

this is cycling UK



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The election cycle

With a general election looming, Cycling UK has been speaking to politicians about the big wins available from backing more bike use. **Sarah Mitchell** reports

How do we convince politicians to care about cycling? Speaking to policy makers about cycling in isolation won't be enough to push it to the top of their priority list. We must show that getting more people moving around by bike has a positive impact on the key challenges most politicians are keen to address – such as climate change, public health, air quality and economic growth.

To that end, Cycling UK has been at the main political party conferences this autumn, including the Liberal Democrat, Conservative, Labour, Scottish National Party (SNP) and Scottish Greens conferences. We hosted events, spoke on panels and met with politicians, future candidates, advisors and journalists to bang the drum for better policies and more investment in cycling. With a general election on the horizon, this was an important opportunity to move cycling up the political agenda and seek to influence commitments in party manifestos. This policy and campaigning work will continue to be a top priority for Cycling UK throughout 2024.

We are continuing to develop Cycling UK's new strategy, which will launch in spring 2024. Part of that process has been looking back on our current strategy and I'm really proud of everything we've achieved together – particularly the way we've grown and

strengthened the organisation over the past five years. We are now working to build on that success with a bold plan for how we can fully realise the potential of cycling to improve our health and wellbeing and tackle climate change right across the UK. While the work is ongoing, I'm confident that it will be an ambitious strategy that will aim to build strong public support for cycling, which is essential to make the UK a better place to cycle for us all. I look forward to sharing the full details with you very soon.

You may have seen that we recently announced our annual 100 Women in Cycling for 2023. It's a remarkable collection of individuals who've each had a positive impact on cycling, from campaigners and community champions to visionary leaders and exceptional athletes. It's so important for us to celebrate those who empower others, and to improve the visibility of women in cycling, so that more women feel that riding a bike is for them.

On the subject of awards, we're delighted to have won the BikeBiz Cycle Advocacy Award for the third consecutive year. Our campaigns and policy work is only possible thanks to our members and supporters, with this recognition highlighting the strength of our collective voice.

All eyes will turn to Edinburgh in December for a critical moment for cycling, as the Scottish Government announces its budget for 2024/25. If the government makes good on its commitment to spend 10% of the transport budget on active travel – something Cycling UK and others campaigned for over many years – it will be a giant leap towards making Scotland a cycle-friendly nation. That's why we wrote to First Minister Humza Yousaf earlier in the autumn, urging him to remain steadfast in his support for cycling.

As we come towards the end of 2023, I want to say a huge thank you to all of our members, supporters, volunteers and groups for your support, energy and enthusiasm this year. Here's to an exciting 2024. ●



77%

of people agree that
**'Britain would be better
if more people cycled'**
(source: YouGov survey)

Photo: Abdullirman Hassona



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