

Cait Taylor, Liberal Democrat, Friary & St Nicolas

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

When I worked in London I would cycle to the station and take my bike on the train to cycle through London. Due to family commitments and a change in work location it hasn't been possible for me to incorporate cycling into getting to work for the last few years. However, on journeys I make by car I incorporate other trips, including GP visits, to ensure additional car journeys do not take place. I regularly walk to the shops but for larger food shopping trips, I still drive.

What inhibits me from making more journeys by foot or pedal is transporting others who are not as confident cycling.

Like many people, the pandemic has made me reassess the need for travel to work. I hope to stay working from home most of the week and I have replaced larger shopping trips with more frequent smaller ones and some deliveries.

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 us...

Guildford Borough Council, like many others have declared a climate emergency. One of the key ways combat climate change is to "leave the car at home". To achieve this, meaningful steps need to be taken to encourage people to reduce reliance on cars and take up cycling, walking and other shared forms of transport.

We need to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. This could be done through more landscaped pedestrian only areas, wider pavements, altering traffic light phasing to give primacy to those walking, providing environmental cues for drivers better highlighting the presence of pedestrians and cyclists and reducing speeds. A foundation has been provided by the 'safer neighbourhood' 20mph roads in Friary and St Nicolas brought in by Liberal Democrat Councillors. We urgently need to build on this.

Cyclists need a cohesive network of segregated protected cycle lanes. Cycle lanes should not just stop abruptly or be funneled into shared space with pedestrians particularly when the width of the pavement is often not adequate. If elected, I will lobby Surrey County Council and support projects to improve cycling in Friary & St Nicolas and Guildford generally. This builds on the start provided by the 'College Link' between the station and Guildford College implemented by Liberal Democrat Councillors.

By giving both pedestrians and cyclists their own secure areas those who are hard of hearing, partially sighted, using wheelchairs or prams are better safeguarded. And designated protected cycle routes allow space for cargo bikes, tricycles and hand-bikes.

This provision for cycling and walking must be central to the opening up the riverside and dismantling the outdated gyratory system. This sort of change is costly and takes a long to come to fruition, so we need to put it at the heart of the Town Centre Master Plan currently being developed.

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

When fewer cars were on the road during the various lock-downs, particularly the first one in March last year, considerable improvements to both congestion and pollution levels were seen. In building a recovery to the pandemic we have been offered an opportunity to learn from these observations.

People walking and cycling do not take up the space that a car would. Each additional person not using a car has an immediate and direct impact on the congestion. A fully occupied car takes up more space than 4 people walking or cycling and most cars have only one or two occupants. Likewise when people walk or cycling they do not contribute to exhaust emissions.

If we can reduce our reliance on cars enough we will lessen the public health impact of exhaust fumes. Research by Imperial College London, among many others, finds that that poor air quality directly leads to extra hospital admissions for asthma and serious lung conditions.

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.

My contribution is limited to ensuring that my family all have bicycles and have undertaken bikeability training. If elected I will consider it a priority to implement the points I have noted in answer to question 6.

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

Education is key. Today when cycling through town, I was 'beeped' by a Hummer. I was following the highway code and maintaining my position in the road appropriately. Drivers need to be reminded that cyclists are entitled to use the full width of the lane in the same way as cars or other traffic and the reason for doing this is to ensure that cars don't squeeze past where there isn't enough space to do so safely and to provide flexibility to avoid potholes and drains. Improved community design and better signposting, implementing the measures suggested at 6. to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists would help change mindsets and improve attitudes all round.

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?

The main impediment to people opting to cycle regularly is that they don't feel safe. Road markings are not enough to make people feel safe. Separate shielded lanes are needed to protect bicycles users. The Dutch have been developing their infrastructure for over 50 years and there is a lot we can learn from their extensive research and experience.

Political courage is needed to make these changes but Guildford and its residents would gain from increased health benefits resulting from lower emissions and improved traffic safety (see Working Together to Promote Active Travel: A briefing for local authorities Public Health England May 2016).

And with less space occupied by vehicles there may be more room for a few more green spaces.