

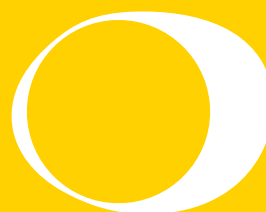
SCOTTISH CYCLING ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 23



sportscotland
the national agency for sport



1ST OCTOBER 2022 - 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023



**SCOTTISH
CYCLING**

Forewords

Kathy Gilchrist, Scottish Cycling President

2023 was a historic year for Scottish Cycling with the world's biggest cycling event, the UCI Cycling World Championships hosted around Scotland.

We all knew it would be a fantastic event on a scale never seen before, but at the heart of our sport our clubs, communities, and individuals embraced the opportunity to become a part of the Championships. We cheered on many of our own riders lucky enough to participate.

I was fortunate to see the Race the Worlds finals taking place on the same stages as the elite riders were competing. The joy on the kids' faces and the pride on the parent's is something that filled me with pride. As they stood on the podium, I saw the future of Scottish Cycling and for our athletes it was a taste of what might be possible.

So many other Scottish Cycling initiatives have stemmed from the 'super worlds'; the Cycling Facilities Fund is another amazing example of the legacy the event is leaving behind. I was at the West Lothian Cycle Circuit opening, which was a great day – I have no doubt it will have a similar impact to that of the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome, which only came about due to Glasgow 2014.

The clubs are the foundation of our sport. While we celebrate the success of the 'super worlds' and look into the future, it is right to reflect on the strength of our clubs. Glasgow Ivy and Glasgow Wheelers celebrated their centenary years. Congratulations to them!

We've seen the strength of our past, the beauty of today and the hopes of the future in one spectacular year.

Martin Cooke, Scottish Cycling Chair

This will be my last foreword to the Annual Report, and whilst we celebrated success in so many ways with the Cycling World Championships in our own backyard during a couple of unforgettable weeks in August, much will be made of that in the remainder of this Report.

I would prefer to concentrate instead on the people who make the sport of cycling, and Scottish Cycling, the organisation, so successful.

That starts with you the members. As club riders and volunteers, commissaires and event organisers, you are the lifeblood of cycling, bringing your enthusiasm and passion for the sport to the fore, day in and day out, and I thank you all for that.

The staff at Scottish Cycling take that one step further and deliver each and every day, almost always going above and beyond their contracted hours to ensure the promotion, development and delivery of cycle sport, and the infrastructure that literally keeps the wheels turning.

Apart from the CEO, the directors are all volunteers who often combine full time jobs with a commitment to give back to the sport they love, attending board meetings, chairing committees, and bringing their expertise and experience from a variety of backgrounds to the table for the benefit of the staff and the organisation.

Nick Rennie, your CEO, leads the business with great skill, and in his own words, ensures that we have "Focus, Clarity and Accountability", a mantra that resonates throughout the organisation, and is clearly seen in our current strategy, [Developing a Nation of Cyclists 2.0](#).

After eight years on the Board, the last four as Chair, I hope that I have done justice to the New Zealand Māori saying of “Whakapapa”, where the players selected for the All Blacks take great pride in being selected for the team, cherish the jersey when they are wearing it, and pass it on in a better state than they inherited it.

Whilst that will be for others to decide, I thank all concerned for their support and the wisdom which they have shared, and will close by wishing Scottish Cycling, and all those invested in it, every success for the future.

Nick Rennie, Scottish Cycling Chief Executive

I hope you enjoyed the spectacle of Scotland being a world leader in hosting the first ever combined UCI Cycling World Championships. I think we should all take great pride in the way we successfully showcased our country and sport to the world.

A key focus for us in the years leading up to the Cycling World Championships has been to not only ensure this mega event was a success, but to fully capitalise on the increased profile and interest in cycling, to ensure it leaves a positive, lasting impact on cycling in Scotland. Across the organisation we adopted a ‘no regrets’ approach, to do everything in our power to ensure cycling was in a better place as a result. From where we are today, I think we have lived up to that approach by:

- Securing increased resources, the most, but not only, tangible example of this of this in the £8m Cycling Facilities Fund, but we’ve also seen investment to all 32 Local Authorities for cycling development activity and events
- Surpassing our medal targets, with 21 medals and 11 world titles
- Over 4,000 people taking part in cycling activities as part of our Ride the Worlds programme
- A new website and associated campaign to direct those inspired to start or increase their cycling participation
- Increasing our credibility and relationships with a wide range of key people from the public and private sectors

We have made progress across the key elements of our organisation strategically, financially, and politically. Strategically with a refreshed, clear and accountable four-year plan, Developing a Nation of Cyclists 2.0. Financially, with increased turnover in a challenging economic landscape, and politically by increasing our influence across the cycling landscape.

All the while though, we have maintained our focus on the core functions of our DNA, as the governing body for cycling across Scotland, by supporting our clubs, offering participation opportunities, providing events and competitions across our disciplines, and enhancing the performance pathway for those with the ability and desire to compete at the highest level.

We are under no illusions that there is much more work to do in supporting our clubs and volunteers who make our sport happen in what can be an increasing challenging environment, with increased governance requirements, rising costs and pressures on family time and expenditure. We must continue to do more.

Finally, as per the golden threads in our strategic plan, I am pleased to report that we are making good headway in removing barriers to participation for underrepresented groups, developing our sport in a sustainable way, creating safe environments that look after everybody’s welfare and ensuring we listen and engage with the cycling community.

Performance

International Success

Writing this in October 2023, and thinking back through the last 12 months, it's incredible what our riders, staff, clubs and volunteers have achieved once again – long may this continue!

Back in October 2022 we had a COVID delayed Track World Championships for both our Olympic and Paralympic riders, Neah Evans claiming a memorable maiden world crown in the Points race. After silver and bronze at the Commonwealth Games, and silver in the Team Pursuit at the Worlds in France, she finally got her hands on a rainbow jersey and was deservedly crowned Female Athlete of the Year at our Awards night a month later.

On the same track a week later Fin Graham would achieve the same feat, getting his hands on world gold for the first time in the Scratch race, backing it up with two further triumphs in the IP and Omnium – a real coming of age. Mr reliable Neil Fachie would bag two further world titles to take his tally to 17, whilst Jenny Holl and Sophie Unwin would scoop the Tandem Pursuit title.

February was another fruitful month, as after success at the British Track and Cyclocross Championships a month earlier, Cameron Mason would crack the top 10 at the World Cyclocross Championships in his first year in the elite category, whilst Katie Archibald would bounce back from an extremely tough 2022 to take a trio of European title on the boards in Switzerland.

On the roads, Oscar Onley and Sean Flynn signed for Team dsm – firmenich to join Anna Shackley as Scottish representatives on the World Tour, the pair combining in the Team Time Trial to win a Grand Tour stage at the Vuelta á Espana. At youth level, Erin Boothman was selected and then chosen as opening ceremony flagbearer for Team GB at the European Youth Olympics, where she would win a medal in the Time Trial, whilst there were no fewer than 10 medals in Trinidad and Tobago at the Commonwealth Youth Games, our biggest ever medal haul. Well done to Millie Thomson, Sarah Johnson, Calum Moir and Elliot Rowe.

The crème de la crème would come in Glasgow and across Scotland in August, as the nation put on a show as the inaugural 'super worlds' came to town, our athletes using the home advantage to great effect as they won a whopping 21 medals, surpassing all expectations. Before that though, I should commend the 35 riders who were selected to represent Great Britain, a fantastic achievement showing the strength in depth we are developing.

From a funding perspective, it was important that 13 of those 21 medals came in Olympic and Paralympic events, notably Fin Graham and Jenny Holl winning six and five medals apiece in the track and road events, five of those golds. Neil Fachie would add two further rainbow jerseys to his collection in front of an adoring Glasgow crowd, bringing back memories of 2014, whilst Archibald and Evans would add a world title each in the Team Pursuit and Madison respectively. There were further medals for Jack Carlin and Lauren Bell in the Men's Sprint and Women's Team Sprint, and Mark Stewart in the Men's Madison.

Charlie Aldridge delivered a champion's performance of the highest order down at Glentress, dealing with the pressure of being a home favourite to take a commanding victory in the U23 XCO in front a brilliant Scottish crowd. Up in Fort William there was a breakthrough ride for Louise-Anna Ferguson, fourth in the Elite Downhill, with 19-year-old Phoebe Gale in fifth – mountain biking in Scotland is in a great place.

A fitting end to a magical 12 days was Anna Shackley winning the very last medal on offer at the Championships, bronze in the U23 Women's Road Race, which started on her local training roads.

All in all, it's been another fantastic year, with 45 riders winning medals at World or European level, and countless British medals across the full range of disciplines and age categories, from Anna Shackley and Finn Mason on the road to Aimi Kenyon and Emily Carrick-Anderson on the mountain bike. The challenge now is to keep that momentum going into 2024.

Pathway Development

After two years of COVID related disruption, our Regional Academy of Cycling Education (RACE) National programme returned to full strength, thanks to the support of clubs and club coaches. In 2022/23 we were able to deliver a full suite of activity across BMX Racing, Cyclocross, MTB DH, MTB XC, Road, Track Endurance and Track Sprint. We know the success this programme has, and continues to have, in supporting the transition of riders from the club environment to performance pathways, be it Scottish Cycling, British Cycling, via race teams or other alternative routes.

Supporting this activity has been successful Regional Cluster sessions delivered at the Emirates, Caird Park, Knockburn Loch, Paisley and the West Lothian Cycle Circuit; these sessions not only provide great value for riders and coaches alike, but provide a natural stepping stone on to the National level sessions. Again, this wouldn't happen without the support of club coaches, who we believe also benefit from operating in this environment.

It is also worth recognising that our pathway is now supported by a number of development focused race teams, notably Alba Road Team, Spokes, SORT and The Cycling Academy and we continue to foster positive working relationships with these teams and are supportive of the key role that they play. In 2023 The Cycling Academy had their first British champion in Finn Mason, who took the Junior Road Race title, and it is great to see that Alba will step up to UCI Continental level for the 2024 season.

Coach Education

The headline statistic in the coached education space is that 161 coaches obtained new qualifications – the highest number for several years. This comes despite a transition in coach education qualifications, as British Cycling launched its new Framework for Coach Education, which offers coaching qualifications in Road, Track, Off Road, BMX Racing, BMX Freestyle and Multi-skills. We are confident the new framework will lead to a more progressive, impactful, rider-centred education pathway that effectively supports our coaches of the future.

In partnership with British Cycling and **sportscotland** we have also launched a new framework for Coach Education subsidies, which offers support for all coaches, but additional targeted support for both female and young coaches, as we look to both balance and diversify our coaching workforce.

Development & Participation

Club Development

2023 has been another busy year for the Club Development team, as they sought to support our network of clubs to maximise the impact of the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships. 95% of clubs reaffiliated to us, with 171 clubs in total affiliating in 2023, up 15 on 2022. Despite this increase in clubs, club membership numbers remained similar to the last few years.

The Community Cycling Fund (CCF), made possible thanks to the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships, has already invested close to £700k into cycling projects across Scotland. A significant portion of this money has gone directly into projects closely linked with our work, such as in Aberdeen, where SportAberdeen have recruited and deployed a Cycling Community Activator, who is supporting the rollout of Mini Riders in the city, and laying the groundwork for a new youth cycling club in the city. In West Dunbartonshire, CCF funding has supported new and existing clubs, providing resource to train and develop coaches, and run taster sessions in Balloch, and support Western Titans BMX Club to put eight coaches through the new Introduction to Coaching BMX qualification, as well as purchasing equipment for the track.

In North Ayrshire, funding supported the activation of the new Cycling Facilities Funded Dyemill Bike Park, with Arran High School MTB Club purchasing a fleet of new bikes and covering the cost of MTB Leadership training for the next generation of young leaders. Meanwhile in East Dunbartonshire, we have continued to support the Women's Track development group, supporting the delivery of women-only coaching sessions at the velodrome, resulting in more women-only races being viable. In total, Community Cycling Funded projects have reached over 1600 participants, investing in 224 coaches and 131 leaders, kickstarted six new clubs and activated 16 different facilities.

Twenty-five clubs celebrated the #PowerOfTheBike this Summer thanks to our activation fund in the run up to, during and after the World Championships. From supporting the running costs for the #WomensHour coaching sessions at the West Lothian Cycle Circuit, to hosting fun days for Meedies Bike Club and KICC, to the FNY Collective who hosted a led ride for more than 50 women during the championships and Dundee Dynamo who ran taster MTB and CX sessions for adults. Projects spanned the breadth of Scotland, reaching over 2600 new and existing participants.

Away from the World Championships, our Aspire programme, where Scottish Cycling works on an individual basis with clubs to support their goals, has continued to grow over 2023, with 41 clubs now engaged in the programme. This includes 31 existing clubs, and 10 new clubs that are part of our 'Project 23: New Clubs Plan'. The areas of focus for our Aspire clubs are expansive, from growing coaching and leadership teams, to doing targeted work around women and girls, disability cycling and facility development. Project 23 is about bringing regular youth cycling opportunities to communities where there aren't currently clubs. Over the course of 2023 we've seen new activity take place in Aberdeen, Aberfoyle, Balloch, Clackmannanan, Forest of Ae and Hawick to name just a few. We're already halfway towards 23 new clubs and we're extremely grateful to the many partners involved, and the new generation of volunteers coming forward to allow youth cycling activity.

Our Accelerate and Activate programme moved into its second year, and we have begun to see the impact of this innovative approach to Club Development. Clubs involved in the

programme have recruited three times the number of volunteers when compared to clubs out with the programme, allowing them to buck the trend in membership and see on average a 5% increase over the last 18 months. All clubs have focused on growing women and girls membership, testing a range of approaches including appointing women and girls coordinators, trialling women and girls only sessions and undertaking focus groups in clubs to understand where they can do better. Reducing barriers to participation in cycling has been a focus for most of the clubs, with over £45k in external funding secured to drive forward projects that break down barriers and allow clubs to reach new audiences.

The first phase of our Bike and Blether programme, delivered in partnership with SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) came to an end in August. Our Bike and Blether Champions, who undertook six training sessions, went on to deliver dozens of supportive rides across the country and welcome hundreds of participants. Whilst we consider the next steps for this programme, we are left in no doubt that it's shown the clubs involved ways in which they can make club rides more accessible to those who might not think the club environment is for them.

2023 also saw the rollout of the British Cycling Limitless programme, an exciting new opportunity to create and sustain opportunities within clubs for riders with disabilities. Dundee Dragons were recognised as the first Focus Club in Scotland in June, while several other clubs have already signed up to be Champion Clubs, unlocking resources and giving them direction to create more inclusive opportunities.

In August, we said goodbye to our second cohort of the Young People's Panel, culminating in them attending the BMX finals day at the World Championships. We have already appointed our third Young People's Panel cohort who will attend a residential at Glenmore Lodge in October; we are looking forward to working them over the next two years.

We have also rolled out a refreshed Young Ambassadors programme, which, in partnership with Scottish Sports Futures, sees a group of 15 young people gain SCQF Level 5 qualifications in Goal Setting and Planning Physical Activity Programmes for Young People, and equipping them with the skills and knowledge to take on a leadership role in their clubs.

Finally, this year we launched our new sport development offering, Mini Riders. Targeting four to eight year olds, Mini Riders is designed to fill the gap in the current pathway between learning to ride a bike, and joining and engaging in club activity, with the programme providing fun cycling sessions for children to develop their cycling confidence and learn new skills. A number of pilots have been held so far with Local Authorities, Active Schools, Clubs and private organisations. We are looking forward to a full roll out in 2024.

Cycling Facilities Fund

Through the £8 million Cycling Facilities Fund (CFF) there is an opportunity to deliver a lasting impact from the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships and inspire a new generation of cyclists, by creating a network of accessible community focused facilities to develop the sport at every level.

The CFF, now in its third year of funding, has been made possible through a £4m commitment of capital funding from Scottish Government and £4m of National Lottery funding from **sportscotland**.

This significant investment in infrastructure is being delivered through a partnership between Scottish Cycling and **sportscotland** to ensure projects can have a lasting impact. From pump tracks to mountain bike trails and everything in between, the CFF is placing strategic investment into facilities which will ensure there are places to ride for everyone, no matter your location or bike of choice.

The projects awarded funds in 2023 are:

Project	CFF Investment	Total Project Cost
Friends of Haughton Park	£ 100,000	£ 300,000
Clackmannan Pump Track	£ 50,000	£ 100,000
Musselburgh Pump Track	£ 80,000	£ 100,000
Ellon Wheel Park	£ 400,000	£ 848,175
Nevis Range	£ 275,000	£ 400,000
Dalgety Bay Pump Track	£ 50,000	£ 256,150
Killin Community Cycling Hub	£ 75,000	£ 174,240
Edinburgh BMX Track	£ 475,000	£ 1,451,635
Peterhead Pump Track	£ 75,000	£ 332,199
Walkerburn Pump Track	£ 50,000	£ 104,283

This is in addition to projects awarded funding in 2021 and 2022, taking the total investment in facilities through the Cycling Facilities Fund to date to £5,619,140.

A number of these facilities funded in the first two years are starting to open to the public, with 2023 seeing grand openings of the West Lothian Cycle Circuit and Tarland Trails 2, both of which have seen significant impact already. In its first six months Tarland Trails has recorded some 25,000 visits, demonstrating that the right facility, in the right place, will cater for the demands of cyclists from across the country and beyond, whilst also boosting the tourism industry in local areas at the same time.

Women and Girls Cycling

The Women's Development Group membership is representative of different disciplines, roles, and geographical areas, providing a forum for members to input into and shape the development of women and girls cycling at Scottish Cycling.

The group has met four times over the past year, sharing their ideas and opinions on a variety of topics and issues affecting women and girls' involvement in cycling. The group had the opportunity to input their opinions to the British Cycling transgender and non-binary review, and meeting agenda items have included sharing their own experiences of leading female-focused projects and preparing for the Cycling World Championships.

We continue to support the major calendar dates focusing on women and girls, including [International Women's Day](#) and [Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Week](#). This year our celebrations have included coverage of [female led projects](#), a spotlight on a [female trailblazer in BMX](#), and the launch of a new monthly female cycling feature '[BlogHer](#)'. Our Women's Development Group members have provided much of the support and collaboration required to develop and produce most of this content.

During the Cycling World Championships, and following the Elite Women's Time Trial in Stirling, we hosted a joint event with the Scottish Government entitled 'Celebrating Women &

Girls in Cycling'. Sports Minister Ms Todd joined seven inspirational women, representing both elite and grassroots cycling, in panel discussions, exploring how we can get more women and girls on bikes. This event launched our work to develop and deliver on a Women and Girls Action Plan, which we look forward to reporting on next year.

Participation Activity

The number of [Breeze](#) rides and women attending these continues to increase, with 26% more rides and 19% more attendees across the year. That being said there has been a slight decrease in the number of volunteers registered in Scotland, falling from 138 last year to 120 this year. This is mainly due to a decrease in the number of courses delivered, and therefore a reduction in the number of volunteers joining the programme. Three courses have been cancelled due to a lack of numbers, including a first attempt to deliver a course in the Western Isles. At the date of writing, four courses have been delivered, training 25 new [Breeze Champions](#). Currently, two further courses are to be delivered, both nearing capacity, which we believe will boost capacity and continue to increase overall numbers accessing our Breeze programme.

[Guided Rides](#) in Scotland have seen a 11% increase in overall attendance in 2023, with 61 volunteers supporting the delivery of this programme, a number of Breeze Champions choosing to volunteer in both programmes boosting numbers.

Led rides in support of the UCI 2023 Cycling World Championships were organised on the Community Groups platform, supporting the delivery of 28 rides. These were led by 19 ride leaders, across six different Championships locations (Glasgow, Perth, Peebles, Edinburgh, Stirling and Dumfries) and had a total attendance of 136, including ride leaders. Rides all took place on competition days, providing an opportunity for participants to celebrate and possibly catch some of the action taking place.

Overall there has been a significant increase in both the number of rides and attendance in [Community Group](#) rides, with 30% more rides delivered, and 37% more people attending.

Rock Up & Ride

Scottish Cycling's inspirational Rock Up & Ride pilot project, funded by Transport Scotland, has helped to change many children's lives across Scotland over the 19-month period that the project ran from August 2021 to March 2023.

As part of the Scottish Government's promise to provide access to bikes for school age children who otherwise could not afford them, the pilot project focused on providing a series of fun, free and easy to access fully inclusive sessions aimed at children aged 7-14 years, who at the end of a four week block of sessions would get to take their very own bike home with them.

To help remove some of the barriers that disabled cyclists experience, the Rock Up & Ride pilot project also successfully trialled an adaptive bike library model. The funding for the pilot project ended in March 2023 and by partnering with 11 different clubs across the country delivered the following:

- 1120 participants
- 876 bikes given away
- 450 hours of coached sessions delivered

Largely due to the successful impact of the Rock Up & Ride pilot project and in response to the outcomes of the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships Active Travel Strategy, Transport Scotland has funded the delivery of the Rock Up & Ride project for a further 12 months to March 2024.

Scottish Cycling has broadened the scope of the project to meet the six key objectives of a participation cycling strategy which was developed through a Scottish Government partnership with the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships Policy Advisory Group. To make this possible the Rock Up & Ride project team has been strengthened by the addition of a further three members, to include an additional Project Officer, Administrator and Participation Coach.

To help to make cycling more accessible to even more disadvantaged people in Scotland, a 'communities' led ride delivery model, building on our Breeze and Guided Rides programmes, has been added to the proven 'children's' pilot project model. This 'communities' model will target women, girls and other underrepresented groups across different communities in Scotland.

The Rock Up & Ride children's project component has partnered with eight diverse clubs and groups to provide fun, inclusive cycling sessions, bikes and accessories to around 600 children. An adaptive bike library has also been developed in Ellon with Ythan CC, who are collaborating with other local disability groups such as Grampian Disability Sport, to maximise the impact that the bike library will have.

The new Rock Up & Ride communities project component has partnered with seven different community groups, ranging from youth centres to housing organisations, and aims to reach around 1800 participants through the delivery of approximately 350 led rides and other group cycling activities. Many of these community groups are new to cycling and bring with them an audience that Scottish Cycling hasn't previously been able to reach.

Scottish Cycling is focused on monitoring and assessing the impact of the Rock Up & Ride project and has engaged with professional organisations including Young Scot and Research Scotland. We also continue to closely engage with Transport Scotland to discuss opportunities to secure further longer-term funding for the Rock Up & Ride project from March 2024 onwards.

Events

Following the launch of our [Domestic Events Strategy 2023-2027](#) at the end of 2022, the events team have been focused on the implementation and delivery of this strategy. This has incorporated the delivery of the Ride the Worlds programme, which Scottish Cycling delivered in its capacity as Official Activation and Legacy Partner of the Cycling World Championships.

The Domestic Events Strategy highlighted four key areas, against which progress has been made:

- 1) 'High-quality and high-profile Scottish National Championships and Series that showcase the best of Scottish racing'. This year saw 130 National Championship titles awarded across 17 events spanning all disciplines and categories. Six Scottish Series were delivered across BMX, Mountain Bike Cross Country, Mountain Bike Downhill, Road, Youth Circuit and Cyclocross.
- 2) 'An annual offering of British Championships and Series hosted in Scotland'. In 2023 we saw British Series rounds on the track (Sprint League), Downhill, Youth Omnium, Youth Circuit and Cyclocross – a big thank you to our event organisers.
- 3) 'Deliver grass roots events that will give everyone the opportunity to experience the thrill of events'. In total 74 grass roots events were delivered through the Ride the Worlds programme, a new initiative that was an undoubted success.
- 4) 'New partnerships that ensure we are working together to deliver the best rider experience'. A number of events delivered in partnership with new organisations, or further enhancing our partnership. In 2023 we worked with velosolutions, Trash Free Trails, Morrisons Academy, ESO, Rare Management, Glasgow life, Bike Trossachs and Dukes Weekender.

Putting all of this into numbers, between 1st January and 30 September 2023 we have supported some 208 events, with over 13,000 entries. In total 2,429 license holders took part in events, with 20% of those female and 45% under the age of 23, both of which are focus areas for us. We also supported 21 non-competitive events, which saw another 1,425 entrants, 33% of these being females.

Both the number of events, and the number of entrants has still not returned to pre-covid levels. There are a number of factors that are likely to be contributing to this, such as the cost-of-living crisis and entrants choosing other disciplines which are not currently sanctioned by British Cycling (e.g. gravel and enduro).

Whilst events face a number of challenges, we have been enthused by the surge in grass roots events throughout 2023, and are confident that by working closely with the Scottish Cycling community, events will continue to grow and we can achieve our overall vision for domestic events, which is that everyone has the opportunity to experience the thrill of events and achieve their best.

Looking more closely at Ride the Worlds, the programme aimed to capitalise on the once in a lifetime opportunity that the World Championships presented, providing young people from across Scotland, and their families, the opportunity to experience the thrill of a World Championship race, and have a taste of racing themselves. We also aimed to inspire and

empower people to start cycling, cycle more, and make cycling a sport for life, delivering a long-lasting impact that will help us develop a nation of cyclists.

Through the months before, during and after the World Championships we delivered 74 different events, with 2,337 participants, including four Race the Worlds finals, which took place during the World Championships at World Championship venues. During the event we also activated at seven championship venues, with 1,784 people getting involved in activities ranging from pump tracks to static bike sprint challenges.

Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland (DMBinS)

Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland (DMBinS) is the voice of the mountain bike community in Scotland. Working with the Scottish MTB Consortium (MTB Consortium) whose members include the Scottish Government, Forestry and Land Scotland, tourism and enterprise agencies, and all the cycling organisations, DMBinS leads and helps co-ordinate partners to deliver the Strategy for Scottish Mountain Biking, 2023-2025 (the MTB Strategy). DMBinS, and the MTB Strategy, provide national co-ordination, strategic rationale for investment, and support for the mountain bike community.

DMBinS itself help deliver many actions within the MTB Strategy, particularly relating to national co-ordination and the work within four of its key themes: Trails, Destinations, Health and Innovation.

During the UCI Cycling World Championships, DMBinS successfully launched the new [Strategy for Scottish Mountain Biking, 2023-2025](#). The MTB Strategy has a strong vision for Scotland to be leading European mountain biking and to continue to sustainably grow the economic contribution of mountain biking, increase participation, and help develop more future mountain bike stars to compete on the world stage.

The three-year MTB strategy has been developed to ensure that the success story of Scottish mountain biking continues with the growth seen through COVID-19 sustained and built upon. The development of the new MTB strategy has been led by Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland on behalf of all those with a stake in Scottish mountain biking, whether they are the mountain bike community, Scottish Government and national agencies, the tourism industry, or product designers and manufacturers.

National Co-ordination

DMBinS play an important role in listening, understanding, challenging and compromising with a number of national organisations where we form relationships which help promote the benefits of mountain biking whilst mitigating against any risks to mountain biking on a national level.

DMBinS host the MTB Consortium where all national organisations with an interest in mountain biking co-developed new MTB Strategy and reviewed the action plan and ensured delivery is as planned. The actions of the previous MTB Strategy were reviewed and 90% of the actions were delivered or on course for delivery. This year saw the release of a ['Progress Report 2019-2022'](#) on behalf of the members of the MTB Consortium demonstrating the impact of the strategy including a detailed breakdown of the circa £200m of investment that the Strategy for Scottish Mountain Biking between 2019-2025.

DMBinS played an important role in supporting EventScotland, VisitScotland, and partners in the Highlands to retain Mountain Bike World Cup in Scotland in 2024 and is working in partnership to develop a strategic business case for longer term funding for World Cups.

In October they hosted the Scottish Mountain Bike Gathering at Comrie Croft, the event focussed on diversity and inclusion, and sustainability. Feedback from delegates has been incredibly positive and the combination of theory and practical sessions was well received from delegates, largely from the industry and community organisations.

National campaigns include #ThinkWinter, which promotes good practice in mountain biking during the winter months to help minimise the impact on mountain rescue, and Take Care of Your Trails, a campaign started by DMBinS but now pan-Europe led by IMBA Europe, to promote the good work of Trails Associations and groups helping to maintain trails across

Scotland. At the IMBA Summit this year, Aberdeenshire Trails Association won the 'Protect and Preserve' award due to their work, supported by DMBinS, to safely open the trail network in the North East following storm damage in 2021/22.

DMBinS also work with the Scottish Cycling Charitable Foundation (SCF) to fundraise through 'donation model' focussed funds, the 'Scottish Trail Fund' and 'Scottish MTB Health Fund'. These funds have raised over £7,000 in donations and a fundraiser with Specialized Soil Searching and with successful grant applications over £30k this year.

Trails

Identified within the MTB Strategy are several key strategic projects which will require significant investment, but will return the largest benefits for riders, grow participation and provide economic growth.

2023 has seen several these projects being realised including Tarland Trails - Pittenderich – a long term goal achieved of securing the first trail centre for Aberdeenshire, the implementation of many trails as directed by the Highland Bike Masterplans including Laggan Wolfrax, Fort William Bike Park, Cairngorm Mountain, and redevelopment of the World Cup course at Nevis Range, Fort William.

DMBinS has also been helping prepare the business cases for the implementation of strategic projects including a Bike Park in the Tweed Valley and a refresh of the 7stanes, and as directed by the MTB Strategy has been supporting new strategic projects including Action Argyll, Dunoon and new trails in Perthshire.

Many of the strategic projects and grassroots facilities have been supported through the Cycling Facilities Fund, an £8m fund from Scottish Government which is being administered through **sportscotland**, Scottish Cycling and DMBinS. These facilities will provide the backbone to successfully grow participation, sport development, and help create economic growth in mountain biking for years to come.

DMBinS continues to help create a network of rider driven Trail Associations (TAs) who can work with landowners to protect, enhance and grow our trail network. TAs are essential for Scotland to create a network of varied and exciting trails across the country; they will also minimise the risks to our access rights in Scotland. DMBinS provided start-up funding to help Trails Associations with trail inspecting, maintenance and building courses, first aid courses, governance advice, buying tools and protective clothing and insurance. Land access is also crucial so DMBinS provides support and a respected voice, which helps agreements to be reached with landowners, largely through Memorandum's of Understandings. Once groups are up and running DMBinS promotes sessions to spread good practice and aid group collaboration through a national TAs meeting.

To continue to support TAs across Scotland, particularly in areas where there isn't a DMBinS Regional Co-ordinator, DMBinS has secured circa £210k of funding from SRAM and have recruited a new UK Trails Project Manager, David Evans. There is agreement from all key partners to form a steering group for the project including British Cycling, Welsh Cycling, Cycling Ireland, Forestry England, Natural Resources Wales, Forestry and Land Scotland, and Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland to ensure its effectiveness.

DMBinS also secured circa £240k of funding from UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund in the Scottish Borders where they successfully recruited a new regional co-ordinator, Emily Stratton. Emily join's the DMBinS team from her previous role within Scottish Cycling's successful 'Rid the Worlds' project. The funding also enabled DMBinS to retain their existing trail co-ordinator, Mark Crowley who continues to work with the Tweed Valley Trails Association (TVTA) to great success. The project will support the improvement and

development of the trail network including developing a sustainable trail plan, supporting innovation and product/service development within businesses, and helping to develop the links and courses between school, college, and universities.

DMBinS, despite no longer receiving direct funding, continues to be a partner in an EU Erasmus+ programme called the DIRT Project (Developing Inter-Regional Trailbuilding Training), which is developing the content, resources, recruiting and training tutors to develop a European network for trail building education. This year DMBinS used these resources and rolled out a new course aimed at volunteers, largely involved with trails associations – Volunteer Trail Dig Leader course. 26 volunteers will have attended the course in 2023. Two Scot's were successful in completing the first European trail building qualification through a college course in Norway set up by DIRT.

The content developed through the DIRT project was utilised in a six-week pilot of a programme working with a young person in Fort William who had disengaged with school and formal learning to re-engage him through mountain bike trail building. The programme, delivered by Ruari Watt, DMBinS Highland Co-ordinator, was extremely successful with outcomes including the young person achieving SQA credits, attendance at school gone from 17% to 100%, and improvements in his, and his wider families, health. The project then further developed as Ruari continued to work with the young person to co-deliver the project to 4 or 5 of his peers.

The staff team in Aberdeenshire, who work on the North East Adventure Tourism (NEAT) project, have secured £2m towards adventure tourism capital projects including providing the match funding for many of the CFF projects being realised in Aberdeenshire including Tarland Trails - Pittenderich, Deeside Bike Collective (Banchory), Transition Extreme pump track (Aberdeen), and Friends of Haughton Park (Alford). Thanks to funding from Opportunity North East the staff team has successfully recruited Fee Wallace who will join the team to help develop a sustainable trails plan for the area working with the Aberdeenshire Trails Association.

Research into the impact of e-bikes onto our trail network was launched at the Scottish Mountain Bike Conference with a presentation from Dr Lesley Ingram - Edinburgh Napier University, Dan Cook - British Cycling, and Tracy Moseley. The research indicates that offroad/mountain bike e-bikes have an impact on our trails, may help reduce health inequalities, and knowledge of outdoor access codes and what to do in an emergency could be improved – although e-MTBers are keen to receive further education on responsible riding.

Scottish Cycling, through the DMBinS staff team, have successfully secured a seat in the National Access Forum helping to represent mountain bikers with access issues.

Health

The DMBinS Trail Therapy programme, focused on mountain biking and contact with nature as an innovative approach to help people experiencing a sustained or acute period of mental ill-health, is firmly embedded within a therapeutic ward in South Lanarkshire and there are now three groups running in Dundee and Perthshire with a charity, NHS and GP referral units. Staff and volunteers have been recruited and are being given training to develop their skills and increase the capacity within the programme.

A formal evaluation of the Trail Therapy programme by Edinburgh Napier University was launched in August. The launch was picked up by BBC 6 Music breakfast show along with features in several MTB magazines.

A new film developed from a successful Trail Therapy intervention programme working with Hazel who has experienced mental ill health, in part due to a rare skin condition, will be premiered at the Kendal Mountain Film Festival.

DMBinS have been working with British Cycling to create a new vision for mountain bike leadership awards. The proposals have been developed through extensive partnership working and consultation with existing leaders, tutors, and a workshop at the Scottish MTB Gathering. The proposals will move towards implementation following a Tutor Development Day co-hosted between DMBinS and British Cycling at Comrie Croft.

Destinations & Innovation

During the UCI Cycling World Championships DMBinS successfully developed a fringe programme in the Highlands and Scottish Borders, featuring Tales from the Trails evenings, the launch of Fort William Bike Park, dig days, ride outs, and promotion of the local community.

Through promotion and key connections in the industry we also helped Scotland, and the Tweed Valley, be named in [Strava's top 10 mountain bike destinations](#) globally.

Secure bike storage has been installed in 18 accommodation providers to improve their level of service to visiting mountain bikers, as well as running workshops introducing our 'Scottish MTB Tourism' microsite with a series of videos and interactive tools to support MTB tourism providers to improve their offer.

DMBinS is also supporting the promotion and implementation of the Highlands & Islands Enterprise Cycling Tourism Facility Fund and the South of Scotland Enterprise Cycling Tourism Infrastructure Fund.

Business Operations

Business Plan

A refresh of the Scottish Cycling Strategic Plan saw the launch of “Developing a Nation of Cyclists 2.0” during the year. Tied into this is a new four-year Business Plan that aligns with the new targets in the latest **sportscotland** four-year funding agreement. The Senior Leadership Team report progress against these targets to the Board each quarter as well as being required to provide six-month updates to **sportscotland** to ensure appropriate progress is being made.

Communications & Marketing

The marketing and communications goals for 2023 were focused around capitalising on the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships. A new website was launch in June, focusing on the ‘new to cycling’ audience, the centrepiece being a signposting tool to allow those inspired by the event an easy way to find local opportunities in their discipline of interest. This resource was also supported by ‘lookalike’ profiles, demonstrating that the Scottish Cycling community is a space for everyone, no matter your age, gender, ethnicity, ability or area of interest. During the World Championships alone 15,000 people visited the site, with over 1,000 of those exiting to club pages, demonstrating that the new site was serving its intended purpose.

The World Championships also saw engagement on our social media channels reaching an all-time high, surpassing Olympic and Paralympic Games levels of activity. Our MarComms team were present across the championships, covering the 35 Scots who had been selected to represent Great Britain, with live updates, video interviews and written reports. Across the 11 days of action we achieved 1.9 million impressions across our social media channels, and some half a million views on our video content.

2022/23 has also seen us enhance our coverage of Scottish National Championships, as well as grassroots projects such as Ride the Worlds and Rock Up & Ride, with more video content produced than ever before.

Commercial

Scottish Cycling is delighted to continue to partner with Digby Brown who have agreed to provide increased support over the coming year for our Conference and Awards, as well as ad hoc projects that don’t fall under any of our other funding agreements. We continue to aggregate the majority of our rights with British Cycling and Welsh Cycling, on the basis that the whole is greater than the sum of our parts, but do have flexibility to attract partners in certain categories.

Membership

Scottish Cycling membership totalled 17,588 across our clubs and British Cycling memberships as of 30th September 2023, down 5.5% over the year. Total declared club membership stood at 11,221, a drop of 4% on the previous year; this included 5,472 British Cycling members with an additional 6,367 British Cycling members not registered with clubs.

Unfortunately, this decline is in line with what a number of other sports are experiencing. Women & girls and young people are our target growth areas, and female British Cycling membership in Scotland stood at 2,240, whilst female club membership stands at 2,779. Similarly, under 18s with a BC membership totalled 967, whilst club membership for U18s totalled 2,261. At the time of writing, with 2024 club affiliation underway, early signs are positive for club membership figures for the year ahead.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

With **sportscotland's** Equality Standards in Sport still under review, Scottish Cycling carried out its first protected characteristics survey of members, volunteers, Board and staff, to better understand the demographic of those involved in the sport. The results of the survey will be used to further improve the diversity in cycling to better reflect society as a whole.

Safeguarding

All clubs affiliated to Scottish Cycling continue to be fully compliant with our minimum operating standards in relation to safeguarding. With improvements to our safeguarding database, clubs are being issued with regular monitoring reports for them to update to ensure they continue to remain fully compliant. During the year, delivery of **sportscotland's** Child Wellbeing & Protection courses continued online, allowing for a range of volunteers to meet their training requirements. In addition to the relevant volunteers, all Scottish Cycling staff must undergo CWPS training to ensure they have basic knowledge of safeguarding.

Finance

The annual accounts to 31 March 2023 show a surplus of £26.1k (£22k in 2022) which was broadly in line with Board expectations for the year. Turnover has once again increased to £3,074K (£2,777k in 2022) – an increase of 10.7% as a result of additional grant funding for several new and existing projects. Expenditure increased by a similar percentage to £3,052K (£2,755k in 2022). As a result of increased interest rates, our bank interest for the year increased from £0.1k in 2022 to £4.6k in 2023. Scottish Cycling continue to make progress towards meeting the Board's Reserves Policy, with reserves now standing at £357k. The Board, Finance and Governance Committee, and Senior Leadership Team continue to actively monitor income and expenditure to ensure Scottish Cycling is in the best possible financial position to meet the challenges it will face over the coming years. Scottish Cycling would also like to express their gratitude to **sportscotland** for the new four-year funding agreement, which has provided additional resource to fund several key areas across the organisation including work to attract more women and girls into the sport and further improvements to the development pathway for attracting and growing new talent.

Staffing

As part of the drive to attract and retain the best staff possible, Scottish Cycling is constantly looking at ways to ensure it is a 'great place to work'. To this end a new online HR portal has been introduced to bring all HR records into a central location. In addition, a long overdue Cycle to Work Scheme and staff personal accident cover have also been introduced. Regular all staff meetings are held to allow staff from across the country to come together for updates, training and to input into current projects.

