

"Your friend or colleague might own a bike but is it fit to use? Can you help fix it?"

GET THAT BIKE FIXED

First things first. Your friend/neighbour/work colleague might well own a bike, but is it fit to use? Most bikes live in sheds and many probably need a little TLC. It could be something as simple as pumping up the tyres or oiling the drivetrain, but if it's a full-blown puncture or malfunctioning gears, is it fear of the unknown that is preventing the owner from getting it seen to, and therefore going out cycling – and can you help fix it? If not for free, you could offer to carry out any repairs at cost price, or find out if a Dr Bike mechanic is visiting your place of work during Bike Week and get it sorted out there.

LEAD A BUDDY RIDE

Now the bike is in working order, offer to meet a colleague at their house and ride with them to work, showing the best route and good cycling technique. Better still, why not arrange a social ride over the weekend before the commute? It might help an inexperienced cyclist gain confidence on a bike rather than launching straight in to the Monday morning rush-hour.

At Cycling UK, we try to practise what we preach, and buddy rides were the order of the day – or days – during Bike Week last year. Regular cycle commuters Sam Jones and Ian Taylor rode in with work colleague Kay Lakin, who used to walk the two miles from her Guildford home to our National Office. 'I would have been nervous cycling in on my own,' said Kay. 'But the buddy rides with Sam and Ian gave me confidence, and



Colleagues might not know the best or quietest route to work

Get work involved

Why bosses should back cycling: bft.ly/cyclinguk-friendlyemployers

I cycle everywhere as much as possible now. It spurred me to undertake a stage of the Countrywide Tour, from Rye to Brighton, and I'm going on a cycling holiday in France, which I would never have considered before.'

GET THE BUG

These BUGs can bite on behalf of cyclists! An ideal Bicycle User Group is a kind of cycling consultancy/promotions agency/social club that does everything it can to encourage people to cycle commute and persuade their employer to cater well for existing cyclists.

Sam Mugford helped set up a BUG at the Norwich BioScience Institutes site last year after reading Cycling UK's Bike Week guidelines about cycle-friendly employers – and received the full blessing of, and funding from, management.

Sam, a research scientist at the John Innes Centre, said: 'There's a strong cycling community here and we already had great facilities, such as showers, drying areas and a bike mechanic on site once a week. But the management were extraordinarily supportive of the idea of a Bicycle User Group and paid for a set of 10 bikes that people can use for nearby meetings or, if they are working here short-term, for their commute to work.'

ARRANGE A BIKE TO WORK DAY

For the ultimate buddy ride, you could arrange a specific Cycle to Work Day during Bike Week. The Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group (HarBUG), based in the South Oxfordshire countryside between Didcot and Wantage, is planning just that on 15 June.

Cycle to Work Days are already popular on the campus. Over 120 cyclists from 20 organisations took part in the latest on 20 April, with escorted groups riding in from Abingdon, Didcot, Wantage and Grove.

HarBUG chairman and Cycling UK member Kevin Wilkinson said: 'We co-ordinate with the Bicycle User Groups from Milton Park and Culham Science Centre, the other campuses in "Science Vale". We will meet at Didcot railway station on 15 June and ride to the respective campuses from there, which should involve several hundred cyclists.'

HOST A BIKE BREAKFAST

Reward those work colleagues (or school classmates) who have cycled in with a coffee and pastry! After all, they say that breakfast is the most important meal of the day – and those who have been using a little pedal power will be entitled to replace a few burned-off calories.

A bike breakfast is simple to host, cheap to put on and an excellent way to bring people together. The Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group expect another large turnout for their bike breakfast on 15 June, having attracted 125 cyclists for tea and toast after their Cycle to Work Day on 20 April.

GET TAX BREAKS FOR BIKES

By subscribing to the Government's Cycle to Work Scheme, an employer can buy a cycle for an employee and hire it to them for a regular payment, usually over a year. If they want, the employee can buy the bike at the end of the loan period at market value. It's tax-efficient because payments are deducted from wages before tax, typically saving an employee at least 25% of the cycle's cost. ➤



With the right bike, special cycling kit is not required