

Govia Thameslink Railway donate 1,000th abandoned bike for new life in South London

August 5, 2022



Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) have now donated more than 1,000 bikes abandoned at stations to charity recycling schemes.

GTR have been making donations for two years, since the Covid pandemic prevented the auction sales of the bikes. The train operator began to look for organisations who could make use of the hundreds of bikes, many in surprisingly good condition, left at stations each year.

They currently make regular donations by the vanload to six charity partners, based across the rail network from Huntingdon to the south coast. The charities all run bike recycling schemes and promote cycling as a sustainable way to travel and a healthy activity.

The company also worked with local authorities and NHS Trusts to donate bikes to NHS workers during lockdown.

GTR has now delivered 85 bikes to Community Cycleworks since the partnership was set up in April 2021. Working with Southwark schools and youth clubs, the charity runs 'Build a Bike' courses in which local

children learn to refurbish a donated bike over a four-lesson programme. The participants then get to keep the bike they fixed, for themselves or a family member.

Cycleworks also lead rides for children to build cycling skills, which along with their new maintenance and repair skills make them more confident and safer cyclists.

Chris Fowler, Customer Services Director for Southern, said: "It's fantastic to be working with Community Cycleworks and our other partners to promote healthy, green transport by extending the life of previously unwanted bikes.

"Cycleworks are making these bikes roadworthy and safe for young, deserving new owners, at the same time giving them the skills to make the best long-term use of them. By encouraging young people to cycle and look after their bikes we're creating lasting benefits for their future."

Stewart Vanns, Founder/Director of Community Cycleworks, said: "We are grateful to GTR for supporting more people into cycling with the donation of bikes. Before our partnership, our flow of donations was 'patchy'. Now we have a regular delivery from GTR we are able to provide a more timely service to people that sign up for our 'Build a Bike' scheme.

"These bikes go to local people, families, or children, who may otherwise struggle to afford a bike. Once riding, people then have access to our support services and drop-in Bike Fix to help them maintain and repair their bikes in the future.

"Thanks too to Vistry Partnership, our other partner who kindly covers the mechanics' worktime."

Photo credit: Govia Thameslink Railway