

PRESS RELEASE

24th September, 2009.

Blacon's Push for More Pedalling!

We have just completed our fourth free cycle surgery in Blacon, making a grand total of nearly 200 serviced bikes. These surgeries have been set-up by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CW&C) in partnership with NHS Community Care Western Cheshire and Blacon Community Trust. The aim has been to promote cycling within the local community and as a starting point to ensure that the people of Blacon have access to bikes that are in a road safe condition.



9th May Surgery at Blacon Community Trust

The first surgery took place on 9th May at Blacon Community Trust's Dee Point Centre, with cycle mechanics provided by The Bike Factory and NHS Community Care Western. During the day approximately 50 bikes were serviced, with typical repairs including simple adjustment of brakes and gears, fixing punctures or replacing inner tubes and adjustment of bikes to suit the rider. The success of this initial event encouraged further support from CW&C and three further surgeries have been held: on 4th July at the Blacon Festival held at Blacon High School, on 15th August at Blacon Community Centre and again at Blacon Community Trust on Saturday 12th September.



Blacon Festival 4th July



Blacon Community Centre 15th August – Edward, Felicity and William Webb

Dave Cotterell from NHS Community Care Western Cheshire commented “There are a number of excellent cycle shops within Chester that currently provide a good quality of service for supplying and servicing cycles. However the basic cost for a cycle service is in the region of £30 to £40 plus parts and this cost will be beyond many families living on low income or benefits. Cycle surgeries like this bring the benefit of cycle maintenance to many families who otherwise could not afford it. We hope it will encourage them to cycle more and reap the health-related benefits that go with it.”

The cycle surgery initiative is a critical and very visible element of a major programme within the Blacon Community focused on the promotion of cycling for reason of health, recreation and sustainability. Other elements of this initiative, which have also been supported by CW&C, have included extensive ‘Bike-ability’ training organised through the local primary schools, provisions of new and additional bike racks at local schools and other key community locations and the provision of free loan bikes to community groups and qualifying individuals.



The promotion of cycling in Blacon is not only strongly linked to the Cycle Chester Campaign, it is also a key element of **Sustainable Blacon**, a new initiative being promoted by Blacon Community Trust. Stephen Perry (Chairman Sustainable Blacon Limited) is working closely with CW&C to complete a major improvement programme on the Blacon Greenway (cycle and footpath) near the Blacon Old Station site. Consultation for the final improvement proposals shared the Sustainable Blacon marquee with the Cycle Surgery at the Blacon Festival. Improvement work on this project is due to start in early October, with significant funding from a Big Lottery/Groundwork Community Spaces grant and from WREN.

For more information please contact Dave Cotterell on 01244 385070 or by e-mail at dave.cotterell@wcheshirepct.nhs.uk

Or James Duckers on 01244 402273 or by e-mail at james.duckers@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Or Stephen Perry at Stephen@blacon.org.uk