



**Coronavirus  
and  
Cycling**

Issue 87  
June 2020

**The Voice of Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire**

**KEEP  
ALERT  
AND  
CARRY ON  
CYCLING**

# CYCLING CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE

*Founded 1992*

## *Committee*

Chair	Peter Blakeman
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@cyclebedford



cycle\_bedford

## **Campaigning Representation**

CCNB is represented on the following committees:

Bedford Cycle Strategy Group (disbanded July 2018)

Bedford Stations Travel Plan Steering Group

Bedford Hospital Bicycle Users Group

and is a key stakeholder on the preparation and implementation of the:

Bedford Green Wheel

Local Transport Plan (LTP3)

It is affiliated to  (<http://www.cyclenation.org.uk>)

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# Editorial

Over the last few months we have seen a global lockdown in an attempt to flatten and reduce the number of people catching, and in too many cases dying, from the pandemic coronavirus, Covid-19. In the UK a complete lockdown of the country was introduced on 23 March 2020.



One positive outcome during this period seen in many towns and cities across the world, including Bedford, has been the significant reduction in traffic with less congestion and noise and significantly cleaner air. This has resulted in the many people who were unable to work at home using a bike to commute.

Initially, anyone not self isolating for underlying health reasons was allowed to take outside exercise once a day and many, including families with young children, have taken to cycling.

With a partial easing of the lockdown from 9 May, 1 June and again on 15 June the advice was not to use public transport unless absolutely necessary, meaning the level of traffic has started to increase again.

When the lockdown is completely removed in the UK this could see an extra one million cars on the road - everyday. Not only will this bring towns and cities across the country to a standstill, it will mean more toxic air, more climate wrecking carbon emissions, more road deaths, more noise, longer traffic jams workers and less public space.

CCNB is therefore pleased to see cycling rapidly moving to the top of the governments agenda with further grants and recommendations to local authorities. CCNB calls on Bedford Borough Council and the areas businesses to take this on board to make the borough and in particular the Bedford urban area the great '**Town of Cyclists**' and '**Cycling Friendly Communities**' as it was in the past.



This latest pandemic, following on from other recent deadly viruses and more expected in the future, is nature's way of showing that the planet is at the edge of a breakdown, and it is time for climate change to be taken more seriously. There is now less than 10 years to try and avoid the worst.

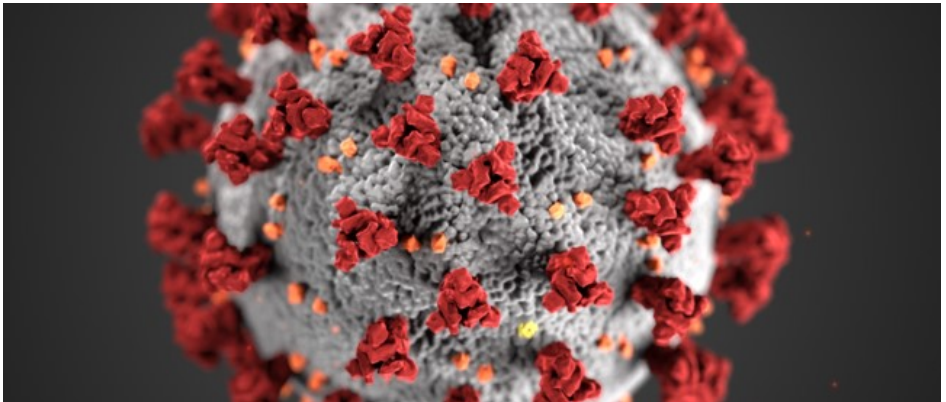


# What is Covid-19?

Covid-19 is the latest strain of coronavirus which was first identified in humans in Wuhan, China in December 2019. Since then it has spread all over the world to become a global pandemic responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, including more than 40,000 (date 6 June) in the UK.

There are millions of viruses in wild animals of which only about 100 have been identified. At anyone time there may be around 50 active just in Asia and Africa alone which have jumped from animals to humans. Over the last few decades the number of serious ones appear to have increased.

SARS-Cov-2 given the name Covid-19 is the seventh coronavirus, the name for the spiky projections on their surface similar to the points on a crown. The overall molecular structure of this latest virus is distinct from the other known coronaviruses and most closely resembles viruses found in bats and pangolins that have been little studied and never known to cause humans any harm.



Two other recent coronaviruses which affected humans severely have been the 2002-03 epidemic of SARS-CoV (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and the 2012 MERS-CoV (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome).

The former also originated in China from civets sold for meat in Chinese markets carrying the virus from horseshoe bats to humans and the latter which emerged in Saudi Arabia from camels and is still active.

Other coronaviruses have typically caused just mild symptoms.

Plagues and epidemics have ravaged humanity throughout existence. Other recent ones being: Asian Flu: (1957-1958), AIDS (1981-present day), H1N1 Swine Flu (2009-2010), West African Ebola (2014-2016) and Zika Virus (2015-present day).

# Coronavirus and Cycling

In the last newsletter under an article 'Car-Free Towns and Cities, CCNB reported on UK towns and cities which were planning to counteract air pollution, dangerous roads, physical inactivity, community severance and congestion. These plans have now become high priority issues.

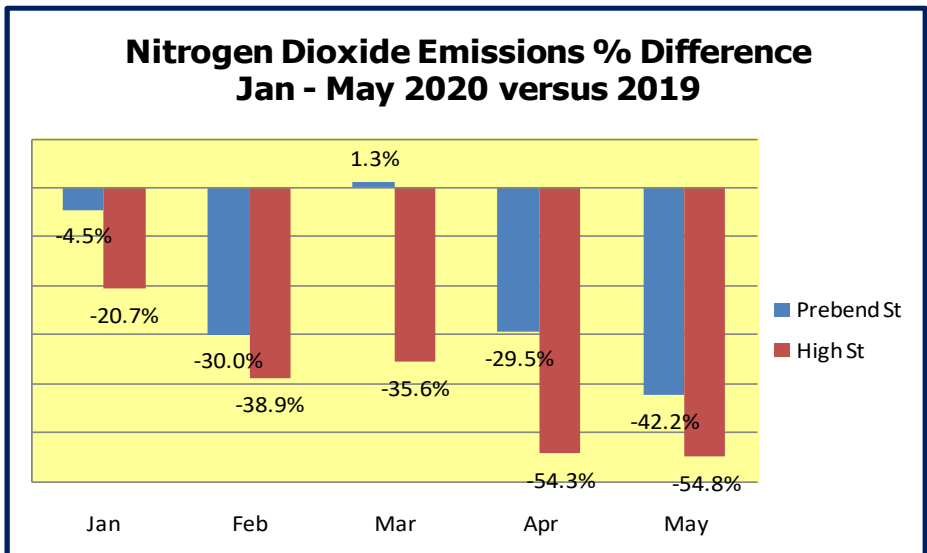
With the rapidly changing global climate and UK's declaration of a 'Climate Emergency' the need to reduce greenhouses gasses has become more important. The coronavirus pandemic Covid-19 has greatly increased problems due to the worldwide lockdowns.

In the UK lockdown took effect from 23 March 2020 with the message to 'Stay at Home' and only leave home for an extremely limited number of reasons ensuring that social distancing guidelines were kept. A daily exercise could be taken by walking, jogging or cycling.

This was detailed in a *cyczine* published by CCNB (see page 28).

One of the early positive effects of the lockdown was an unprecedented fall in motor traffic particularly noticeable in Bedford and elsewhere resulting in significantly lower pollution levels from particulate matter, carbon dioxide from petrol motor vehicles and nitrogen dioxide from diesel vehicles. at a stroke helping to reduce climate change and improve the health of residents.

Nitrogen dioxide levels from the automatic hourly sensors in Bedford Prebend Street and High Street over the period January to May 2020 (below) has shown a 21/41% decline over the same period last year.



The air has been cleaner, birds can be heard singing, especially the dawn chorus, and the sudden increase in insects has been seen to splatter car windscreens, something which has not been observed for many years.

The lockdown also saw in Bedford and elsewhere an upsurge in active travel as many people who still had to go to work and those taking their daily exercise used a bike, and particularly for the latter, families with young children. Many of these people had not used a bike for some time, if ever. This resulted in old bikes being brought out from the back of garages and an upsurge in new bike sales.

The UK lockdown was slightly eased on 9 May 2020 and still further from 1 June 2020 with recommendations for people who could not work from home to begin commuting again, but ideally to avoid if possible the use of public transport and preferably to cycle or walk if not to travel by car. This has given the wrong message. Even before these announcements there were signs that traffic was starting to increase and this has continued to the date of publication of this newsletter. When lockdown is eventually completely stopped it is feared that traffic, if not controlled, will rise to an higher level than before due to people continuing to shun public transport and using a car instead.

**Commentators have stressed that pollution MUST not be allowed to revert back to 'previous levels'.**

This upsurge in active travel and the use of sustainable modes; cycling and walking, must be maintained to help reduce the increasing world crisis of climate change and the burden and costs on the NHS as people become more healthier – one of the many effects of pollution is the increase in cardiovascular health problems which has seen an increased susceptibility of people to catch the virus.

Following from the government's announcements (outlined on page 11) letters were sent to the borough's Mayor by CCNB members and others what actions would be taken in Bedford. This was also the subject of two questions at the beginning of the Climate Emergency committee's virtual meeting on the 11 May 2020 (page 13).

The Mayor announced on 5 June 2020 that to encourage pedestrians and cyclists back into the town centre safely the High Street would be reduced to one lane and the pavements widened. No mention was made for any improvements along the road for cyclists. The works are expected to commence on Monday 22 June 2020.

Cyclists will be catered by introducing new cycle lanes and markings later in the summer on River Street, Greyfriars, Bromham Road and the Embankment.

# The Rise of the Anthropocene Epoch

The Holocene epoch has given planet earth 12,000 years of stable climate since the last ice age. During this period civilisation arose, agriculture developed and science was born. This all changed in the mid-1850s with the start of the industrial revolution.

One hundred years later the earth had been profoundly changed due to the extent of pollution and mans interference in nature, transforming the land by deforestation and development causing a rise in temperature and sea levels and the global mass extinction of species. This has led to a call over the last few years for the Holocene to be replaced by the **Anthropocene** era - the age of humans - from around the 1950s.

Since then events have started to put humans and all life in a precarious position with threats from climate change as well as water shortages and increasing energy and food demands.

Climate change is already seeing accelerating increases in weather changes causing extreme rainfall and floods, rises in sea temperature, acidification and level due to arctic ice reduction, melting glaciers with loss of biodiversity and global inequality.

This is due to the increasing global temperatures from greenhouses gas emissions in the upper atmosphere, mainly carbon dioxide, from industry, domestic and transport activities.

Climate scientists are now saying that we have to reach zero carbon emissions by 2030 and if possible to limit the rise in temperature to 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial levels.

At 2 degrees C or higher some parts of the world by mid-century will be too hot to live in or below sea level causing trade disruption, large scale migration, humanitarian disasters and shifting ecosystems.

The editor of the Royal Society of Chemistry journal in 2016 (four years ago) put it in perspective when he said:

*"We are the first humans in history whose activity has reached such a scale that it affects the whole planet.... The Anthropocene warns us that time is short, but we can still work to make sure that it is defined by positive human impact. Otherwise, the first man-made epoch may also be our last."*

In Bedford transport made up 41% of total carbon dioxide emissions in 2017, a significant increase from the 29% in 2005.

This is why time is getting shorter to help save the planet. We have to urgently use sustainable transport; cycling and walking for short journeys wherever possible and in combination with buses and trains for longer ones.





### *Thwaites Glacier in Antarctica*

*This vast glacier is about the size of Great Britain. While it has been shrinking since the early 1990s, ice loss has almost doubled over the past 20 years. It is shedding a dizzying 35 billion tonnes a year. On its own, its collapse would raise seas by around 65cm. That is worrying enough in the context of the 19cm rise in the whole of the 20th century. But the bigger worry is that this glacier buttresses the entire West Antarctic ice sheet. If Thwaites goes, the fear is it will trigger a wider collapse of ice – enough to raise sea levels by a calamitous 3.3 metres within a few hundred years.*

### **Carbon Dioxide Levels**

Global carbon dioxide emissions have fallen dramatically since lockdowns were imposed around the world and it is expected that this will result in a fall for 2020 of about 7% allowing for increases in traffic as lockdowns are eased.

In the meantime global figures from Mauna Loa Hawaii at beginning of June were still showing rises although these are expected to fall over the next few weeks:

01 June 2020 - 418.32ppm	(+0.94%)	(+6.54%)
02 June 2019 - 414.40	( 0.00 )	
02 June 2010 - 392.63		( 0.00 )

To meet the Paris target of well below a 2°C rise, ideally below 1.5°C, global emissions have to fall by 7.6% per year over the next 10 years.

# Government Funding for Cycling

Announcements made by the government over the last few months suggests that cycling is being raised to the top of the agenda after the lockdown is over.

In the last newsletter (Issue 86) there was an article on the government's announcements in February 2020 to expand the 'Bikeability' cycle training scheme by 400,000 places each year so it can be offered to every child in the UK. A few days later five billion pounds of new funding was promised to overhaul bus and cycle links in every region in the UK outside London; £350m for cycling over five years.

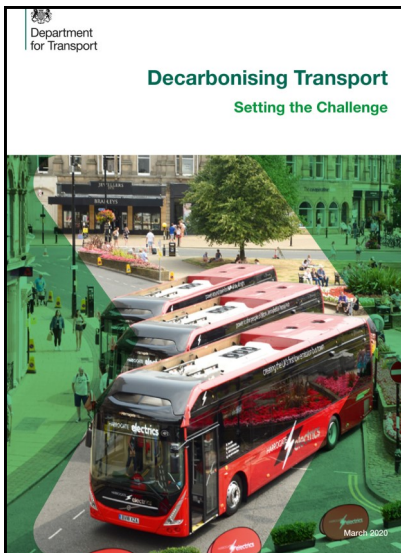
In their first budget of the new parliament on 11 March 2020 £1bn was announced for 'Green Transport Solutions' but none committed for cycling and walking.

Towards the end of March 2020 the DfT quietly published a document '**Decarbonising Transport: setting the challenge**' stating the current challenges and steps to be taken to develop a transport decarbonisation plan.

One of the six strategic priorities of the plan to be published in the summer is to deliver a vision of a net zero transport system accelerating a modal shift to public and active transport (see below).

The document can be seen under:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/878642/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878642/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf)



**Accelerating modal shift to public and active transport**

- Help make public transport and active travel the natural first choice for daily activities
- Support fewer car trips through a coherent, convenient and cost-effective public network; and explore how we might use cars differently in future
- Encourage cycling and walking for short journeys
- Explore how to best support the behaviour change required

Further encouragement for cycling was reinforced by the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, in his Prime Minister's question time in the Commons on 6 May 2020 where he said that as the UK looks ahead to life after lockdown it should be a new '**Golden Age for Cycling**'.



This was followed on 9 May 2020 by the Department for Transport announcing the provision of an emergency £250m active travel package, the first stage of the £2bn investment announced in February 2020. The fund will enable local authorities to create pop-up bike lanes with protected space for cycling, wider pavements, safer junctions and bicycle and bus only corridors within weeks.

Vouchers were also to be made available for bike repairs to encourage people to get their old bikes out of the shed or garage while plans were developed for greater provision of bike fixing facilities.

Trials of rental e-scooters are to be brought forward to increase green transport options

Fast-tracked statutory guidance (updated 23 May 2020) was made available to local authorities to enable them to introduce schemes straight away on a temporary basis at first to avoid the normal bureaucratic processes.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, said at the time that thanks to these plans far more people will be cycling and walking to boost greener, active transport.

The latest guidance can be seen at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities/traffic-management-act-2004-network-management-in-response-to-covid-19>

The indicative funding allocation for local transport authorities of the emergency active travel fund to support the production of cycling and walking facilities was published on 29 May 2020. The funding was to be available in 2 tranches;

- 1 - to support the installation of temporary projects for the Covid-19 pandemic and
- 2 - to help fund the creation of longer term projects.

with the objective to make it easier for people to choose to cycle as an alternatives to public transport.

The allocations have been made using a formula based on census data of all residents aged 16 and over in employment who use public transport as their usual method of travel to work..

## Situation in Bedford

Bedford Unitary Authority has been allocated a total of £606,000, £121,000 under tranche 1 and £485,000 under tranche 2.

CCNB believes this is excellent news for Bedford.

An initial package of measures was announced by the Mayor on 5 June 2020 which will be carried out shortly in the town centre area (page 7).

In other recent news from the government an updated Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) is to be launched in the summer with further measures to transform cycling and walking to deliver the government's aims to double cycling and increase walking by 2025 - including:

- the creation of a national cycling and walking commissioner and inspectorate
- higher standards for permanent infrastructure across England
- getting GPs to prescribe cycling and exercise
- creating a long-term budget for cycling and walking similar to what happens for roads.

*The poster (right) has been created in the image of the motivational World War II poster*

**'KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON'**

*produced by the government in 1939 to raise the moral the British public threatened with Widely predicted mass air attacks on major cities.*



# KEEP SAFE

AND



# Town Deal Board

In August 2019, Bedford was selected as one of 101 towns to develop a Town Investment Plan to bid for a Town Deal of up to £25m. The funding has been established as a result of the Government recognising that there had been too much focus on larger cities and not enough on smaller towns.

A prospectus for the Town Deal was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in November 2019.

As part of the initiative a Town Deal Board had to be established consisting of public and private representatives who will lead the development of the plan which will focus on regeneration skills and business support and connectivity. A draft plan was to be produced by summer 2020 and submitted to the Government in August to October 2020 and if approved delivery to start in April 2021.

The newly formed 19 member Board met for the first time 20 January 2020 at which the requirements were reviewed.

From the Town Centre consultation held last year (see CCNB Newsletter Issue 85 - October 2019) six key areas had emerged which would be taken forward:

- Leisure and entertainment
- Retail
- Connectivity
- Culture and the environment
- Community
- Crime and safety

At the **second meeting on 24 February 2020** opportunities for funding from current and outstanding projects were noted including for cycling the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LC&WIP).

Improving access to cycling was recorded as one of the prospective project ideas.

The **third meeting took place on 3 March 2020** where two 'work in progress' documents were presented - Project Suggestions and a draft Bedford Town Centre Plan.

## Project Suggestions

In this document the original themes had been condensed into three:

- Regeneration
- Arts and culture
- Connectivity

The last theme was divided into three projects; Transforming Bedford 2030, Cycling and Connectivity and WIFI Connectivity in Town Centre.

## Cycling and Connectivity

*The objective of this project is to improve connectivity for Bedford' cyclists across the town centre. The aim would be to create a cycling environment suitable for beginner cyclists and family cycling as well as more confident cyclists. This would be achieved through network improvements and sign posting; resurfacing; Bromham Road Bridge and South-North connectivity.*

The document gave more details and examples of good practice.

Cycle path in pedestrianised area - Leicester and Islington Green in London

Alternative routes: segregated cycle lanes - Bristol

Contra-Flow lanes - Dame Alice Street Bedford

Timescales, risk/dependencies, possible costs/funding opportunities and successful outcomes were finally discussed.

The document was updated on 13 May 2020 with a paragraph inserted to respect the government's latest announcements on the coronavirus lockdown which had been introduced on 23 March 2020.

*Local governments are being encouraged to respond to Covid-19 by increasing access to cycling and walking routes for residents. Cycling and connectivity should be a consideration across the Town Investment Plan.*

The latest project suggestions document (updated on 13 May 2020) can be seen on:

<https://www.councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/documents/s49866/Item%205ii%20-%20Bedford%20Town%20Deal%20Board%20-%20Project%20Summary%20Statements.pdf>

## Town Centre Plan Draft

The only mention of cycling in the whole of the 18 page document is under Future Plans - Connectivity - To deliver improvements to the cycle network to attract more people into town.

CCNB put in a response to the draft plan in mid April following a request for feedback from stakeholders to three questions - its vision, future priorities and general thoughts.

The Town Centre Plan draft can be downloaded from

[https://www.councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/documents/s49158/Item%206%20-%20EG006\\_20\\_Town-Centre-Plan\\_A4-DRAFTv4%20Updated.pdf](https://www.councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/documents/s49158/Item%206%20-%20EG006_20_Town-Centre-Plan_A4-DRAFTv4%20Updated.pdf)



# Heartlands Outline Transport Strategy Draft

Bedford Borough is a member of England's Economic Heartland which stretches from Swindon across to Cambridgeshire and from Northamptonshire down to Hertfordshire. The region has a total population of more than five million.

A Transport Forum chaired by Bedford Mayor, Dave Hodgson, was established in 2016 and as the region's Subnational Transport Body is responsible for preparing a Transport Strategy.

A draft document was published in July 2019 with title 'Outline Transport Strategy: Framework for Engagement' with a request for views by the end of October 2019.

The document can be downloaded from:

<http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Documents/Outline%20Transport%20Strategy%20Framework%20for%20Engagement.pdf>

An updated version is to be published shortly for formal consultation.

The final adopted document will then provide the long term plan for investment in strategic infrastructure and services for the period to 2050.

In the original document it quotes the vision for the region as '*Connecting people and places with opportunities and services*' with the ambition to have a zero carbon transport system by 2050.

Future growth must improve the region's quality of life and environment and gives the opportunity to deliver environmental net gain as embodied by the government's 25 year Environment Plan as well as drawing on the government's Industrial Strategy's four main challenges; artificial intelligence and data, an ageing society, clean growth and the future of mobility.

In seeking a debate on the future of transport it commissioned perspectives on how scenes familiar across the region might be transformed over the next few years.

*Key to numbers in top right illustration*

- 1. Highways redesigned to support walking and cycling.*
- 2. New wider pavements allow for the inhabitation of the street space.*
- 3. Cycle lanes and associated infrastructure including parking and charging locations for e-bikes.*
- 4. Introduction of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and tree planting to respond to the challenges of climate change and improving air quality.*
- 5. Decluttering the streetscape of unnecessary signage and street furniture.*
- 6. Provision for local deliveries to be made by electric/hydrogen vehicles, providing first mile/last mile logistics.*
- 7. Supporting the uptake of local deliveries by electric cargo bikes.*
- 8. Potential for 'parcel pipes' to be integrated beneath carriageways.*



The example (see illustration top below) dear to the heart of CCNB is how High Streets could be rejuvenated by offering a safer, greener and more attractive place for people to enjoy, ensuring they remain a central hub for urban communities.



*A typical High Street below transformed above*



# Climate Emergency Committee

The Borough held its **fourth meeting** of the Climate Emergency Committee on 9 March 2020.

One of the main agenda items discussed and approved was the **Carbon Reduction Delivery Strategy (CRDS)** which sets out the approach that Bedford Borough Council will take to become Carbon Neutral by 2030.

The key aim of the strategy explains where the council are to date, and the future actions that will need to be taken as a whole to meet this carbon neutral ambition. It also touches on some carbon reduction activities being undertaken by the council already to achieve the objective of reducing emissions of climate changing greenhouse gases

The strategy can be seen on :

[http://www.councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/documents/s48855/Item%2005%20-%20200309\\_CCC\\_Carbon%20Reduction%20Delivery%20Strategy.pdf](http://www.councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/documents/s48855/Item%2005%20-%20200309_CCC_Carbon%20Reduction%20Delivery%20Strategy.pdf)

The priority area for Business Travel included actions to:

- Encourage staff to adopt sustainable transport options such as cycling and walking, car sharing, public transport and ultra-low emission vehicles
- Consider a corporate Smart Travel Plan for staff and members to reduce our carbon impact through cutting the amount of travel (e.g. video conferencing), using cars more efficiently and switching to public transport, walking and cycling

The work highlights that there are significant challenges in reducing energy demands and offsetting any remaining carbon dioxide emissions. The Council will need to actively work towards a transformation in the transport sector by replacing all existing vehicles with low and zero emission vehicles. In addition, it will be necessary to reduce vehicle use /mileage through behavioural change and modal shift. As part of this it will:

- Review if facilities and cycle networks within the borough are fit for purpose, to make cycling an attractive option for staff to take up
- Improve cycling provision: secure bike parking/lockers and drying cabinets to promote cycling as an alternative to one person car trips

It was noted that each cyclist frees up a car park space, saving several hundreds of pounds per space annually. A one percentage year on year increase in cycle mode share. (Each cyclist saves 0.22 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per year over a car driver).

At a **fifth virtual meeting** on 11 May 2010 no agenda items were related to cycling but at the beginning of the meeting two questions were asked on council's plans in respect of the government's announcement two days earlier to give funds to allow the creation of 'pop-up' temporary facilities for cyclists and pedestrians (pages 7 & 12).

# Public Attitude to Climate Change & Cycling

The latest BEIS's (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) Public Attitudes Tracker for March 2020 was published in May 2020.

Three quarters (76%) of the people surveyed said they were concerned about climate change although only just under half (47%) believed it was caused by human activity. 47% thought the government should take the most responsibility for it and only 25% the general public.

Most people were concerned about the rising sea levels and flooding (51%) followed by rising temperature/hot summers (38%), extreme events (32%), pollution (16%) and health (15%).

In actions taken by the public in everyday life, choosing to walk, cycle or use public transport more instead of using a car came third at 46% after avoiding food waste (54%) and minimising energy use in the home (51%). Only 12% said they use sustainable transport for climate change reasons.

The full report may be seen under:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/883255/BEIS\\_PAT\\_W33\\_-\\_Key\\_findings.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/883255/BEIS_PAT_W33_-_Key_findings.pdf)

Note - Report findings were collected just before the Covid-19 lockdown.

## Department for Transport Survey

The above results were similar to last year's Department for Transport National Travel Attitudes Study. This had revealed more than 75% of people in England believed everyone had a responsibility to reduce how much they use their cars for the sake of the environment.

Only 43% of car drivers were willing to reduce their amount of driving to help improve the impact of climate change but 36% said there was no point in reducing their use of a car to help the environment unless others did the same. The Government still had plans to spend billions on motorways and trunk-roads, while starving councils of the funding for cycling, walking and other clean and healthy local transport options.

61% continue to say it is too dangerous to cycle on the roads although 71% of respondents are in favour of having 20mph speed limits in residential areas to improve cyclists and other vulnerable people's safety. This was the same as 10 years ago.

Traffic congestion in towns and cities is said to be a problem by 68% which has increased from 51% ten years ago. Exhaust fumes from traffic in towns and cities at 60% is similar to what was cited in 2009 (59%).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/national-travel-attitudes-study-ntas#road-journeys-and-the-environment-ntas02>

# Bromham Road Bridge Update

Network Rail announced on 2 June 2020 that the bridge would be fully open on Tuesday 9 June.

In early April, they said it would be fully open in the Summer and not by the end of April as was originally expected due to delays resulting from the need to keep workers safe during the coronavirus lockdown.

However in mid-April the south side footpath and half of the south side carriageway were opened for pedestrians and cyclists. This allowed both pedestrians and cyclists to cross the bridge while maintaining the recommended 2 metre separation during the lockdown.



*Footpath and carriageway in late April looking westwards leading up to the bridge*

The temporary bridge was closed and demolition started but is not expected to be completed until there is an overnight shutdown in July. Spencer Road will be finally opened during August.

In the meantime the outcome of last February’s public inquiry into CCNB’s objection to the absence of cycle infrastructure across the bridge is still outstanding.



There has been no further news on the provision of the separate cycle bridge although in the recent update (13 May 2020) of the Bedford Town Centre Deal - Project Suggestion document (see page 15 for reference) it mentions under time scales that it could take up to 29 months to design and 10 months to construct.

This would give a completion date of 2023, three years time! CCNB was told in January 2020 that three potential designs had already been done.

## Manton Lane School Junction

At the beginning of April 2020 the Manton Lane part of the Northern Gateway project, one of the schemes under the Transporting Bedford 2020 Project, was completed including the dual use path across the signalled junction at the entrance to the Bedford Modern School entrance (see photo below).



*Manton Lane cycle path at BMS entrance now signalled*

CCNB's initial concern is that in the absence of signals and markings on the path at the crossing the safety of pedestrians and cyclists may be compromised. The crossing in the past has been subject to a number of near misses.

A safety audit is due to be carried out shortly but it will probably not be possible to see how the junction operates until the school reopens.

# Amphill Road Toucan Move

As part of the Transporting Bedford 2020 project for the Southern Gateway scheme along Amphill Road the road will be widened at its north end by narrowing the west side footpath to allow the bus lane which currently finishes near Victoria Road to be extended as far as the Bedford Hospital A&E entrance.

To facilitate this extension the current Toucan crossing located to the south of Aspley Road has to be moved to the north side.



CCNB has no objection to the move as long as it is still connected to the town's orbital 'Avenue' cycle route. CCNB has suggested that the route should be signed westwards up Aspley Road to Victoria Road with a cycle zebra crossing provided to safely get across Kempston Road on its way to the town centre via the Britannia Bridge. To the east a dual use path is required south to Ridgmount Street with an on-road route signed up Ridgmount Street to Sandhurst Road and in reverse using both cycle symbols on the carriageway and finger posts.

## Ford End Road/South of River Workshops

Masterplans for the Ford End Road area (including the gas works area) and South of the River (including the Kingsway and St John's station areas) were approved by the Borough Council in 2018 and the cycling elements proposed listed in CCNB's Newsletter Issue 82 (October 2018).

In early May 2020 consultants on behalf of the council held virtual workshops to obtain ideas from the general public on both areas to enable them to draw up comprehensive planning briefs and design codes.

The public will be able to have further says on the schemes in a more formal consultation to be held later in the year.

## Bromham Road Junction Cycle Zebras

The construction of cycle zebras on each arm of the Bromham Road/Ashburnham Road/Shakespeare Road mini-roundabouts have now been completed, except for the Shakespeare Road arm, ready for the Bromham Road bridge opening on 9 June 2020.



*Bromham Road (east) cycle zebra 7 June 2020*

*Bromham Road (west) cycle zebra 7 June 2020*





# Cardington Hangers Estate

Work has started on the installation of the cycle/Pedestrian path to the new Cardington 425 dwelling 'Falcons Lodge' development site behind the hangers.

The path (and road) connects to the existing cycle network from the east arm of the Greycote roundabout.



# Millbrook Station Covered Cycle Parking

Millbrook station on the Bedford to Bletchley Marston Vale railway line is due to have covered cycle parking installed adjacent to the entrance to the Bedford platform at Millbrook in August 2020. This project has been funded by a Section 106 Agreement.

# E-Cargo Bikes

The borough was successful in May in obtaining a grant from the Energy Saving Trust in conjunction with the University of Bedfordshire and Flamme Rouge cycle shop to pilot 6 e-cargo bikes.

They will be used by Council Officers on service duties and as such will help to reduce the borough's carbon content by taking a number of vehicles off the road.



# Future of Transport Regulatory Review

Following on from last years Department for Transport's document Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy in March 2019 a new document published in March 2020 called for evidence with a consultation period from 16 March to 3 July 2020.

The call for evidence asked for information and views on 3 areas of the 'Future of transport regulatory review'. The areas are:

- micromobility vehicles
- flexible bus services
- mobility as a service (MaaS)

In the case of certain micromobility vehicles (such as electric scooters) it asks whether they should be permitted on the road, and if so what vehicle and user requirements would be appropriate.

The forward states that the aim of the consultation is to try and understand the true benefits, and costs of each new technology or service. We want transport to be cleaner, safer, healthier, greener, cheaper, more convenient, and more inclusive. We want new technology and services to reduce traffic but not sustainable modes such as walking and cycling.

As a result the evidence will be underpinned by a number of key principles, one of which is that walking, cycling and active transport must remain as the best options for short urban journeys.

## Use on Pavements

One of the questions posed in the consultation was whether other micromobility vehicles in addition to ones currently allowed should be permitted to use the pavement or pedestrian areas. If so, which types of devices should be permitted and in what circumstances?

Certain mobility vehicles could be beneficial to disabled and/or other people as a mobility aid but would also impact on other users of the footway. There is already a previous commitment to look in more detail at the issues relating to the use of bicycles as mobility aids by disabled people and their impact on other users of the footway.

Currently no vehicle is permitted to use the pavement, except some pedestrian operated street cleaning vehicles and mobility scooters (also known invalid carriages) with lower speed restrictions than on the road.

The full document ay be seen under:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/873363/future-of-transport-regulatory-review-call-for-evidence.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/873363/future-of-transport-regulatory-review-call-for-evidence.pdf)

# Local Growth Funding for Cycling

In February 2020 the government issued the results of a survey on the levels of Local Growth Funding (LGF) that were being used by LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships) on cycling and walking projects over the years from 2015/16 to 2020/21.

Bedford Borough is part of the SEMLEP (South East Midland LEP) region. The region did not do very well coming seventh from the bottom of the 36 LEPs spending just £1.15m out of £5.6m for cycling and walking. The money was used on Smarter links to employment (£0.40m) and Bletchley station links £0.75m).

The highest amounts were £38.60m by Liverpool, £35.18m by SELEP (South East LEP) and £33.24m by Leeds,

The table can be seen on:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-local-growth-fund-schemes>

## Friends of the Earth Briefings

During 2019 Transport for Quality of Life issued a number of interesting briefing papers for Friends of the Earth:

<https://www.transportforqualityoflife.com/policyresearch/transportandclimatechange/>

Subjects covered are:

- Transforming public transport regulation spending and free buses for the under 30s (January 2019)
- Planning for less car use (February 2019)
- More than electric cars (February 2019)
- Segregated cycleways and e-bikes - the future of urban travel (April 2019)
- Getting the Department for Transport on the right track
- 33 actions local authorities can take on climate change (May 2019)
- A net zero carbon budget for the whole the whole transport sector (June 2019)
- 20 actions parish and town councils can take on the climate and nature emergency (October 2019)
- A Radical Transport Response to the Climate Emergency (November 2019)
- An eco levy for driving, cut carbon, cleanup toxic air and make our towns and cities liveable (November 2019)
- Transforming transport funding to meet our climate targets (November 2019)

# European Bike News

With the coronavirus lockdown gradually being eased in most of Europe many countries are experiencing significant increases in bike sales and in particular e-bikes as a means to solve the problems of overcrowded public transport. Bike sales in the Netherlands as just one example were 6.3% higher for April than in April 2019.

At the same time many countries all over the world are creating pop-up bike lanes to improve cyclists safety to make cycling the smarter and clean mobility in their recovery strategy to help reduce the climate emergency. Paris has plans for 650km of cycle ways and London similar ideas, while New York, Berlin, Helsinki, Calgary, Mexico and Bogata and many others have already started.



*Hamburg temporary cycle lanes*

*Paris - La Defense cycle lanes*



# CCNB AGM

Just before the end of CCNB's year on 31 March 2020 we learnt of the UK lockdown to try and reduce the progress of the Covid-19 virus which has been affecting nearly every country in the world since January 2020.

The lockdown has resulted in all events and meetings including CCNB's AGM which was due on Friday 24 April 2020 being cancelled.

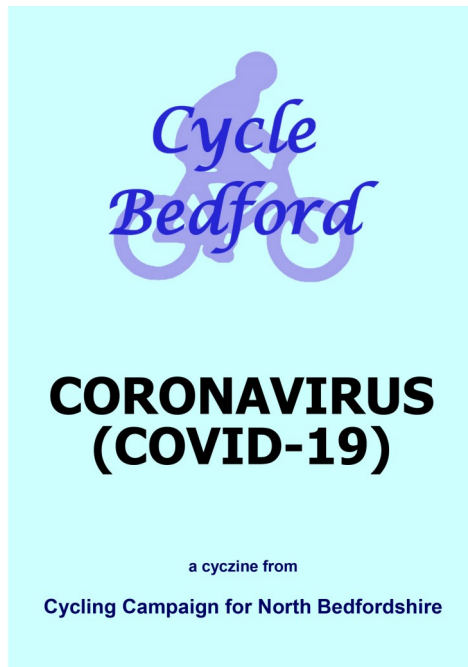
The Chairs Report for the year ending 31 March 2020 can be seen on CCNB's website:

[http://www.ccnb.org.uk/CCNB\\_AGM\\_Report\\_2019-20](http://www.ccnb.org.uk/CCNB_AGM_Report_2019-20)

The committee has agreed to continue until our next AGM in 2021.

## CCNB Publication

To emphasise the governments lockdown guidelines with respect to cycling CCNB published at the end of March 2020 its second cyczine, this time on the **Coronavirus (Covid-19)**.



The publication can be downloaded from:

[http://www.ccnb.org.uk/Cyczine\\_Coronavirus.pdf](http://www.ccnb.org.uk/Cyczine_Coronavirus.pdf)

# Unusual Bike Parking!



*Bike seen on wall outside a Melbourne Australia bar  
(Photo - Robert Goodacre)*

# Cycling and Climate Change Presentation

Just a few days before the UK's lockdown on 23 March 2020 due to the coronavirus, your chair gave a presentation to the March meeting of the Bedfordshire Climate Change Forum (BCCF) at the University of Bedfordshire on '**Cycling and Climate Change (and Pollution)**' to an audience of around 40 people.

The presentation was split into five topics starting off with why we have a climate emergency followed by a brief history of CCNB, the current state of emissions and pollution from transport in Bedford Borough, a brief history of the town's cycle network and what is still outstanding and what actions residents and the borough can take to help to mitigate the emergency.

The evening ended with a robust discussion on some of the points made.

## Actions

Many people believe replacement of both petrol and diesel engine vehicles by electric vehicles will be the answer. Unfortunately e-cars will not be the complete answer. There is still particulate matter affecting health given off from brakes, tyres and road surfaces as well as the declining availability (and mining conditions) of the raw materials used in the manufacture of current batteries.

Traffic congestion will not be reduced or the increasing obesity and inactivity not resolved.

Therefore the future has to see a drastic reduction in the use of motor vehicles for short journeys and sustainable transport used instead. There is no longer a choice. Cycling has to be taken seriously to help tackle the climate emergency and its proven health and economic benefits.

## CCNB Priorities

- Complete missing links in the town centre network and improve those routes that still have some safety concerns.
- Make roads safer for cyclists and pedestrians by continuing the introduction of 20mph speed limits into all residential areas, schools and shopping areas.
- Encourage all schools to take up 'Bikeability' cycle training.

The borough must put in for as many grants as possible for cycling (and walking) schemes and increase the percentage of money currently received for maintenance and road improvements for sustainable transport.



## Actions for Residents

The phrase continually put forward by CCNB was '*The belief is that someone else will save the planet*'. In practise '*Everyone MUST do their bit no matter how small*'.

The presentation put forward the following actions for residents to take:

- 1 - **Journeys** - Before making a journey ask the question:
  - Is my journey really necessary?
  - Is the journey necessary by car?
  - Can I use a sustainable mode instead by cycling, walking or public transport? Walking and cycling for short journeys, and a mix of these and the bus and/or train for longer journeys.
- 2 - **Funds for Cycling** - Ask your MP to lobby the government to provide more money for cycling schemes.
- 3 - **Speed Limits** - Lowering the speed of traffic in residential areas, shopping streets and around schools makes it safer and more pleasant for all residents from children to the elderly and encourages more cycling and walking.
  - If your residential road or area around your local school does not have a 20mph speed limit ask your local councillor to request Bedford borough to provide one and also ask your local MP to lobby the government to make 20mph the default speed limit for all urban areas.
- 4 - **Travel Plans** - Requirement of all major planning applications and potential means of significantly increasing levels of cycling to work or school/college. Problem is enforcement of actions specified after application is approved.
  - If where you work does not have an active travel plan in place ask them to provide one.
- 5 - **Bikeability** - Cycle training is available at three levels. Ideally all pupils after levels 1 & 2 should have been given level 3 training which ensures cyclists can ride safely and competently in all traffic conditions.
  - If your child or grandchild goes to a school that does not provide 'Bikeability' cycle training ask them to provide it via Bedford Borough's government grant.
- 6 - **'Cycle Buddy'** - If you are already a cyclist why not be a 'Cycle Buddy' and take a friend, work colleague or non-cycling family member out cycling. Once they have tried they will not want to stop.

A number of these recommendations cannot now be carried out while the coronavirus pandemic lockdown is in place but should be considered as soon as possible when it is relaxed.

# Abandoned Bikes - Bedford Railway Station

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) announced on 6 May 2020 that over the previous fortnight they had taken forward a suggestion from a member of staff which now sees them partnering with organisations to recondition bikes abandoned at their stations.

Southern is working with specialist repair company 'Handlebars' and West Sussex County Council, and Thameslink has teamed up with Luton and Bedford Borough Councils. Under these two schemes, unloved cycles are to be restored then rehomed with key workers who would really benefit from them.

## Proposed Cycle Contra-Flows

Bedford Borough Council in mid-May 2020 issued a Public Notice proposing to amend 'one-way' and 'prohibition of entry' restrictions on various roads in Newnham Ward Bedford proposing the introduction of cycle contra-flow in the following current one way streets in Newnham Ward to allow cyclists to ride along the streets in both directions;

- Denmark Street - Castle Road to Russell Avenue
- Dudley Street - Russell Avenue to Castle Road
- George Street - Shaftesbury Avenue to Castle Road
- Shaftesbury Avenue - Russell Avenue to George Street
- Greenshields Road - Castle Road to Greenshields Road (No 29)



*George Street south - direct cycle route from the Embankment to Goldington Road toucan, Caves Lane and onto Putnoe/Brickhill*



# Bedford Station Cycle Parking

The 2019/2020 winter period (October to March) saw cycle counts at Bedford railway station carried out by CCNB one percent lower than the previous winter period with the 2019 calendar year down by 3%.

The start of 2020 to the middle of March however saw an encouraging 15% increase over the same period in 2019.

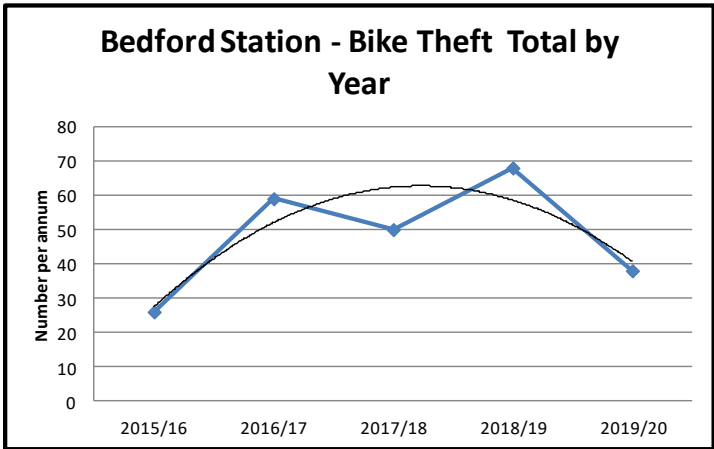
Unfortunately since the coronavirus lockdown on 23 March 2020 travel by train has dropped drastically and no counts have been carried out since this date.



# Bedford Station Bike Thefts

Bike thefts at Bedford station for 2019/20 dropped down to a more respectable 38 compared to the 68 for the previous year (revised figure from the 79 originally reported by the train company GTR, a drop of nearly 50%.

When leaving your bike at the station please ensure that it is adequately secured, preferably using two different types of lock. .



# Stylised Bike Stands - Melbourne Australia



*(Pictures by Robert Goodacre)*



# 20mph - Latest News

Global Road Safety Experts and Ministers from 130 countries including the UK attended the 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Stockholm in February 2020. Throughout the conference reducing the speed of vehicles in the presence of people walking and cycling was noted as a key intervention for reducing accidents. In particular, speed in urban and village areas was recognised as a key factor in collisions not being avoided and casualty severity not being mitigated.

The conference ended on 20 February with all countries present adopting the '**Stockholm Declaration**' which requires 20mph (30km/h) speed limits to be introduced where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix for safety, air quality and climate change.

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To help the NHS during the Covid-19 crisis a national campaign was launched on 9 April 2020 supported by leading doctors to call on the UK Government to change the national urban default speed limit to 20mph from 30mph to reduce pressure on the NHS now and in the future.

In England alone there are around 35,000 non-fatal admissions to hospital every year related to road traffic accidents the majority of which could be avoided with lower speed limits in place and enforced.

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The campaign group 20s Plenty's said:

*'We all need more space – 2m for safe social distancing during Covid-19. Leading cities are delivering more room for access on feet and slower speeds for public health, fewer casualties, to help us breathe, exercise and mitigate car use. If people avoid public transport in our cities then, unless walking or cycling is chosen instead of driving, urban areas may become polluted traffic jams as travel bans lift. 20mph limits are valuable, key tools for accessibility, lung health and economic recovery.'*

Their latest briefing on air quality, Covid-19 and 20mph speed limits can be seen on the webpage:

[http://www.20splenty.org/air\\_quality\\_covid\\_19\\_and\\_20mph\\_limits](http://www.20splenty.org/air_quality_covid_19_and_20mph_limits)

A further briefing paper on travel patterns after lockdown is ended makes interesting reading and can be seen on the webpage:

[http://www.20splenty.org/travel\\_patterns\\_after\\_lockdown\\_ends](http://www.20splenty.org/travel_patterns_after_lockdown_ends)

In its introduction it states:

*'Boosting walking and cycling by population level policies such as slower speeds and a 20mph national limit matter now and long term for traffic reduction and the climate. Public transport travel has nosedived. It will be hard to bounce back meaning car use may rise. We must keep vulnerable road users feeling protected from serious injury.'*



For details see

[www.bikeweek.org.uk/](http://www.bikeweek.org.uk/)

### Local Cycle Rides Contact:

Cycling UK (CTC) - North Beds Section - (01234) 219148

## Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire



### Our Vision

To see Bedford as a  
'Town of Cyclists' & 'Cycle Friendly Communities'

### Objectives

- ◆ To promote, encourage and support cycling as an important means of transport and recreation.
- ◆ To encourage consideration of the needs of cyclists in all aspects of transport planning and management, access issues and recreational use.

### Membership

Please contact us if you have any cycling issues or better still, consider becoming a member to give us added weight in our discussions with the relevant authorities. Write to:

**Membership Secretary, c/o 15 Dove Road, Bedford, MK41 7AA**

including your name, address, postcode, telephone number and e-mail address (if available) together with your subscription.

Single £3.00 (£13 for 5yr); Family £5.00 (£22 for 5yr)