

RideLondon-Surrey Case Study

Box Hill Neighbourhood Council

During the RideLondon-Surrey events Box Hill Neighbourhood Council - which is made up of eight Box Hill residents - set up a refreshment stall selling cakes and sandwiches and hot and cold drinks outside its village hall to serve refreshments to passing cyclists taking part in the 100-mile sportive.

Council Member Daphne Ladell came up with the idea after setting up a similar stall during the Olympic Cycling Road Races. Here she explains how her plans for the day of the RideLondon-Surrey events unfolded.

"I'm always on the look out for ways to raise money for the Box Hill Neighbourhood Council, which works like a parish council. We're a group of local residents who have been together for years and any money we raise is ploughed back into activities in the village.

"This year, for instance, we will hold a free Christmas party with entertainers for all the children who live on Box Hill. We'll also have our annual carol concert with a 20-foot Christmas tree where we sing carols and enjoy mulled wine and mince pies around the tree - and that's free too. This year we've also given £100 to all the local clubs to put towards their Christmas parties.

"I came up with the idea to set up the refreshment stall during the first meeting that I had with the organisers, London & Surrey Cycling Partnership (LSCP), and the National Trust.

"It all started with the Olympic cycling events. We set up a refreshment stall on the days of the road races, opened

up at 6am and immediately had a massive queue. By midday we'd sold out two-days worth of food.

"I predicted before the RideLondon-Surrey events that we wouldn't get many spectators - as it was hard for people to get to Box Hill with the event road closures - so the only way we could make money for the village was to sell refreshments to the riders.

"We have a great community up on Box Hill. There were plenty of volunteers willing to help out during

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the RideLondon-Surrey events, either by making homemade cakes or volunteering their time.

"I had to rely on a bit of guesswork before the event. Someone worked out how many cyclists would be passing and at roughly what times and out of that we had to guess how many might stop. On the day we were delighted by the number of riders who did stop.

"I opened up our village hall and at the front, where it faces the road, we sold homemade cakes, toasted and fresh sandwiches and tea, coffee and cold drinks. The village hall was also an official water station for the RideLondon-Surrey 100 participants.

"We had three people on teas and coffees, two on cakes, two on cold

drinks, three on toasted sandwiches and two on freshly made sandwiches, which sounds like a lot of volunteers but I knew that if the cyclists did stop for refreshments, we needed to serve them quickly.

"We'd never seen so much Lycra. We've got quite a big green outside the village hall and at one point you couldn't see the grass for bikes because there were so many piled on top of each other. The LSCP had to bring marshals up to manage them all. I was very pleased with how things went on the day, especially as loads of

the cyclists came up and thanked us afterwards.

"If there are other communities interested in setting up a

refreshment stall for the sportive cyclists, I'd tell them to have faith that people will want to stop and enjoy the refreshments they've put on and also warn them against over buying - aim to sell out instead.

Also, be prepared to be busy in the morning - we were. I think it also helped that by the time the cyclists got to our refreshment stall, they'd ridden over three big hills and were keen to stop.

"I spoke to LSCP straight after the 2013 event to ask if we could be an official stop again and they've already said yes. There's no doubt that the events were a good thing for our village community. If we can raise some money during the event then everyone in the village benefits."

