

Green  
+ Healthy  
Frome

LEARNING INSIGHT #4  
CYCLE TOGETHER  
MAY 2026

# Cycle Together



Green and Healthy Frome is a partnership made up of the following



Funded by:

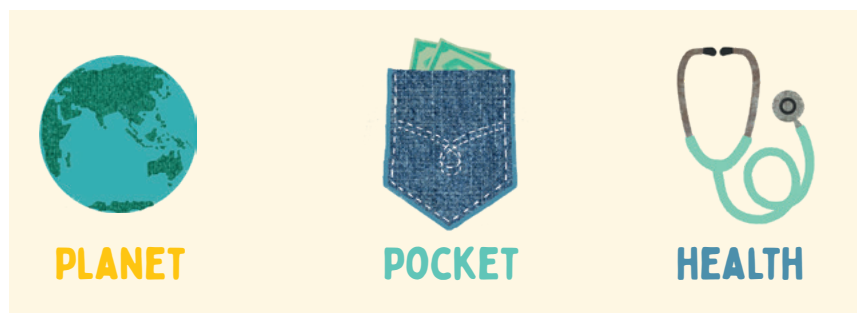


# WHAT IS GREEN AND HEALTHY FROME?

Green and Healthy Frome<sup>1</sup> is a partnership of Frome Medical Practice<sup>2</sup>, Frome Town Council<sup>3</sup> and Edventure Frome<sup>4</sup> (a community, learning and social enterprise hub). The project is funded by the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund<sup>5</sup>. After a two year development phase (April 2021 to March 2023), we achieved a three year full award (April 2023 to March 2026) to upscale our programme.

Our mission is to engage our community to make changes which are good for the planet by highlighting climate, health and/or cost of living benefits. We do this by:

- Modelling and embedding sustainable practices into existing systems and structures, both at community and organisational levels
- Promoting community engagement and network building by working with community groups, individuals, and other organisations to enable action on climate and to amplify our impact
- Providing free resources to individuals, families and households, enabling them to make choices which are good for their health and good for the planet, often saving money too
- Using storytelling to promote behaviour and culture change within and beyond Frome
- Using evaluation to share our insights, learning and impact



*GHF's core message is that 'people's health and the health of the planet are firmly linked - if we improve one, we'll also improve the other - enabling everyone to share in a better future'.*

You can explore Green and Healthy Frome<sup>6</sup> to find out more about what we did, what we learned and what happened next in Frome.

<sup>1</sup><https://greenhealthyfrome.org/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.fromemedicalpractice.co.uk/>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/>

<sup>4</sup><https://edventurefrome.org/>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-programmes/climate-action-fund-our-shared-future>

<sup>6</sup><https://greenhealthyfrome.org/>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.fromebikeproject.org/>

<sup>8</sup><https://greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learning/>

## INSIDE

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## WHO IS THIS FOR?

This learning insight is for Local Government, organisations and community groups interested in active travel projects. If you are starting or growing a social enterprise to promote cycling, Frome Community Bike Project<sup>7</sup> has a wealth of wider learning to share and you can contact them directly to find out more.

## GHF LEARNING INSIGHTS

We have published a series of learning insights and toolkits, in which we share both our successes and our learning with people and projects looking to create opportunities for green and healthy living and to enable community-led action on climate. You can find them on the 'Our Learnings<sup>8</sup>' page.



# WHAT WAS CYCLE TOGETHER?

Cycle Together<sup>9</sup> was GHF's active travel initiative, designed to increase uptake of cycling by improving accessibility and boosting cycling confidence. This was achieved by providing free access to cycling equipment, offering maintenance and cycle training, and organising social rides. Cycle Together addressed common barriers to cycling and created opportunities to build a cycling culture in Frome and surrounding areas. During the development phase of GHF, Cycle Together was an e-bike loan scheme hosted by Frome Town Council alongside led social rides. For the full award phase, the Cycle Together work package was sub-contracted to Frome Community Bike Project<sup>10</sup> due to the specialist knowledge and skills required to develop and deliver a broader cycling support offer which included:

- Free four week e-bike loans
- Cycle confidence training
- Led social rides for adults and for families
- Bike maintenance classes
- Dr Bike - free bicycle safety checks at events and pop-ups

## WHY CYCLE TOGETHER?

Cyclists generate 84% lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from daily travel compared to non-cyclists and an average person switching from a car to a bike for daily commutes reduces their emissions by approximately 3.2 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per day. For context, swapping just one average commute per day from driving to cycling for 200 days of the year would save half a tonne of carbon dioxide over the course of a year - the equivalent of a one way flight from London to New York<sup>11</sup>.

The changes that Cycle Together was hoping to achieve were:



### CLIMATE

- Reduced emissions from car use including exhaust emissions
- Reduced particulate matter from tyres and brakes



### HEALTH

- Improved fitness
- Increased physical and mental wellbeing
- Better connection to nature
- Better air quality



### COMMUNITY

- New connections through social rides, group bike maintenance sessions, volunteering
- Finding new routes to cycle for transport and leisure



### FINANCIAL

- Savings on car use
- Knowledge to fix minor bike repairs

Over half of all car trips are less than three miles and a large portion of car journeys are under five miles. By replacing these trips with cycling, there is huge potential for reducing carbon footprints and other emissions.

Not only is physical activity good for our health, it is also good for our mental health. There are further benefits from connecting with the natural world when riding, both in terms of urban greenery and in rural areas such as the countryside around Frome. Cycling in a group also creates community, with recognised wellbeing benefits from social contact and shared experience.

<sup>9</sup><https://greenhealthyfrome.org/cycle-together/>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.fromebikeproject.org/>

<sup>11</sup><https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/how-much-carbon-can-you-save-cycling-work>

# SETTING UP

## WHAT WENT WELL

By partnering with Frome Community Bike Project (FCBP), Frome Town Council was able to sub-contract Cycle Together to FCBP's team of active travel experts with experience of delivering similar projects. This sub-contract also represented significant growth potential for FCBP, which was set up in 2022 after a crowdfunding campaign to secure workshop premises and equipment for the Project's trading arm, which includes bike servicing and sales of refurbished donated bikes. Cycle Together required a team of contracted staff, volunteers and freelance sessional workers. Roles included a Cycle Together Co-ordinator, bike mechanics, cycle instructors, ride leaders and comms and marketing support.

The Cycle Together programme provided a valuable opportunity for FCBP to build community and capacity and to develop their cycling support offer across three years of Climate Action Fund grant funding. Cycle Together enabled free training for staff, sessional workers and volunteers which increased uptake and retention of voluntary and paid roles. Training programmes included ride leader training and bike mechanic courses, with all volunteers subject to DBS checks and first aid training, ensuring that the offer to the community was safe and fully compliant with best practice.

Cycle Together implemented automated booking systems including Calendly, Bike Rental Manager, Ticket Tailor and Eventbrite to reduce the considerable admin load of managing events and activities. Follow up emails were also automated, with a link to further cycling opportunities and to evaluation surveys which captured data about behaviour change.



## WHAT WE LEARNED

During GHF's development phase, the main strands of Cycle Together were e-bike loans and social rides which were delivered by Frome Town Council. The transition to the 'full award phase' in 2023 involved a sub-contract with FCBP, relocation and expansion of the Cycle Together offer. Overall the scheme needed additional resources and 'lead-in' time for implementation. We would advise similar projects to consider the following initiation and implementation activities and costs in their funding and planning cycles:

- Considerations relating to storage and maintenance of loan bikes and accessories e.g. construction, utilities, insurance, equipment, storage
- Recruitment and induction - in our case the Cycle Together Co-ordinator was a secondment from Frome Town Council and their role needed to be back filled
- Recruitment, induction, co-ordination and supervision of volunteers and sessional workers
- Capacity in co-ordination or similar roles to cover workload on top of delivering a public-facing programme, e.g. attendance at internal meetings, monitoring and evaluation and comms

- GHF's team also had a remit to support our Beyond Frome work package (e.g. conferences, presentations and meetings) which required additional resource

Although there was some comms capacity within Frome Town Council, as a sub-contracted work package Cycle Together needed a dedicated resource. In Year 3 GHF underspend funded additional co-ordination and comms capacity for Cycle Together, releasing pressure on the lead co-ordinator role and boosting awareness and uptake of cycling support via marketing and events.

Finally it's important to remember that any outdoor UK cycling scheme is seasonal by default and activity projections must take this into account! We missed out on the Year 1 'peak' summer season due to implementation delays.



# DELIVERY PHASE

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## WHAT WENT WELL

During GHF, Cycle Together was one element of Frome Community Bike Project's activities. FCBP offers a wide range of revenue generating and grant funded services and reaches a broad cross-section of Frome's established and emerging cycling community from its permanent base near the train station. FCBP runs regular events such as bike jumbles and donates profits to local charity *Frome's Missing Links*<sup>12</sup> who work towards extending traffic free routes linking Frome to nearby destinations. This partnership has meant that members of the public accessing FCBP could find out about Cycle Together and vice versa, building cycling community and capacity for the future.

Cycle Together's free four week e-bike loans, led social bike rides and bike maintenance classes were really popular. People who enjoyed the social rides were invited to a WhatsApp group which has generated self-led rides, enabling social connections and new cycling communities. Our family friendly rides, introduced in Year 3, also proved very popular. The feedback for our 'Book a Buddy' cycle training sessions was particularly strong. People who had been cycling for years learned new and simple techniques to build confidence and cycle more safely in traffic and complete beginners reported that Cycle Together was the only available opportunity for adults to learn how to cycle.

## WHAT WE LEARNED

No-shows' for free classes were problematic, particularly for our bike maintenance classes with a maximum group of three and frequent waiting lists. To reduce the risk of no-shows, we implemented a refundable deposit and an email reminding participants that these classes were popular and emphasising the importance of cancelling if necessary.

Cycle training went through a number of iterations until we settled on 'Book a Buddy'. In year one it was called 'Adult Cycle Training' and in year two 'Cycle Confidence'. Initially classes were classified as beginner, intermediate or advanced and offered at set times and days. It is likely that the title and/or the rigid timings of the offer limited uptake. In year three, cycle training was relaunched as 'Book a Buddy' offering 1-1 or small group bookings through Calendly scheduling software. This provided complete flexibility with a choice of date, time, location and lesson outcomes. 'Book a Buddy' proved to be a popular model and will continue as a paid-for service now that Lottery funding has ended.

<sup>12</sup><https://fromesmissinglinks.org.uk/>



## WHAT NEXT?

By harnessing the learning from Cycle Together, FCBP now understands the true costs of delivering a suite of cycling support services. This enables the FCBP team to offer realistically priced 'paid for' services and prepare 'full cost recovery' funding applications. FCBP and FTC continue to work together and have already partnered again by using funding from Great Western Railway to install a fleet of on-street hire bikes and a cargo bike that can be hired from a smart phone by the hour.

Following a survey of families, it is clear that there is a strong appetite in Frome for cycle training for children. FCBP has responded to this need by becoming an accredited [Bikeability](https://www.bikeability.org.uk/)<sup>13</sup> provider, delivering Bikeability courses and scoping out schemes such as bike hire/exchange for children's kit. Cycle Together trialled family friendly social rides during Year 3 of GHF, and these will continue as a popular addition to the programme of adult social rides.

<sup>13</sup><https://www.bikeability.org.uk/>

# ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

## WHAT WENT WELL

Cycle Together is one element of GHF, it is also a sub-contract delivered by Frome Community Bike Project on behalf of Frome Town Council. For the Co-ordinator at Cycle Together, the support of the GHF team and the wider partnership team was essential for morale and energy, and for 'spreading the word' about the opportunities and benefits of cycling. Thanks to the Climate Action Funding:

- The FCBP newsletter membership has grown due to the exposure generated by Cycle Together and additional specialist comms capacity to promote the scheme
- FCBP is now tagged and shared on social pages across the partnership, raising the profile of the FCBP which will continue beyond the GHF funded programme
- The Cycle Together Coordinator was able to connect with other cycling communities and projects for two-way learning exchanges

Cycle Together has had stalls at various GHF events including the River Vision Festival, River Walk and Green Hacks Day. There have also been Cycle Together 'pop-ups' at Frome Medical Practice and Dr Bike stands in the park and at various local events. This exposure has enabled the scheme to reach new audiences and has provided a platform for FCBP's work.

## WHAT WE LEARNED

A dedicated Cycle Together comms lead was needed to liaise with the wider GHF comms team and to maximise opportunities for partnership. Overall it was difficult for Cycle Together to integrate with other GHF work packages since the classes and activities offered were very specific to cycling.

The administrative elements were time consuming (e.g. management of bookings, compliance with insurance requirements and health and safety standards) and as a result a high volume of information needed to be shared with participants. Instead of explicitly linking Cycle Together to other GHF work packages, Cycle Together integrated with the wider GHF programme through events, social media, newsletters and a shared Eventbrite account.

## FROME COMMUNITY BIKE PROJECT SOCIAL STATS

165

Newsletter readership increased from 100 to 165 between September 2024 and March 2026

+50%

Facebook views peaked at over 100,000 in the six months October 2025 to March 2026 - an increase of 50% in two years

# ACTIVITY AND IMPACT

Over three years, Cycle Together worked with 50 new volunteers, contributing a total of 417 volunteer hours. 825 participants joined our events and activities:

- 213 e-bike loans
- 55 people joined bike maintenance classes
- 234 cyclists came on group rides
- 198 people attended Dr Bike sessions
- 125 riders enjoyed adult cycle training



Using the best available carbon and cost calculators, we are able to estimate the CO<sub>2</sub> emission savings for Cycle Together on the basis of fewer miles travelled in conventional motor vehicles:



**900+ KG** (or 0.9 tonnes) of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions saved during our group bikes rides



**90,000 KG+** (or 90 tonnes) of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions saved by e-bike loans



Nearly **£12,000** saved in fuel costs by miles covered during Cycle Together activities

It is more challenging to measure lifetime carbon and cost savings for somebody who changes their travel behaviours in the long term. For this we would need follow up data. However, most survey respondents stated that they were encouraged to cycle more after interacting with Cycle Together. In terms of health, survey respondents reported feeling physically fitter and increased wellbeing, particularly due to the social nature of group rides and the benefits of spending time in nature. Some also mentioned savings on fuel for motor vehicles.

## FEEDBACK

Feedback for Cycle Together has been overwhelmingly positive:

It has been brilliant to re-discover the joys of cycling, as well as contributing to the climate welfare of our environment.

It will reduce my car use for short journeys. More enjoyable, healthier, and better environmentally than a car.

By having an e-bike for a month, I was able to work out how much I was likely to use it, which gave me more confidence to go ahead with quite a large purchase.

Got me out exercising more. Had a good mental impact too.



## BENEFICIARY STORY

I wasn't sure if I needed an Ebike! So, I thought it would be a good way to try before I considered buying one. Borrowing one for a whole month seemed a better way to experience an e-bike rather than just a day hire or talking to a sales person.

[The e-bike] was well prepared when I arrived. I was given information on how to operate the motor assistance, the display unit, the built in lights, explained in terms that I understood. I was pleased to find that it was not long before I felt comfortable riding it after many years with an ordinary cycle.

Having had a number of chemotherapy sessions for cancer, my energy levels fluctuate. I was worried that I would have to give up cycling. Being able to continue riding a bike was important to me and my recovery.

I knew only too well how it had helped my mental health to be out in nature. An Ebike meant that I could continue to enjoy the ex railway paths and canal towpaths that I enjoyed using so much.

I have been able to keep up my motivation, maintaining a better level of fitness than would have been possible with walking alone. I have covered more distance and with less fatigue afterwards.

As the hire period reached the end, I was smitten and decided to buy a second hand e-bike. I took it on holiday with me to the Lake District and it enabled me to enjoy forest paths that were too steep for me on an ordinary bike and faster than I could have ever walked. I'm so pleased to have found the Frome Bike Project!

## RESOURCES WHICH WE HAVE FOUND USEFUL

- <https://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/>
- <https://www.cyclinguk.org/>
- <https://www.bikeability.org.uk/>
- <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/recreation/article/20151204-Ride-Leadership-Award-Level-1-0?c=EN>
- <https://yatecommunitybikehub.co.uk/>
- <https://cscic.org/programmes/access-bike/>



## FURTHER INFORMATION

Find out more about what Frome Community Bike Project offers here:

<https://www.fromebikeproject.org/what-we-do/> or to contact the team <https://www.fromebikeproject.org/contact-us/>

Thanks to Emma Parker and the team at FCBP and to Frome Town Council for supporting Cycle Together, and to the directors, staff, volunteers and sessional workers who contributed. Thank you to the National Lottery for funding our Project and for your support along the way.

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You can find our other learning insights and toolkits on Green and Healthy Frome's '[Our Learnings](#)' page.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup><https://greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learnings/>

