

Cycle4Jersey

Jersey's climate emergency.

Cycle4Jersey was set up to promote the use of the bicycle and similarly pedal-propelled vehicles such as those provided by Cycle Without Limits. We support agencies such as "Move More Jersey" involved in pursuing this goal.

The bicycle (and similar):

- Is cheap to buy / maintain and is efficient to use
- Is easy to park and store
- Is versatile yet easy to learn
- Represents independence
- Enhances people's interaction with their surroundings
- Reduces health issues leading to health care savings and ultimately lower taxes
- Is environmentally-friendly
- Is great fun for all ages, abilities and is universally the best transport mode for an island such as Jersey
- Has saved businesses as cyclists increase spending in local businesses
- Brings communities together
- Dramatically reduces road maintenance costs and costs connected to crashes
- Is inextricably linked to communities receiving higher "liveability" scores

The Simple Bicycle

The bicycle is one of the greatest pieces of engineering, the perfect mode of travel in so many ways. It is cheap and efficient, versatile in its use and easy to park and store. With a rack and panniers you can carry shopping or material to work or school. With an add-on seat or trailer you can carry your young children. With the modern electric power assist version it can overcome the issues of gradient, wind and age. With the growing popularity of cargo bikes, a whole new world of carrying children and goods can seriously replace car or van use. The bicycle is truly a cradle to grave means of transport with the very young to the very old all able to pedal their way. It offers all the benefits of being out in the fresh air, exercise and is pollution-free.

During lockdown many more people took to their bicycles. Families were out together in the lanes; more young children rode out on the roads than ever before. Why did we see so many more bicycles out? It was simply because during those early days of lockdown there were fewer cars out on the roads. And people felt safe. The main reason more people, young and old do not cycle is because of the perception that our roads are not safe to do so.

Looming health crisis – the Bicycle can be the catalyst for change

Years ago, children walked or cycled to school, or got on the school bus. Now many children are driven there. A recent island survey revealed 81% of school-aged children do not exercise for the minimum one hour per day. Many adults also live a very sedentary lifestyle. More than 60% of the UK adult population is overweight (Jersey is no different – this is wholly unacceptable). The main reason given to explain a sedentary lifestyle was a lack of time. The beauty of active travel is that it

puts fresh air and exercise into the daily routine. With the issues of unacceptably high obesity levels in young children, more active travel would have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our young people. But cycling is not only for young people. E-bikes make it feasible to ride into our later years. In the Netherlands, levels of cycling only drop off after the age of 70 and even at the age of 80 about 20% of all trips are made by bike. Those would be good and achievable aims to work towards. We need to encourage more people to engage in active travel as their default transport mode.

Children cannot cycle safely to school – this is unforgivable

Is it safe for children to walk and cycle to school? Are there safe routes linking the main catchment areas with the local school? There are the obvious health benefits for people engaged in active travel. Many of these health benefits are long term. We should be looking at promoting the number of children who are safe to walk and cycle to school, people walking their dogs, rambles enjoying the country lanes, local people walking to the shops, more people walking and cycling to work and people using active travel just for the enjoyment of it.

Jersey is full of roads and full of people travelling around in a number of ways. Much of the travel space is shared and our challenge is to enable everyone to move safely in a respectful way where we understand the needs of other road users. The island has a slogan of **'Putting Children First'**. Our transport policies should reflect this. A point worth considering is that in Odense, Denmark, the city's aim is for bike routes to be sufficiently safe for all children aged six and over to ride alone.

Providing a safe infrastructure to walk and cycle on is only part of the solution however. People need a safe and secure parking space for their bicycle at both ends of their journey. Planning regulations must mandate in all town and residential areas the need to ensure provision for bike/e-bike parking is included. This includes a cycle-friendly look at workspaces and in residential areas. Do new housing and work-place developments include infrastructure for cycle routes and facilities for storage?

Improved and interconnected cycle network

In every part of the island, we would suggest that there are obvious routes that stand out as having the potential to make safer routes for active travel. And every person riding a bicycle or walking is another car off the road, reducing the congestion and air pollution. Are there safe routes linking residential areas with town or local areas of shops? If not, then a recent States proposition adopted by the Assembly means roads can be designated for priority use of pedestrians and cyclists. In many cases this could be looking at The Cycle Network, 11 sign-posted cycle routes criss-crossing the island. Or it could be looking at the Green Lanes, 50 miles of roads restricted to 15 mph where the Highway Code gives guidance for priority of use to walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. Or it could be designating other roads. Examples of this include Rue de Maupertuis, St Clement and Chasse Brunet, St Saviour, both of which have recently been closed to through traffic making access to local schools safer. There are many other examples around the island for making roads safer for everyone. Speed restrictions such as the 20 mph zone through Grouville or St Aubin's, traffic control measures such as the road passing St Martin's school, segregated shared use tracks like the one from Le Hocq parish hall to Le Rocquier school, alongside Grouville Common or through St Peter's Valley and marked pavements separated by bollards running through St Mary's.

Unnecessary pollution and the pressing climate emergency

Fossil-fuelled vehicles are responsible for more than half of the nitrogen oxides in our air. Air sensors have now been installed at all schools yet the calibration of such sensors remains incomplete. Such data would highlight the worrying pollution issues we face and prove the benefits of cleaner air as vehicular-traffic is reduced. We have to cut carbon emissions by 45% under the Paris Agreement, at current levels we are only on track for a 1% reduction.

We are not advocating that everyone should ride a bike all of the time. There is a time and a place when cars are needed and longer-term cars will be electric and not petrol or diesel fuelled. Replacing petrol cars with electric ones will not solve the congestion issue and electric cars produce harmful particulates from their tyres that pollute our air. But most local car journeys are very short (under two miles) and research has shown that cars sit in parking lots for around 85% of the time. Large tracts of town are used for parking spaces; these could be repurposed as parks and outdoor spaces for the local residents to enjoy. Fewer cars driven reduce the congestion on our roads and make it easier and safer for alternative transport modes to take over. Fewer cars owned means less space needed to park them on. One car parking space can accommodate 10 bicycles. Other research shows a high proportion of car journeys are single occupancy. For the space they take up on the road, the car is not an efficient means of transporting one person on a short journey.

The island has made a commitment towards a Sustainable Transport future. It essentially mothballed the last Sustainable Transport Policy; this time we have no choice but to implement it, and more. Our politicians made a commitment to become Carbon Neutral. We promised to “Put Children First”. Promoting the bicycle as a means of active travel satisfies all three of these key targets. The bicycle, as one of the greatest pieces of engineering, could just be the answer to many of our key issues today and help us overcome the challenges demanded by our climate emergency. The States members agreed we were in a Climate Emergency – now we collectively need to act like we are in an emergency.

Viva la Velorution.



For Cycle4Jersey

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