

PRESS RELEASE 02/2010

For immediate release:

Dame Tanni supports London Disability Cycling Forum's aims to get more disabled people cycling

Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson attended a London Disability Cycling Forum (LDCF) meeting on Tuesday March 9th to find out what is needed to get more disabled people cycling. Cycling has a high profile in the press and much government expenditure is now being spent on cycling but very little of this is directed at disabled people of any age, whether children, workers or older people.

Of her visit to the meeting, Dame Tanni said, "There are of course barriers to be



overcome in trying to raise awareness of cycling as an activity that disabled people can take part in. I found it very interesting to meet people on the ground who have direct experience of cycling, whether on 2,3 or 4 wheels, in parks or on the road. It was good to hear first hand what they think is needed to encourage more disabled people to cycle."

Members of the London Disability Cycling Forum © Wheels for Wellbeing

Dame Tanni is keen to improve access to transport for disabled people. She brings with her the kudos of her haul of 11 gold medals as a wheelchair racer and will be entering the House of Lords in March 2010.

Wheels for Wellbeing

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Neil Smith leaving the office on his trike © Wheels for Wellbeing

Neil Smith, an occupational therapist who rides a trike around town as he has balance difficulties, states, “disabled people enjoy the same benefits from cycling as anyone such as being physically active, building self confidence and reducing stress, but they also enjoy others such as increased mobility. And cycling can help to change attitudes to disabled people more generally”.

Anne Wright, who was born with spina bifida hydrocephalus, rides at Wheels for Wellbeing sessions in a Brixton park and has this to say: “I enjoy the club so much. Cycling is about trying to help myself – getting out and exercising. It has made me determined and has given me much more confidence. I’m now even learning to ride a 2 wheeler and hope to ride on the road in future. And that will make me much more independent”.



Anne Wright cycling at an off ride cycle session © South London Press

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Janet Paske, the chair of the Forum and manager of Wheels for Wellbeing, a cycling charity for disabled people, says “Transport for London has for the first time included cycling in its Disability Equality Scheme following lobbying by our Forum, which is great news. We now need to continue working with them and local boroughs to help promote cycling as a possibility for disabled people. We also want to help them design roads for people who ride 3 or 4 wheeled cycles. This helps not only disabled people, but others who ride other types of cycle, such as parents taking children to school using child carriers, people with long term health conditions such as Parkinsons who don’t have the confidence to ride a 2 wheeler safely and local businesses who do delivery runs by tricycle.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

For further information or photographs please contact Janet Paske at Wheels for Wellbeing on 020 7346 8482 or 07930 148 312

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About the London Disability Cycling Forum

The Forum is an informal network of people and organisations which believe that more disabled people should be inspired, encouraged and supported to cycle. It meets quarterly to keep up to date with what’s going on in the London cycling world, and to campaign for changes it thinks are important. The Forum is driven by providers of cycling services and others interested in encouraging more disabled people to cycle. Read the terms of reference and find out more about previous meetings at www.ldcf.org.uk.

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About Wheels for Wellbeing:

Wheels for Wellbeing (WfW) is a charity which supports disabled people to cycle, whether using 2, 3 or 4 wheeled cycles. We want people to be able to cycle safely on the road and enjoy social inclusion, health and environmental benefits on a daily basis. For people for whom cycling in a park is more appropriate, or who need 3 or 4 wheeler cycles, our emphasis is on running regular sessions so they too can enjoy doing an activity with their family and friends and benefit from regular exercise & fresh air. www.wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk .

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