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Name

Jan Harwood

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Party

Liberal Democrats

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Ward / Parish or PCC Candidate Position

Guildford South East

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Email address (will not be shared)

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Do you regularly walk or cycle to get to work, the shops, your doctors etc?
If not, what is stopping you from doing so?

I tend to walk everywhere and have done since my teens. I have in-fact never owned a car! At first, when I first moved away from my family home to University of Bristol, I could neither afford nor found it practicable to own a car. Since then it has become a habit and a principle. I spend a lot of time advocating for modal shift as part of a comprehensive set of actions to tackle climate change. It always made sense to practice what I preach. My wife does own a Nissan Leaf which is a full electric but I am not even insured on that! So that is a very long winded way of saying - yes I regularly walk to put it mildly. I can even be found on a bike from time to time, although my time living in Bristol and London has left me hesitant to cycle on road networks after some of the things I've witnessed.

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What do you think about the current walking and cycling infrastructure provision in your local area and how can it be improved for all (including those who hard of hearing, partially sighted or using wheelchairs, prams, cargo bikes, tricycles and handbikes etc)?

I don't think Guildford along with many towns of its era were built with walking and cycling in mind. The South East division is no different in this regard. We live in a car dominated space. Combined with the topographical challenges (that is a polite way of saying people avoid big hills!) I think our

towns design puts walking and cycling as secondary methods of travel. In order to improve this, we need to drastically rethink the way we prioritise travel infrastructure. It is not simply a question of putting down some bike lanes or wider pavements. We have to tackle to root issue and not just the surface level symptoms. Residents have to have credible options for non-car journeys that account for the realities of their daily lives. In other words, modal shift must place the burden on the institutions looking to enact it and not the end users who have to endure it! Translated to on the ground action: we should identify the specific journeys we hope to replace with car-free alternatives and build infrastructure that directly enables that choice. My money is on starting with our schools. If you can enable parents to get their kids to school in a stress free and safe manner through walking and cycling, a huge piece of the puzzle begins to lock into place.

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How do you see walking and cycling provision contributing to the decongestion and de-pollution strategy for Guildford?

Short of the invention of the all electric hover-bike, this question is a bit redundant in my opinion. If you want people out of their cars, they must have credible alternatives to their journey plan. There has to be a happy compromise between people like myself who will shun the car out of a principle, and busy families that don't have the luxury of taking moral stances on issues like this because little Johnny has to get to football practice across town at 4:30 and there is no way a responsible parent will let them get on a bike on these roads! Walking and cycling have to become credible alternatives.

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What have you done personally to improve cycling and pedestrian mobility in your area? If you are standing for re-election outline improvements you have put forward or voted for previously.

I think politicians take credit for all sorts of things and I have not been around for long enough to make my own list. As the lead member for Climate Change and Planning Policy at GBC my work has been focused at pushing forward good policy when it comes to cycling and walking infrastructure. I hope G-Bug will be pleased to see the healthy focus on this topic in the set of planning policies we will be consulting on over the summer. I think when I move on from politics perhaps I will compile a list then. For now, I have very little interest in claiming credit for this or that, to the contrary I find letting others

claim political credit to be a worthwhile price if it brings progress on this topic. I will let my time in office be its own proof. Either residents will feel there was an improvement over this time or they won't. Given my current position and set of responsibilities, I don't think it will be too hard to guess where I've been involved!

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Given the push towards active travel, what could you do to promote more considerate behaviour towards people using bicycles and those walking.

I think we reflect the norms of our routines. If there was an uptick in active travel, there would be a comparable uptick in the awareness around active travel issues like safety and infrastructure quality. It is somewhat of a chicken and egg problem in many ways. The simple answer is probably to identify the sort of "travel culture" we are hoping to emulate and promote it strongly until it is achieved. The more complex answer is: if we accept that there is a final destination we are hoping to reach with regards to active travel usage across Guildford, it is likely that the balancing act between providing infrastructure for cars and for cycling/walking, a greater emphasis will need to be placed on the latter. In other words, we should make it easier to be considerate and harder to behave poorly (for example, a dedicated cycle lane makes it easier to co-exist with cyclists on the road).

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What is preventing Guildford becoming a cycling city with mini-holland type infrastructure, where the majority of people doing short journeys choose to walk or cycle?

Money and courage. The dark and bottomless pit for both that is Surrey County Council will never achieve that outcome on its current political course. Before Holland was a cyclist heaven, it was just another European country dominated by the car. It takes years of sustained prioritisation to achieve outcomes like that. Perhaps more importantly, we need a little bit of intellectual honesty from our politicians. Perhaps we have to admit that Holland is not our ideal end goal (the difference in geography is significant after all). What I want to see is other towns like Guildford ask, "what is preventing XYZ becoming a cycling city with mini-Guildford type infrastructure". Lets accept that our unique challenges may have unique solutions, lets be a little bit brave. Because if you can't address some of these things in one of the most affluent corners of this country, what hope do we have for leaving behind a sustainable future for the next generation...