWOLD



“Helping Suffolk to become the most active county in England”

Suffolk County Council’s Annual Public Health Report 2013 identifies cycling as having significant potential to reduce inactivity and its associated health risks.

Low and declining levels of physical activity are having detrimental health, economic and social impacts on individuals, families, communities and local services. Almost 1 in 2 women and 1 in 3 men are not active enough for good health, with a quarter of all adults inactive (completing less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per week). This is now responsible for 17% of premature deaths in England. There is an estimated £20bn annual cost of inactivity to the UK economy through NHS services, lost productivity and premature mortality.

Women on Wheels can help to address some of these levels of inactivity and reduce the associated costs whilst helping Suffolk to achieve its ambition to become the most active county in England.

*Alison Blackwell, Abbeycroft Leisure Development
Director on Women on Wheels, Bury St Edmunds:*

“It was a fantastic event and despite the heavy rain, spirits were very high. I thoroughly enjoyed it and would love to see this happen every year. I hope it has encouraged more women to start cycling”



To find out more or to discuss an event in your area email info@wowsuffolk.org.uk

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