



Advocate: Ciara Burke
Age: 50
Province: Leinster
Club: Giant Off Road
Dublin IMRC
Discipline: Off Road

What age did you get involved? 40

Why did you start cycling? I walk my dog regularly in the hills around Dublin and Wicklow. I could see all these trails and could hear the mountain bikers chatting as they cycled - it looked like so much fun.

What has been your involvement in cycling, your story? I did my first enduro in Mount Leinster in 2017, and despite a few tumbles, and carrying my bike through some parts I was hooked and have since gone on to compete in regular Gravity Enduro Events, Vitus Enduro and the Biking Blitz races around the country. I really enjoy having an event to focus on and to work towards. I have worked as a Marshall at the Enduro events: when I did my first events it was fantastic to get the encouragement from the marshals and it is a great way to get to know more people in the sport and to learn how to tackle the trails! I have also helped organise the women's only Dirty Dames enduro race. I love encouraging other women to get out on their bikes and to see confidences and friendships develop. It's a very friendly and encouraging community, even at competitions.

When I started mountain biking it was hard to get numbers of ladies / girls out on the trails, to help build a community we have built a page on Facebook "Ladies who shred" - this page has now got over 400 members and it has been a great resource to ask questions, to help people get started or make connections with others around the country. The page is a source of great support and information to anyone interested in getting more involved in the sport: we have posted beginner social spins and even some bike maintenance sessions!

Do you have a quote that you live by or inspires you? The only one that comes to mind is "just do it!"

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How do you feel cycling has benefitted you?

Over the last few years I have got to know so many people around the country it has been fantastic, the camaraderie and the support among the mountain biking community is brilliant. Through mountain biking I have visited areas of Ireland that I did not know before, I have travelled to Wales and to France and explored the mountains. My overall fitness has increased slowly bit by bit - I can nearly admit I like the climbs as much as the descents!



What have been your cycling highlights? My proudest moment was completing my first full 5 stage Enduro event in Carrick in 2018. Carrick is a really lovely location for mountain biking: as a venue it is quite compact, the trails offer tough rocky sections, flowing sections and some steep descents, the weather also plays a huge factor - dust or puddles! That feeling @ at the final descent on the 2nd day of the final stage covered in mud and smiles was just brilliant. In my first event the previous year I was only able to complete 3 of the 5 stages and I walked some of the more technical parts: to complete all the stages to manage to stay on the bike and have lots of really good company for the 2 days was just such a sense of achievement.

Early in 2020 the Giant store in Dublin approached me to become a LIV Ambassador: I was delighted and honoured to be approached to do this: my goal is to encourage ladies to get more active on the trails, to explore the amazing Coillte trails and other locations and to enjoy every single minute

What would you say to other females who may be interested in cycling? Find a small group of people that you feel comfortable cycling with and get out there! Keep getting out for short periods (even in damp conditions!). Join up with the Ladies who Shred page on Facebook and a new world will be opened up - enjoy.



What is your favourite thing about cycling?

Fresh air, friendships and adventure: every spin is different

How do you feel about becoming a Bike Like Me Advocate? Excited and ready to get started ! I am really looking forward to getting more ladies out on the trails and experiencing the thrills of mountain biking.

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