

Girls Together launches Wheel Women

Sport Cardiff is excited to be launching a Women's cycling community to engage more females in active recreation.

Two years ago, in response to the financial challenges facing local government in Wales, Cardiff City Council entered in to a formal partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University through Cardiff Met Sport to safeguard Sport Cardiff in providing the development of sport across the City. In March 2016; addressing a need to increase female participation in sport and physical activity Sport Cardiff launched the flagship Women and Girls Programme 'Girls Together'.

Girls Together aims to provide the females of Cardiff with an appropriate selection of locally based activities where participants can be sure to receive a friendly welcome and get active with other like-minded females.

The programme has recently partnered with Welsh Cycling to create a new female cycling community called 'Wheel Women'. Two rides have already taken place in partnership with the Breeze network engaging 49 females. The women and girls took to Cardiff on two wheels utilising the Taff trail as a traffic free route. Four Breeze Champions volunteered to lead the group rides providing support and encouragement to the riders. Plan 2 Ride and Coffi Co have also supported our rides by providing well-earned coffee stops! Participant Victoria Pritchard who has attended the first two rides said "I've really enjoyed Wheel Women. It's a relaxed and friendly group and the leaders are good with directions - a great way to get back into cycling with a lovely group of women."

The Wheel Women programme has created a student placement opportunity for Lusi Lawler who is studying an MA in Sport Sociology and Ethics at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Lusi said; My placement with Sport Cardiff has been an invaluable experience. As I am an avid cyclist I was over the moon to be given the opportunity to work with the Girls Together programme on a female cycling project in Cardiff. It is fantastic to have a real input in the development and decision making of this new programme and work in partnership with the National Governing Body – Welsh Cycling.

Wheel Women has received wonderful support from 'The Bike Shed' who offer pre-ride safety checks as well as exclusive in-store discounts for rides which leave from their Tongwynlais or Pontcanna stores. Olivia Davies from 'The Bike Shed' said "We are delighted to be working in partnership with Sport Cardiff and Welsh Cycling in support of the Wheel Women and Breeze initiatives. These are great incentives for women to get involved in cycling. We plan to support the programmes by offering maintenance classes where women can form an understanding of basic mechanics to boost confidence. Our store in Tongwynlais has the biggest range of bikes and accessories in store specific for women and staff are on hand to give advice. We are looking forward to watching the Wheel Women's cycling community grow even further."

The long term plan for Wheel Women is to offer rides which; build the confidence of riders, increase fitness and create an inclusive cycling community for females. Rides

will be offered for varying abilities insuring that each participant can access a ride appropriate to their needs. Groups will always go at the pace of the slowest rider and of course, there will always be a refreshment stop! We are excited to be planning our first range of Intermediate rides which will be available from February and we are looking forward to linking with Pedal Power to provide specific group rides such as over 50's and mum and tots.

To hear more about the Wheel Women community please contact Fbenningwood@cardiffmet.ac.uk or follow @Wheel_Women on twitter.



Ladies meet at The Bike Shed in Pontcanna ahead of an 11 mile cycle ride around Cardiff Bay.

The first group reached the half-way point of our Bay ride averaging 14.4kmph over 16.6km

