**Press Release**

**9 September 2022**

For immediate use

**New fun bike event in Ballater for all to thrive in the outdoors**

A new fun and inclusive bike festival for all ages and abilities will be taking place in Ballater between Friday 23rd and Sunday 25th September. The inaugural Thrive Bike is a weekend for mountain and road bikers, as well as non-bikers, to come and enjoy different trails, try out cycles from top brands and test their navigation skills in the Ballater Dash and Reliability Rides. Music and local food are among other highlights including children’s activities and a talk from storyteller and bike adventurer Lee Craigie of The Adventure Syndicate.

The Thrive Bike Team - Andy Lewis, Ben Allum, Richard Watts, Kate Stewart and Susan Allum - wanted to create a festival where everyone could enjoy the benefits of the local environment whilst reflecting the values of responsible tourism. Susan said:

“*Biking is such an accessible sport, whatever your age or fitness level, and in Scotland, and particularly around us here in the Cairngorms, we have the most stunning trails. Thrive Bike is very much welcoming everyone, bikers and non-bikers, families and those of all abilities, to come and enjoy this beautiful area and a fun weekend full of activities. All of us behind this event know ourselves how good the natural environment is for our wellbeing, and we want to showcase the fantastic trails and scenery we have here but also the local food, hospitality and other brilliant businesses that make Ballater and the East Cairngorms such a great destination.”*

The weekend’s activities include guided and self-guided rides, on road, gravel and trails and a chance to demo new bikes from top brands. Test your navigation and route planning skills in the Dash or take the Reliability Ride (26 or 125km) at your own pace, which the elite Alba Development Road Team will be joining, stopping for coffee and cake on the way, before relaxing at the end of the day with the film night or inspiring presentation from Lee Craigie of The Adventure Syndicate.

As well as a children’s play area, climbing wall, stunt show and disco; you can recharge from local food trucks on the greens; learn how to improve your health and wellness from a range of coaches, from foundation and personal training to breathing your way to better health and sports performance; and explore with Grampian Disability Sports how their bikes can open up biking for all abilities.

Learn too about how we can all enjoy the benefits of our outdoor space at the same time protecting the environment for future generations by chatting to Nature Scot and Forestry and Land Scotland.

Entry to Thrive Bike Festival is free, with tickets available for purchase for specific activities. Advance booking is necessary for certain events; demo bikes, guided rides, the talk and film night (full details at [www.thriveballater.com](http://www.thriveballater.com)). Bike hire will be available, but visitors are advised to bring their own where possible.

The Thrive Team’s aspiration is to – over time - build a recognised event of a world class standard, which balances our responsibilities towards the land, landowners, users, flora and fauna, while at the same time aiding the development of mountain biking in the area and protecting the environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

“This is Thrive Bike’s first year,” explains Susan, “And will be the foundation upon which to improve year on year.”

Profits from Thrive Bike will be invested in the local trail network, working with landowners, the Aberdeenshire Trail Association and existing, sanctioned projects.

Keen mountain biker Andy Lewis, who will also be at the event with his wellbeing business, Highland Breathwork, said:

“*This event is exciting as not only is it, genuinely, inclusive, giving everyone at every level a chance to try new trails, bikes and meet like-minded people, but the profits are going back into local bike trails. The better we can make the trail network, the more we can all enjoy being in the outdoors, and make it work for bikers, landowners and locals for all to benefit and enjoy. The fact that the whole event is filled by people and businesses from Aberdeenshire or a connection with Ballater, is what makes it special, as well as knowing that it is so brilliantly run with the environment, community and local growth so front and centre.”*

The event aims to bring adventure tourism back and away from its more common association with extreme adventure races, to allow people of all fitness and ages to enjoy the holistic benefits of being in the outdoors, as well as working Cairngorm National Park and Scottish Disability Sport, to open up the magic and value of the landscapes to different abilities.

For more details and to book events see [www.thriveballater.com](http://www.thriveballater.com).

**ENDS**

**Editors’ Notes**

* Thrive Bike Friday 23rd – Sunday 25th September 2022, Ballater Village Greens <https://thriveballater.com/thrive-bike>
* Thrive Events are designed purposefully and with integrity to provide holistic, enriching experiences for locals and visitors alike to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of Ballater, situated in the Eastern Cairngorms, Aberdeenshire. For more about the founders and purpose of Thrive see <https://thriveballater.com/about-us>
* Profits from Thrive Bike events are invested into various initiatives focused on building and improving the trail networks in the area
* The Adventure Syndicate [The Adventure Syndicate](http://theadventuresyndicate.com/) understand the physical and emotional benefits that travelling self-supported by bike in outdoor, adventurous environments can offer a person, and we want to share this understanding with as many people as possible.