



***GUIDANCE FOR CLUBS
TO HELP ATTRACT
NEW CYCLISTS***

INTRODUCTION

The leisure commission has been engaging with clubs and unattached members since its inception earlier this year. Clubs are struggling with common themes in relation to member retention and engagement, and in an effort to help clubs attract and retain members the commission has developed this guidance with useful ideas and suggestions.

ATTRACT AND RECRUIT

New members are essential for sustainability of clubs and provide new energy and enthusiasm that is essential to revitalise and re-energise.

We all have experienced the benefits of joining a club, for example, networking, sharing knowledge, increased confidence, increased cycling etiquette, social activities, coffee stops etc. Its this experience that we need to draw upon when trying to attract new members.

The most successful way to attract new members is word of mouth so your current members are your club ambassadors and number one recruitment source!

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Appoint a membership development officer to lead a working group that would speak to club members on how to proactively attract new members and effectively market activities within the club. An annual competition could be developed with a prize for whoever gets the most new members to join, perhaps a year's free membership!

PR AND COMMS OFFICER

Use of social media is a vital source of free marketing and should be used to its full advantage. Appoint a person, or team, to look after your social media and marketing activities. Have a public channel so that non-members can see what activities the club are running. Make it easy for non-members to contact you and respond to their queries quickly.

Don't shy away from negative feedback but use it as constructive criticism to help tailor future events or spins. Use pictures and testimonials to help advertise your club and the activities you engage in. Take plenty of happy cyclists enjoying beautiful scenery and the cakes and buns that might have been consumed enroute.

Consider designing a leaflet or poster to advertise your club in local shops and coffee shops and ensure the club contact details and social media channels are included.

RETAIN AND REWARD

When a member joins your club, the engagement does not stop there! You need to continue the great work to ensure the new member is welcomed into the club to retain them for years to come.

NEW MEMBER CLUB SPIN

Advertise your club rides openly on your social media channels each week and invite people to come along. Cycling Ireland provide insurance for non Cycling Ireland members to join a maximum of three clubs spins.

Ensure you include relevant details, for example, group pace, miles/km's, approximate duration, start time and location. A new member spin can be anything from 10 to 20 miles at a pace of 11-13 mph and ideally a flat route.

Ensure a ride leader accompanies each group, preferably two with one leading and one at the back. We are all for rewarding volunteers so perhaps the club could pay for refreshments for ride leaders at coffee stops.

Try and fit in a coffee stop. This is really important to engage new and existing members and make them feel welcome. It is also an opportunity to allow guest cyclists to ask questions and find out more about the club and how to join.

Follow up with guest cyclists to gauge their experience and if there is anything that can be improved from their perspective. Invite them to join the club and ensure they are aware of the process required to do so.

We encourage new member rides to be scheduled either on a Saturday or Sunday each week so that non-members can see that there is continuity and a pathway to get fit and improve.

WEEKLY LEISURE SPINS

A common issue that guest or existing club members experience is the dreaded drop! Not all cyclists want to cycle at pace, therefore, leisure spins are imperative for you to retain your members.

Schedule a weekly leisure paced spin that is advertised as a no-drop and make sure no one is left behind.

Develop a rota of ride leaders who are willing to lead a leisure paced spin. If you have 10-15 volunteers this can mean a commitment of one ride every few months. Reward these ride leaders. Perhaps on a breakfast cycle the club could pay for their breakfast.

A popular leisure spin is at a pace of 11-13 mph for approximately 30 miles with a coffee stop mid-way. Advertise this and you might be surprised at how many guest cyclists you might attract.

CLUB CYCLING GROUPS

Many clubs have different cycling groups that cater for differing member needs but the most common are:

Speed: 11-13, 14-17, 18-20 and 20 mph+

Distance: 30, 50 miles etc

Start time: Evening 18.00/18.30, weekend 07.00/08.00/09.00

Whilst there is no clear guidance on the number of cyclists that should be in a group, we would recommend a maximum of 14 cyclists per group.

OTHER SUGGESTED RETENTION ACTIVITIES

WOMEN ONLY EVENTS

Women only spins can be very successful, especially in attracting new members. A women's only cycle could be arranged monthly led by female ride leaders. Again, reward the leaders with refreshments or breakfast. Their time and commitment may increase your club membership. Participants in these events go on to join clubs and progress to weekly club leisure spins.

BREAKFAST SPINS

Organise a monthly breakfast spin that concludes with a proper breakfast. Reward ride leaders by paying for their breakfast. Speak with local hospitality providers who may offer special discounts for group bookings.

Another suggestion is to have a monthly spin whereby the club pays for all coffee/teas and speak to shops in advance to negotiate a discount if you bring your group to them.

OFF-ROAD

During the winter months, many clubs encourage off-road cycling. This is another way to keep members engaged and motivated during the dark winter evenings. If you have a local trail, forest path or gravel track, we encourage your club to make use of this. Guided trail rides can give new riders added confidence on a bike before venturing out on the road. Organise a development evening to improve skills that can be transferred to the road.

OTHER SUGGESTED RETENTION ACTIVITIES

CLUB SOCIAL EVENTS

Clubs are more than just cycling! While cycling is their key activity, other social events can include club quiz nights, BBQ's, wine and cheese tasting, mystery bus tours and general socialising which add to enjoyment of being a member and people should be made aware of the variety of other activities on offer when they join a cycling club. Some clubs have even embarked on cycle tours abroad during winter months.

BICYCLE MAINTENANCE CLASSES

Consider organising some basic bike maintenance classes and market these on social media and local press aimed at the leisure cyclist. Take time to speak to all non club members so you can encourage them to come along and try out a club run.

CLUB SPIN CLASSES

Some clubs organise these for their members in the winter months and again this is an opportunity to market these to non club members.

NEW MEMBER EVENTS

This is an opportunity for club members to bring along a friend or family member to a club event to hear specifically what the club can offer to new members. It affords the club the chance to market a club cycle for potential new members at a pace and distance to suit all.

OTHER SUGGESTED RETENTION ACTIVITIES

RE-ENGAGE WITH PAST MEMBERS

Everyone's personal circumstances will change from time to time and cyclists may drop off from being a member. Do keep in touch and sometimes a nudge can make all the difference to get people back on their bikes. Each year the club could look at past member records and assign people to make contact to have a chat with them and hopefully get them back out cycling again.

ATTRACT A LOCAL CELEBRITY TO JOIN YOUR CLUB

Extend an invitation to a local celebrity to join your club, and make sure it is well covered with photos and commentary in your social media outlets and also by your local press. This action can get local people talking about your club and their joining may be the catalyst for some new members to join your club.

***WE HOPE THAT YOU HAVE FOUND THIS GUIDANCE USEFUL
AND WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU ABOUT ANY ACTIVITIES
OR INCENTIVES THAT HAVE WORKED WELL FOR YOUR CLUB.***

CONTACT US BY EMAIL LEISURE@CYCLINGULSTER.COM