

Ebike Loans

Cascade Training Module



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INTRODUCTION

FORTH ENVIRONMENT LINK

A local organisation with a national impact

Forth Environment Link is a Scottish environmental charity based in the Forth Valley, working across the climate action agenda to deliver outcomes which support and promote healthy people and a healthy planet with equality for all.

As an organisation, rooted in the communities we work with, we are passionate about what we do and about making our places and community spaces better to live, work and play in.

Our Strategic Objectives

To deliver our ambition, we will focus on four main areas and our charitable activities will support:-

Active Travel More day to day journeys on foot or by bike.	Food & Growing More local food to be grown and eaten in our communities.	Volunteering Provide meaningful volunteering opportunities for all.	Reuse & Repair Helping to increase the lifespan of our everyday items.
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Our Vision

To enable and support communities to live healthy and sustainable lives in a way that reduces the impact on our planet.

Our Mission

- We will put healthy people and a healthy planet at the heart of our work.
- We are community led - our projects, partnerships and priorities are shaped by and developed for the communities within which we work.
- We value the planet and each other. This underpins everything we do.
- We are enabling - what we do is practical, easy to understand and accessible to everyone.
- We are collaborative - we like to work in partnership because we believe we are stronger together.
- We love new ideas; innovation is at the heart of our work and is what pushes forward new ideas that inspire change.
- We are passionate about what we do and it shows in our work and in our team's activities.

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EBIKE LOANS



Ebike loans are aimed at individuals who are in the contemplation, preparation and action stage of behaviour change and allows them to move onto the maintenance stage. This is possible as the project removes barriers, provides information and facilitates access to ebikes.

What is an Ebike Loan?

Stirling and Falkirk Active Travel Hubs have fleets of ebikes available to loan for between 3 days and 3 weeks. The bikes are available for any individual with an FK postcode and businesses in Forth Valley to enable staff members to try an ebike for business use. The ebikes are free to borrow, with participants required to fill out a survey once the loan is completed.

Project Partners

- ⚙️ Energy Saving Trust/Home Energy Scotland
- ⚙️ Electric Cycle Company (bike supplier)

**energy
saving
trust**



Why Offer Ebike Loans?

- ⚙ Ebikes are expensive to buy; offering free trials allows individuals to decide if they will use an ebike and what type would suit them best before buying. This allows them to see the benefits of an ebike before committing financially.
- ⚙ Enable individuals to experience the value of ebikes for their individual situation
- ⚙ Promotes EST loans for individuals and businesses.
- ⚙ Ebikes are popular with many different people and can enable individuals who can't or won't cycle the opportunity to.
- ⚙ The Hub regularly receives enquiries about borrowing ebike and advice on buying them.
- ⚙ The project supports outcomes and objectives of The Active Travel Framework (2019):
 - ⚙ Increase the number of people choosing walking, cycling and wheeling in Scotland
 - ⚙ Delivery of walking, cycling and wheeling is promoted and supported by a range of partners
 - ⚙ Walking, cycling and wheeling is available to all
 - ⚙ Better health and safer travel
 - ⚙ Cut carbon emissions



Project Benefits

The ebike library benefits anyone who is interested in trying an ebike, either in advance of buying one or just out of curiosity. Ebikes can help individuals gain confidence in their cycling abilities and can remove barriers relating to health. This allows the project to reach a wide audience, including people who may not ordinarily engage with the Hub. Prior to the loan, advice is given on how to use them so the individual borrowing the bike gains knowledge - this will be useful to them if they go on to buy their own ebike.

Before an ebike is borrowed Hub staff ensure that the potential loanee is able to cycle safely. Cycle lessons are offered to anyone who is unable to cycle safely or lacking in confidence. Once they have completed the cycle training they are then offered the opportunity to loan an ebike.

Participant Access to EBikes

The ebikes are available to borrow from the Hubs in Stirling and Falkirk and can be borrowed by anyone with an FK postcode. Individuals can contact either Hub by phone, email or in person visits, however all the bikes are collected from and returned to the Hubs. When loaning a bike, individuals are asked to complete a form with their basic information and details of where the bike will be kept (see Resources).

When an ebike is loaned the individual is given a pack of equipment to help them when using the ebike. This includes:

- ⚙ Ebike Battery and Key
- ⚙ Ebike Charger
- ⚙ Gold Standard Bike Lock and Key
- ⚙ Helmet (optional) Hi-viz vest (optional)
- ⚙ Cycle maps (optional)



How is the Project Staffed and Facilitated?

The bikes are stored at the Hub between loans and one member of staff is primarily responsible for maintenance. Day to day loans are managed by the members of staff in the Hub that day using a spreadsheet tracker for the bikes. This tracker has a built in calendar showing where each bike is and when it will next be available for a new person to loan (see resources for example tracker).

Process for the loans

Step One	Step Two	Step Three
Individual or business makes initial enquiry to the Hub via email, phone or in person.	During the conversation with the individual Hub staff gather information on the type of bike (eg. step through, hybrid, folding), when they are looking to loan the bike and the rider height.	The Hub staff member checks the calendar on the tracker to see when a suitable bike is available. Dates of loan and type of bike are agreed by Hub staff and loanee. This must happen a minimum of 24 hours prior to the start of the loan.
Step Four	Step Five	Step Six
The individual is given the pre loan information and booking form (see resources) to fill in and given information on what they will need to bring with them when they pick up the bike <ul style="list-style-type: none">⚙ ID and proof of address⚙ Completed booking form⚙ Bag for the lock and charger	The individual comes to the hub to collect the bike. At the Hub they are shown how to use the controls on the bike including the gears, electric assist, walk assist (if applicable) and the charger. They are then assessed by a Hub staff member to ensure they can safely ride the bike. In Stirling this is done in the Train Station car park and includes starting, stopping and cornering. If the individual is deemed safe they can then take the bike if not they are offered cycle lessons. Once these lessons are complete they are then offered the bike on loan again.	The individual returns the bike at the end of the loan period and fills out a survey on their experience. They are also offered other activities the Hub has to offer.

Stirling Active Travel Hub's ebikes are funded by Energy Saving Trust (EST) and bought from Electric Cycle Company in Edinburgh. After the bikes are returned the individual is asked to fill out a survey which will be shared with EST. If interested in purchasing their own ebike they are also given information about the interest free loans EST has available for purchasing ebikes.

Project Promotion

The ebikes are promoted through all of the Hubs events, social media, posters and flyers. Dedicated events at key locations such as the local sports centre, The Peak, in Stirling, are also used. They are included in most pop up Hub events in communities, workplaces, colleges and universities; at these events individuals are able to try the bikes in a small area and talk to a member of staff or volunteer about the bikes and trialling one for a longer period.

Key Stages

⚙️ When purchasing a fleet of ebikes it is important to get a variety of frame shapes and sizes to suit as many different people and situations as possible. Stirling Active Travel Hub has:

⚙️ 2 folding ebikes (suitable for people up to 5"9 or 175cm)



⚙️ 3 small step through ebikes, all with pannier rack (suitable for people 5" - 5"7 or 152-170cm)

⚙️ 2 medium step through ebikes, one with a pannier rack (suitable for people 5"6 + or 167cm +)

⚙️ 1 large cross bar ebike (suitable for people 5"6 - 6" or 167-182cm)

⚙️ 1 very large cross bar ebike (suitable for people 5"9 + or 175cm +)



⚙️ Ensure you have insurance in place to cover the bikes. This will need to cover the bikes when they are on your premises and when they are loaned out to people. Insurance companies may stipulate the type of locks required and the wording in the terms and conditions of loan.

⚙️ Ensure you collect ID and proof of address from anyone hiring a bike and store this information in compliance with GDPR.

⚙️ Ensure you have sufficient area to store all the bikes at the same time. While most of the time they will be out with people it is important to know that you have the space to store them all at the same time if needed.



⚙️ Decide on the loan period you allow; the Hub's EST ebikes are on loan to people for anything from 3 days to 3 weeks.

⚙️ Decide what competency checks you want to do for your riders before they take the bike away. This is up to you - you can make them as brief or in-depth as you want, both Hubs do a basic check to minimise the likelihood of avoidable falls and are able to offer cycle lessons to help combat this.

⚙️ Decide how you want to capture data on the individuals loaning the bikes.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Once the ebike has been returned to the Hub individuals are asked to complete a survey detailing their experience and if they intend to purchase an ebike in the future (see resources). This survey gives feedback on the process of the loan which is used to improve the service for future loanees.

The ebike tracker spreadsheet provides detailed information on the number of loans, duration and most popular bikes.

The ebikes were purchased with a grant from Energy Saving Trust (EST), as a result of this all the loans are monitored and reporting data given to EST on a monthly basis. EST encourage people who have trialled an ebike to apply for their 4 year interest free loans for ebikes, ecargo bikes and adaptive ebikes, which are available for individuals, households and businesses.



Lessons Learned and Project Reflections

- ⚙️ Accidents will happen. Eventually an individual will fall during the competency test or once they have taken the bike away. If this happens follow normal incident protocols and ensure they are alright. You can offer them extra training and once this is completed they may loan the bike.
- ⚙️ Bikes will require more maintenance than you initially expect. Check each bike thoroughly after each loan is returned and carry out any maintenance immediately.
- ⚙️ Leave a minimum gap between when a bike is to be returned and when it is to be loaned out again. We recommend a minimum of 48 hours to safety check and resolve any maintenance issues. This allows for rescheduling of the next loan if needed.
- ⚙️ Collect as much data as you can from all borrowers, individuals may not return bikes and the more information you can give to the police the more chance you have of recovering these bikes.
- ⚙️ Bike mark or register the frame numbers so the bikes can be tracked.
- ⚙️ Managing the bikes and their maintenance will take up the majority of one member of staff's time; at least 3 days a week depending on the number of bikes you have.
- ⚙️ Ensure you have a way to clean the bikes after each loan. This is especially important in the winter once there is salt on the roads.
- ⚙️ Ensure all loanees know who to call if they have any trouble and spell out what services you are offering. For example:
 - ⚙️ Are you offering road side assistance for punctures or do you expect them to fix it themselves? Consider giving them a puncture repair kit with the loan.
 - ⚙️ Will you collect damaged bikes (eg. buckled wheel, bent frame) or expect the borrower to return it? Do you have the means to collect the bikes?
- ⚙️ Ensure you know where you can electrical issues fixed. Is this at the bike shop you bought them from or somewhere else? It is easier to buy from a local shop than online so that you know where you can go with issues.
- ⚙️ Ensure that individuals borrowing the bikes understand that most standard bike racks are not strong enough to hold an ebike. Some towbar bike racks may be suitable however roof racks will be unsuitable due to the weight of the ebike.

Ebikes can also be loaned out to businesses for work use to help them understand how the bikes would fit into their employees' work day. For example, one of the ebikes was loaned to a GP practice and primarily used by GPs for house calls. Recommendations from the GP trial for other GP practices or employers are:

- ⚙️ Keep some spare trousers and shoes at work for wet days or muddy routes
- ⚙️ Biking in wet weather was harder than biking in the cold
- ⚙️ Carrying a doctor's bag on the bike is not always the easiest and there will be trial and error with different methods
- ⚙️ A bike was never used for any emergency or on-call work but worked well for house calls (as these require less kit and you generally don't carry drugs so there are fewer security concerns)
- ⚙️ Get everyone who might use the bike to have a go and then consider how they'd use it, how they'd carry their gear, and what clothing considerations they may need to think about.

Resources

See Resources tab for details

- ⚙ [Bike Library Booking Form](#)
- ⚙ [Participant Survey](#)
- ⚙ [Example of Tracking](#)



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