



DUFFTOWN FREE EBIKE LOANS 2023

Outcomes, impact and evaluation
July 2023



The need

Dufftown and District Community Association (DDCA) works towards creating a fairer community by delivering better change for all. Through the Moray Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing fund, DDCA delivered a free eBike loan scheme to promote wellbeing through active travel.

Transport and wellbeing

Dufftown has a disproportionately old population compared to the Scottish average, creating a need for transport designed for all abilities. Dufftown has limited infrastructure for public transport and active travel, creating reliance on cars. Therefore, there is scope to improve the offering of electric bikes to promote active travel. Evidence suggests that cycling can contribute positively towards mental health through physical activity.

During the pandemic, DDCA purchased a fleet of eBikes and ran a key worker free eBike loan scheme. As we are recovering from the pandemic, there is scope to promote active travel with eBikes to strengthen the community resilience.

Desired outcomes

The desired outcomes of the free eBike loan scheme were:

- **Increased active travel**
- **Improved mental and physical wellbeing**

About us

Dufftown and District Community Association (DDCA) is a two-tier Scottish charitable incorporated organisation (SCIO). We act as Dufftown's anchor organisation, providing community development to improve prosperity, amenities, enterprise, opportunities and advocacy. Our current projects involve running and repairing the clocktower, providing a community food larder and bike hire, as well as organising various events in the community.



DDCA

Amenity & Outdoors

What we did

Recruiting participants

To recruit participants, DDCA promoted the scheme on social media.

Residents and workers in Dufftown were encouraged to express interest in taking part through an online form. When asked about the motivation for taking part in the scheme, some of the reasons were:

- Overcoming limited mobility/health issues and improve fitness
- Commuting
- Leisure

14 participants were offered a free eBike loan of up to 4 weeks per person. On collection, participants were given an introduction to the bike as well as basic bicycle repair kits.

Engaging with participants

DDCA engaged with participants half way through each free loan to check how they were getting on and if any help or adjustments were needed in terms of the bike. On return of the bike, participants were asked to fill out an evaluation form. Below is a photo of one of the participants out on their eBike.

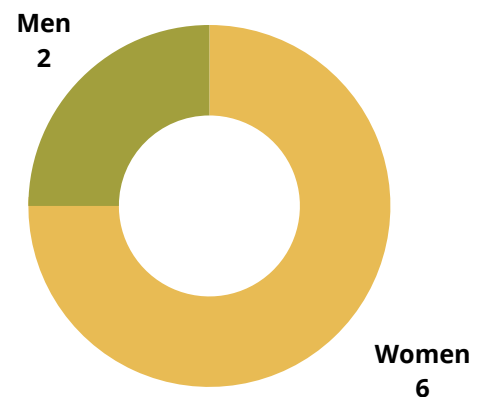


Who took part

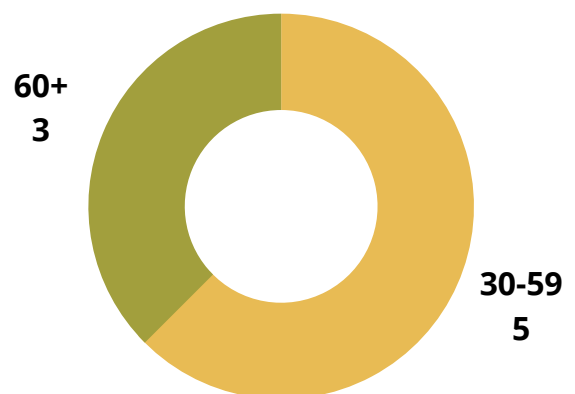
9 participants took part in the free eBike loan scheme and 8 of these completed the evaluation form, which included demographic information. More women than men took part in the scheme. Majority of participants were in some form of employment and between 30-59 years. A minority pf participants reported having a long-term disability or illness.

Free eBike loan participants by demographics

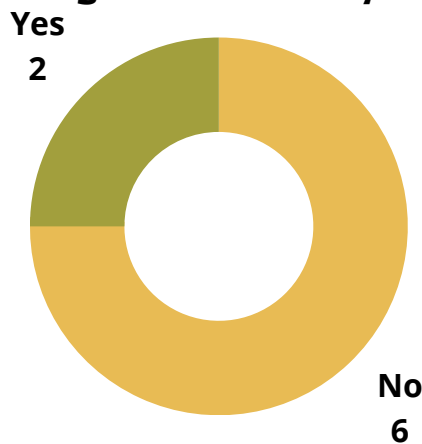
Gender



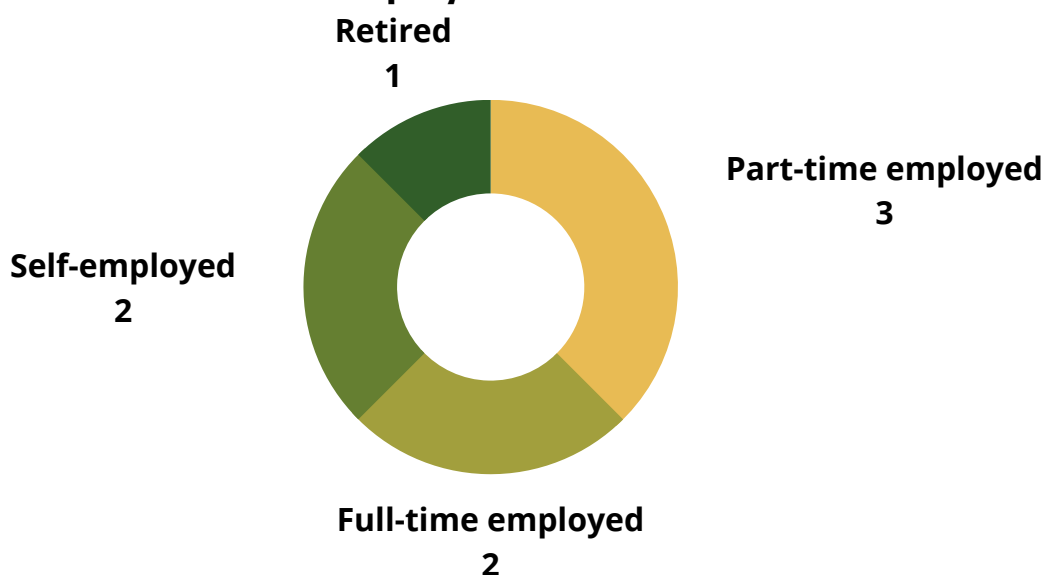
Age



Long-term disability



Employment status



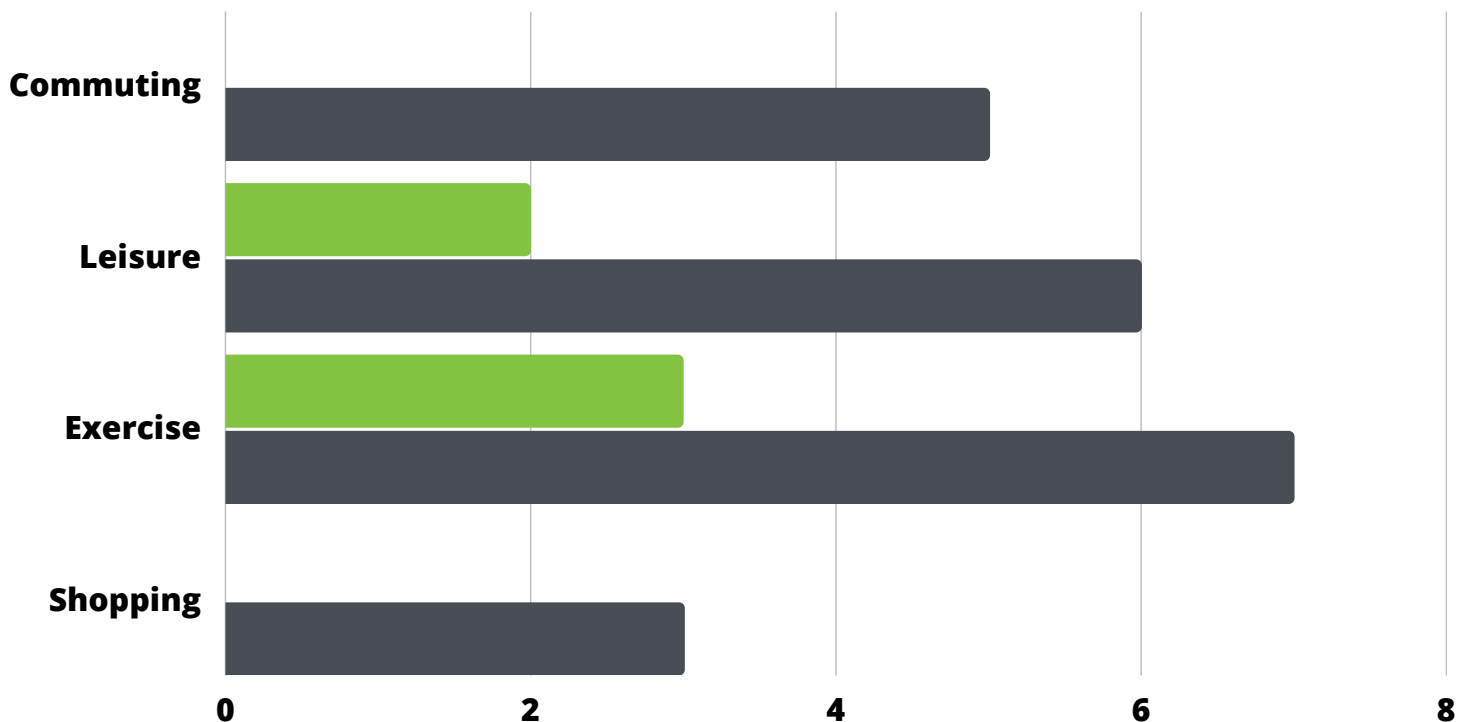
The impact

To evaluate our desired outcomes, indicators from the post-event questionnaire were measured. As seen in the bar chart below, prior to the loan period, less than half of the 8 participants cycled on a regular basis (at least once per month), and the reason was for leisure and exercise. During the trial, cycling increased across all four categories. Interesting to note is that the loan resulted in an increase in active travel.

5 out of the 8 participants used the bike at least once for commuting, and 3 participants cycled for shopping. While not asked in the questionnaire, we assume that these activities replaced car journeys, based on the rural nature of Dufftown.

Number of participants cycling on a regular basis

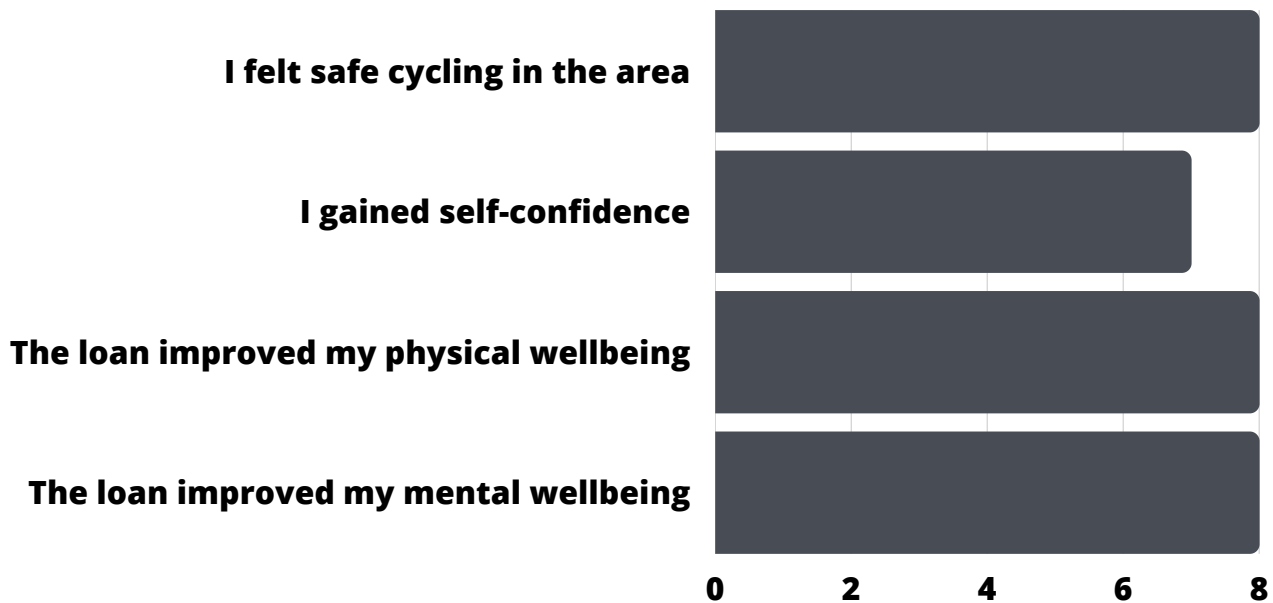
■ Before loan ■ During loan



The impact

After the free eBike loan, participants were asked to report on a series of indicators measuring wellbeing. All respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe cycling in the area, the loan had made them more physically active and improved their mental wellbeing. Seven out of eight respondents reported having gained self-confidence from using the eBike.

I really enjoyed the satisfaction from getting to work without using my car



Allowed us to move around this hilly region with ease, and go some distance, without having to use a car.

I could cycle further, and get up inclines that I normally could not achieve.

Looking to the future

While the free eBike loan was relatively short in terms of time of participants using the bikes, evidence from the participant evaluation indicates that cycling can have an immediately positive impact on people's mental and physical wellbeing. Furthermore, the scheme suggests that behaviour change in terms of increasing active travel can occur within one month if individuals have access to equipment and infrastructure, such as electric bikes and organisational support.


Having taken part in the scheme, three out of eight participants are now considering purchasing their own eBike and another three would consider renting an eBike long-term.

Encouraging long-term hires

Based on the feedback of the free eBike loan scheme, DDCA will consider ways to encourage more long-term hires among residents and workers in the community. Firstly, this could be done by changing the pricing model to make long-term hires more affordable. Secondly, improving the collection and drop-off system, such as automated bike lockers, to become more user-friendly would be useful.

Improving access and skills

Comments from participants suggest that the service could improve if there were smaller bikes available. This will be taken into account if DDCA increases their eBike fleet in the future. Furthermore, comments suggest that basic maintenance classes would help. DDCA will consider working in partnership with local cycling organisations to deliver a more in-depth introduction with a maintenance class and a more comprehensive maintenance kit for long-term renters.



This was a fantastic experience and has really encouraged me to think about using an ebike more often and by hiring it for the four weeks could really get to know what I might be able to use it for.

**Dufftown free eBike loan scheme 2023 was funded by Moray
Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund.**



**Thanks to all the participants for taking part in this project - we hope
you enjoyed it.**

**Dufftown and District Community Association is a Scottish
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) regulated by the
Scottish Regulator (OSCR). Scottish Charity Number: SC023622**

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