

Chief Executive

POLL POSITION

With the new name recently endorsed by members and by governments, who have awarded us £1m in grants, Cycling UK is ideally placed to promote cycling. **Paul Tuohy** explains



PAUL TUOHY
Chief Executive



The Big Bike Revival: now being funded in England and Scotland

IT'S BEEN a fabulous few months for the UK's number one cycling charity. Our first presentation to the Scottish Government as Cycling UK was a winner: we were awarded a grant of £450,000 to take Big Bike Revival (BBR) north of the border and encourage more Scots to have their bikes fixed and re-engage with cycling. The feedback from officials was simple: 'We never really understood what you were all about, but we do now.'

We are already in the midst of delivering the second BBR in England, which has been funded again as we were able to show that we could encourage more people to re-engage with cycling than any other organisation – especially people from poorer communities. Governments are keen to work with us to help encourage the public to lead a healthier, more active lifestyle. They recognise that we're the real deal when it comes to cycling because we're not narrowly

“We're the real deal in cycling because we're not focused on sport”

focused on sport. We're about the vast range of different reasons for riding a bike – recreation, transport, health, and more.

One of the biggest issues I've encountered working for charities is the need to make sure you can communicate what it is you actually do. Even when I worked for the visual impairment charity RNIB, I still had friends say to me that they didn't know I was interested in boats or birds! Sometimes you have to spell it out. We have done – and we've won £1m in new grants in just a few months. It's wonderful news for cycling.

A BIGGER MEMBERSHIP

Our next big challenge is to increase our membership. Members are the bedrock, the evidence of and inspiration for all we do. Thank you so much if you are one of the many who have volunteered to help us in our work this year. Thousands of hours of free time are given and we are so grateful. We now want and need more of you to support Cycling UK because it will make our small island a better place for everyone.

The more new supporters we can attract, the more work we can do to benefit you and other cyclists. We can campaign more for better infrastructure, improve our support for grassroots riding, encourage more touring,

and boost commuting and leisure cycling. My mantra is simple: if you ride, join!

When you join Cycling UK, you join the most eclectic band of cyclists in the UK. You might start out riding a few miles with a beginners' group and go on to join one of our legendary CTC group rides or tours. Our nationwide CTC groups are our most experienced, dedicated riders, with a wealth of knowledge to pass on. But even they have sometimes struggled to gain new, younger members. As CTC, we could only appeal to a limited audience.

My hope is that Cycling UK will be able to attract new members to benefit every aspect of our cycling community, including touring. The recent members' poll on the rebrand had the largest turnout of any vote for decades, with a massive two-thirds in favour of the Cycling UK name. So let's now get on with it and grow our wonderful movement into a more inclusive and diverse cycling organisation.

If you have a cycling friend who's not a member, suggest they join for all the above reasons – not forgetting our great insurance cover, legal protection, and cycling discounts. Another easy way to help us is to sign up for Gift Aid. We've already had a great response but it could be even better. PLEASE do it. For details on how to sign up – instantly online or by post if you prefer – see the sidebar on page 12. We can then use this windfall to find new members and support existing ones.

Cycling is one of the UK's best kept secrets and needs a champion – Cycling UK is that champion.



The BBR is successful because it reaches out to communities

Photos by Joalze Dymond