

Shaking things up

Wandsworth Cycling Campaign's Movers & Shakers initiative was the beneficiary of a CLPP grant (see page 15). **Bryony Evens** explains what the project aims to achieve



Above and below left: Councillor Tony Belton, of Wandsworth Council, takes a cycling lesson with Vicky Carnegie of Cycle Training UK
 Left: Justine Greening, MP for Putney, gets some bicycle maintenance advice



Campaigners generally agree that getting the 'person in the street' on to a bike is the key to the continued growth of cycling in London. In an effort to make achieve this goal, Wandsworth Cycling Campaign (WCC) decided to go straight to the top and ask our community's 'movers and shakers' to inspire local residents to take to two wheels. We applied to Transport for London (TfL) for a Cycle London Promotion Partnership (CLPP) grant and our Movers & Shakers (M&S) project was born.

M&S is an innovative action research programme to provide community leaders and role models with bike training – and then encourage them to tell everyone about their experiences. We set out to sign up local elected representatives, celebrities, community and faith leaders, educationalists, business leaders and journalists.

We hope our Movers will start cycling (or cycle more), gain a better understanding of cyclists' concerns and generate press coverage in Wandsworth to promote cycling. We also want to explore the barriers to, and perceptions of, cycling as this will help future campaigns.

How the project came together

M&S was the brainchild of Susie Morrow, who now leads a steering group of six WCC members, including our press officer Faz Hakim. The group set project objectives, a budget and a timeframe, and sorted out the practicalities with our training partner Cycle Training UK (CTUK). We created a database of people we wanted to invite and sent out invitation letters, information sheets and a questionnaire which included questions about how the participant would be able to relay their experience to the community.

To make it as easy as possible for our nominees to say

yes, we offered one-to-one cycle training from CTUK, PR support, and assistance from WCC such as Dr Bike assessments and route-planning. We emphasised that commitment to the project would be limited to the training, brief press interviews and their help spreading the word in their community. A networking event (ie a party!) may have swung it for some.

M&S moves up another gear

Acceptances are now flowing in. Two borough MPs who promised to commute by bike to the Commons when they were elected last May have both signed up – neither was riding to the Commons as both had found it more difficult than they imagined it would be. We hope Justine Greening (Putney) and Sadiq Khan (Tooting) will be encouraged to join the MP for Battersea, Martin Linton, on the All Parliamentary Cycling Group. Also on board are local councillors and teachers, while the borough town centre managers with whom we often discuss parking and accessibility issues are also participating.

We have written to a number of borough-based celebrities, and we are hoping for a good response in order to reach potential cyclists who are wowed by the celebrity factor. We have also approached the police borough commander, health professionals, the editor of the local paper, youth workers and other community group representatives.

The first few training sessions have taken place. Talking with our Movers has reminded us how a fear of traffic prevents many people from cycling, thus denying them the simple pleasure of getting around under their own steam. Every day we're becoming more confident that we can inspire those in positions of power to help change things for the better.

Here are a few of the responses WCC received via Movers its questionnaire

"What would I like to get from M&S? Pleasurable exercise, gives me more energy...also, learning how to commute without using the car."

— MJ Parazino, teacher, Ravenstone Primary School

"Anything that reduces the use of cars is a good thing."

— Lorinda Freint, Clapham Junction town centre manager

"I'm very unfit now...so [I'm] a bit worried about that!"

— Harvey Heath, Battersea Society secretary

To nominate a community leader or celebrity for the Movers & Shakers project (or if you are one and would like to become involved), please email movers@wandsworthcyclists.org.uk, call 07803 723 425 or see www.wandsworthcyclists.org.uk