

United Communities

Overview

Travelwest worked with Communities Officer Tamsin Evans to identify properties across the city that would benefit from cycle parking. United Communities had already begun to respond for tenant demand for bike parking in 2014, installing wooden sheds with Sheffield stands at several properties across the city. The sheds have been well used in some places, but less well in others. Because United Communities had already begun to invest in cycle parking, they were eager to take advantage of the match funding available through the project.

United Communities has a range of properties across the city, from low rise apartment buildings to Georgian townhouses. Existing resident demand for cycle parking led to United Communities agreeing to match fund parking for four properties in Eastville and Fishponds.

Odoni Elwell is a specialist provider of bike parking based in Newport, and was selected as the supplier given the good security features and sympathetic aesthetics offered by their timber clad shelters, as well as being fairly local to Bristol. Four shelters holding between 4 and 16 bikes each, creating a total of 36 bike parking spaces for United Communities residents.

Tamsin emphasized that bikes being stored in communal hallways has been a big health and safety problem at Freemantle Gardens (the largest site), and at a smaller site (Manor Court) the second bedrooms are very small making bikes in children's rooms a big problem. Tamsin thinks that because the flats with new cycle parking are all fairly close to town, it means that people will be able to easily get to appointments and to work.

"It has been great working with Amanda on this project as her expertise and knowledge of the industry meant she was able to come up with designs and ideas which we would never have thought of. Our previous bike sheds were literally just sheds and Amanda came with me to talk to residents about what worked / didn't work so we could ensure we learnt from our previous mistakes.

Once the bike sheds were in Amanda was able to advise on ways that our residents could access affordable bikes and accessories and this combined with the new secure storage will mean an increase in residents cycling."

Tamsin Evans, Communities Officer, United Communities

Freemantle Gardens

Freemantle Gardens is one of United Communities' largest properties, based in Eastville. Residents wanted something that they could lock securely, and which would keep their bikes dry. The existing shed was too small to meet the demand so a large shelter was installed.



Previous bike shed at United Communities



Consultation event at Freemantle Gardens, and testing out some temporary bike storage



Residents outside their new bike shelter at Freemantle Gardens with local councillor Mhairi Threlfall

<p>Regardless of whether you own a bicycle, what do you think about the new bike parking facilities</p>	<p>Please give as many details as possible: <i>Really Good. United listed and sorted it out. Great landlords as always. Well done sur trans ↑ as well.</i></p>
<p>Do you have any other comments about this project?</p>	<p><i>This is great. Decent sized and well designed. Just Wait have to drag bike thru several doors + hallways / stairs to get to use it. Plus, wait ^{bike} be sitting in my living room anymore. Hopefully enough space in the shed for everyone's bikes. But if not, still ^{big} a step in the</i></p>
<p>If you would like to be entered into the prize draw to win tickets to a local attraction (details above), please leave your name and telephone number and/or email address</p>	<p>Name Telephone number Email address</p> <p><i>(Might be worth ^{right direction} revisiting it to see if shed not ^{not} get overcrowded with bikes in a few months time. Too many bikes in the shed and it can become very difficult to get bike in/out)</i></p>

Resident response to the new shelter at Freemantle Gardens

Interview with United Communities' tenant, Berkeley Grove



United Communities' tenant with Communities Officer, Tamsin Evans, using the new bike shelter for the first time

How do you normally travel?

I travel on bike, yeah.

Is that to go everywhere?

Most of the places, everywhere close, yeah.

How often do you use your bicycle?

I use my bike very often.

Before you had the new storage, where did you keep your bike?

I used to keep my bike outside behind in the garden

How did you feel about your bike being left there?

Well I know I have a safe lock on it, so I never really worried about it that so much

How do you feel about the new bike parking?

Yeah well I feel comfortable and up with it, like, the bicycle have a home where you and I am right now, more protected, more safe

Do you think you will use this new bike storage?

Yeah, yes. It's very alright and very convenient.

Do you think the new bike shed will change cycling for you?

It will make more easier, but normally if it rains it's gonna save paint, it's gonna save everything.

Do you have any other comments?

No, it's very already and I think nothing about for the time, and now's the right time so we transfer the shed and the safe place for the bike.

Interview with United Communities' Communities Officer

You're involved with the RSL bike parking project. How did you find out about it?

We do quite a lot of work with the APE project and we get them to come to our community events. Their children's bike swap is really popular with our residents and they put me in touch with Amanda from Travelwest.

Why was your organisation motivated to get involved?

Well, we have a lot of requests from residents for secure bike parking, and at one particular location we have a big problem with people leaving bikes in the communal hallway which from our point of view is a health and safety concern and because of fire risks we regularly have to confiscate bikes where residents have left them blocking a hallway.

Now you've been involved with the project, has it met your expectations?

Absolutely. It's been invaluable. We did actually put in some bike storage on our own a year or two ago, and actually it wasn't really fit for purpose, it was basically just sheds: it wasn't really thought out. But working with Amanda from Travelwest it was just so useful to have that expertise, and she really researched where the best deals were, we did consultations together with the residents, and I'm really happy that we've got the best deal and we've put it in the best places, and already we've got lots of residents asking for keys and they're proving to be really popular.

And would you recommend this service?

Absolutely. And I did recommend it to a couple of other housing associations, and I know that they've really appreciated it as well.

Do you have any outstanding requests from your tenants for more cycle parking?

We do, and in fact one just came in last week off the back of them seeing the wonderful storage that we've already put in.

Do you have any further comments?

No, but we would be happy to carry on working with Travelwest and I'm sure we could come up with more sites!

Interview with United Communities' tenant, Manor Court

How do you generally travel?

We normally walk, because everywhere I walk is nearby. But my son is bugging me to use his bike!

How often does your son use his bike?

At the moment he doesn't really use it, he has his lessons starting on Friday so every Friday he'll have lessons with the school, so I need to bring his big bike to the school so that they can fix it for me, at the moment it's not, I put it together but I don't know what I've done wrong, cause it's kind of wobbly – so that they can fix it so that he start using it, and he knows how to ride it now so he'll be using it a bit more often

Where do you keep the bike at the moment?

In my bedroom

How is that for you?

It's not – it's up against the wall like this – one wheel up, one wheel down.

What do you think of the new cycle parking?

I think it's perfect actually, it's what I need. It's enclosed so I don't need worry about the bike being stolen, leaving it out there at night locked just on a bar, because I don't think I would leave it out there if there was just a bar to be honest. So it's a lot easier.

Do you think it meets your needs in terms of space and security?

It does. It does. Because I wouldn't leave it outside the flat because people, anyone could come in here. My last bike was stolen from back there. So yeah, it meets my bike.

Do you have any other comments?

No, just hopefully no one wrecks it!