



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

Issue 89  
February 2021

## **Cycle to reduce Transport Pollution**



**Gases and ultrafine particles from exhausts  
and ultrafine particles also from tyres, brakes  
and road surfaces affect both  
climate and peoples health**

# CYCLING CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE

*Founded 1992*

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

Bedford Green Wheel

Local Transport Plan (LTP3)

It is affiliated to



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# Contents

2	Committee
2	Campaigning Representation
2	Bedford Borough Council Contacts
3	Contents
4	Editorial
5	Sustainable School Transport Figure
6	Air Pollution
9	Fuel Pump Pollution Warnings
10	UK E-Bike Sales Surge
10	Bicycle Access
11	E-Unicycle
11	E-Skateboard Variant
12	Western Street Cycle Contraflow
13	St Cuthbert Street Cycle Lane Loss
13	Quote – Alan Bennett
14	Government’s Latest Plan for Cycling
14	Ban of Petrol and Diesel Cars
14	National Infrastructure Strategy
16	Bromham Road Railway Bridge
18	Separate Cycle Bridge/East West Rail
18	Bedford Borough Cycle Thefts
19	Bedford Station Cycle Security
19	Bedford Station Cycle Counts
20	Government’s Emergency Active Travel Fund
21	Cycling Infographic
22	Outstanding Cycle Infrastructure
23	Town Centre Investment Plan
24	Bobo Doll
25	A Cat called Nala
26	Modeshift National Travel Awards 2020
27	1950s Cycle Cartoon
28	20mph Latest News
29	Volt E-Bikes
30	Inclusive Cycling Update
31	Bike Chain Sculpture
32	Hastings Pier Cyclist
34	The ‘Starley’ Network
36	Coronavirus Guidelines
36	Local Cycle Rides - Contact
36	CCNB Vision and Objectives

# Editorial

The UK as well as many other countries are still in the middle of another lockdown due to the increasing spread of a mutation of the Covid-19 coronavirus.

The 'Stay at Home' advice by the government allows people only to leave their home for a specific number of reasons and If you need to travel, to cycle or walk, if possible and stay local. You may also leave your home for a minimum time once a day to exercise on your own, with or without one person from another household, or with your family or support bubble.

It is hoped that 2021 with the roll out of vaccines will be better than last year. In the meantime continue to follow the advice, stay safe and keep cycling, and encourage all you family, friends and work colleagues to do the same.

The fourth largest risk for an early death is breathing polluted air. In December 2020 a London coroner ruled that air pollution was the cause of a young girl's death and this was written on her death certificate, thought to be the first time, probably in the world, that this reason has been shown. Air pollution is made up of many types of ultrafine particles but one of the main causes is from tyres, brakes and the impact of motor vehicles on the roads (see pages 6 & 7 for the latest pollution levels from traffic in Bedford).

The switch to electric vehicles, in which the government has brought forward the phasing out of petrol cars to 2030 (page 14) will not be the complete solution. Electric vehicles introduce other problems associated with the materials used in the manufacture of batteries and their ultimate recycling. This aspect may be eliminated in the future through the emerging development of hydrogen powered vehicles.

The only way is to lessen air pollution is by bringing in stronger policies for reducing the number of cars on our roads and to encourage sustainable transport; buses and trains for longer journeys and cycling and walking for short journeys.

To reduce the perception by many people that cycling is dangerous there must be renewed emphasis on:

**Infrastructure  
Infrastructure  
Infrastructure**

by creating dedicated cycle paths which are **Coherent; Direct; Safe; Comfortable and Attractive.**

Bedford Borough Council has been awarded or is about to be awarded significant funds to improve the safety of the cycling and walking environment in the town. It is extremely important that this money is

spent wisely (pages 21 to 25).

When motorists see that it is safer to cycle it will encourage them to consider making the switch as was seen during the initial lockdown for the coronavirus in late March to May last year.

2020 saw the sales of e-bikes increase in the UK by more than 40%. Europe saw even higher increases with 85% bought by females and 80% by the over 50 year olds (page 10).

The looming catastrophe of climate change is not going away. Last year was with 2016, the joint hottest in the world and in Europe 1.6°C higher than the long-term average. There were alarming heat and wildfires in the Arctic and a record 29 tropical storms in the Atlantic. Although pollution levels fell by 7% as a result of the Covid-19 lockdowns, heat trapping carbon dioxide emissions continued to build up in the upper atmosphere.

This has resulted in an increase in global temperatures 1.25°C higher than pre-industrial levels, pushing dangerously close to the 1.5°C target set at the COP21 2015 UN Climate Change Conference in Paris.

For lighter moments read about a cat called Nala (page 25) and the cyclist who cycled over Hastings pier (pages 34/35) or look at a 1950s cycling cartoon (page 27) or one of the exhibits at last year's Mayfair sculpture trail (page 31).

## Sustainable School Transport



# Air Pollution

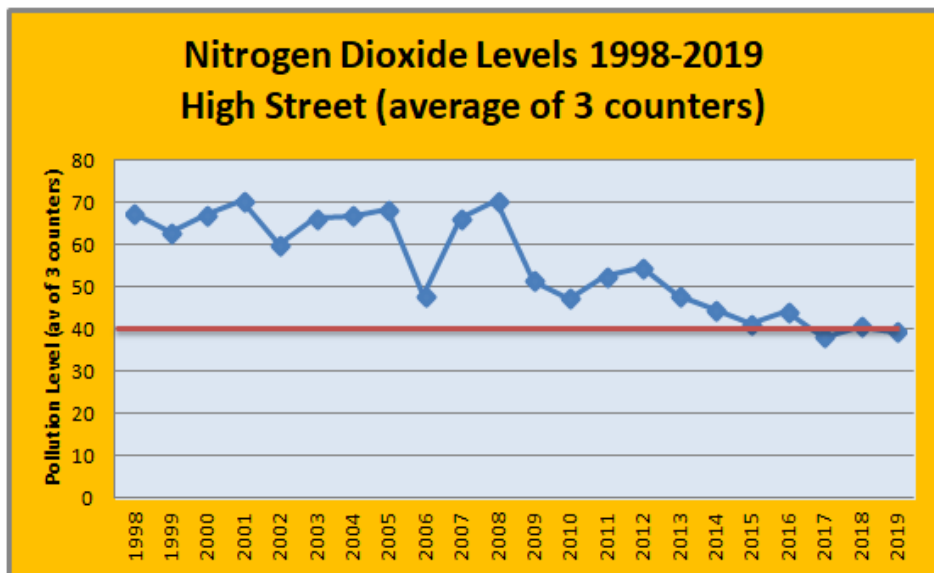
The effect of air pollution on climate change and the health of people has been known for some time. It is caused by nitrogen oxides emitted from diesel engine cars and particulate matter given off from exhausts, tyres, brakes and road surfaces by all vehicles including electric models.

## Nitrogen Dioxide

Nitrogen oxides measured as nitrogen dioxide is one of the five major greenhouse gases which when emitted into the upper atmosphere affect our climate. The gas also affects our health by inflaming the airways in our lungs and accentuates asthma.

CCNB has regularly analysed the nitrogen dioxide emissions recorded by the two counters, one situated in the High Street at the junction with St Loyes and the other in Prebend Street, which give results every hour of every day.

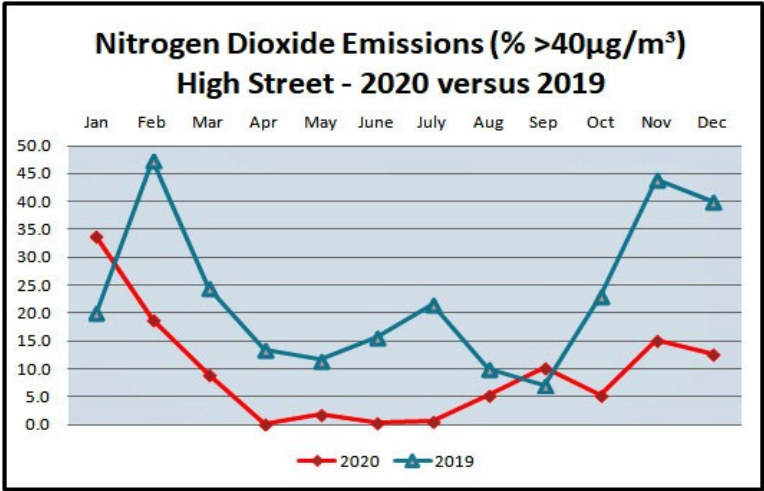
Although the levels today are much less than when measurements started in 1998 and their average for the year is now just at the EU and WHO limits (see below) individual values still show a significant number above the limit during the daytime when, particularly the High Street, is busy with pedestrians including the young and elderly.



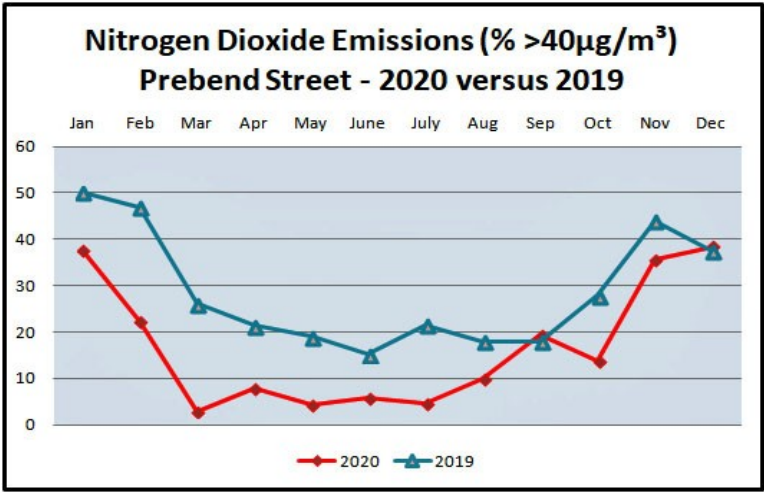
The effect on pollution from reduced traffic and the increase in cycling due to the first UK wide lockdown in March 2020 resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic has been written about in previous newsletters.

The percentage of hourly readings above the EU/WHO limits is normally

lower during the summer months and due to the first lockdown reduced to almost zero in the High Street between April and July but then showed a slow progressive increase to a level 25% less than in December 2019, a similar difference to the start of the year before the pandemic. The reduction of the road width from two carriageways to one in the High Street may have contributed to the lower value at the end of the year compared to the start. The average maximum value above the target was 50% for 2020 but 100% for 2019



In Prebend Street there was a lower difference between 2020 and 2019 and towards the end of the year was almost the same with around 40% exceeding the limits. The average maximum value above the target was 100% for both 2020 and 2019.



## Particulate Matter

Ultrafine particles, the worst size, are measured as concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> (particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm or less).

Today PM<sub>2.5</sub> has been found to affect nearly every organ in the body contributing to cardiovascular diseases of the heart and lung(s), dementia, reduced intelligence and depression with children and the elderly suffering the most and all those with asthma. It also has a significant effect on premature mortality, allergic reactions, and has found recently to increase the risk of coronaviruses such as Covid-19.

The particles, blown long distances by the wind, also have an environmental effect in affecting the diversity of ecosystems, soil, crops and water as well as haze in many towns and cities.

The level in Bedford is not currently monitored but a review has suggested that the annual mean is in the range of 10-12µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines are that PM<sub>2.5</sub> should not exceed 10µg/m<sup>3</sup> although the EU Air Quality Directive still has a high value of 25µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

Recent studies have however shown that there is no safe limit with mortality increasing significantly for every rise of just 5µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

## Clean Air Strategy

In 2019 the government issued a **‘Clean Air Strategy’** document to compliment the earlier **‘A Green Future - Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’**.

The Strategy sets out the case for action and demonstrates the government’s determination to improve air quality and in particular to reduce particulate matter emissions by 46% by 2030.

The Clean Air Strategy document can be downloaded from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/770715/clean-air-strategy-2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770715/clean-air-strategy-2019.pdf)

## Bedford Borough Council

Bedford Borough Council has had an Air Quality Action plan for more than a decade. An updated plan was drafted in 2019 and consultation is expected early this year. Since 2012 they have issued an annual air quality status report In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management.

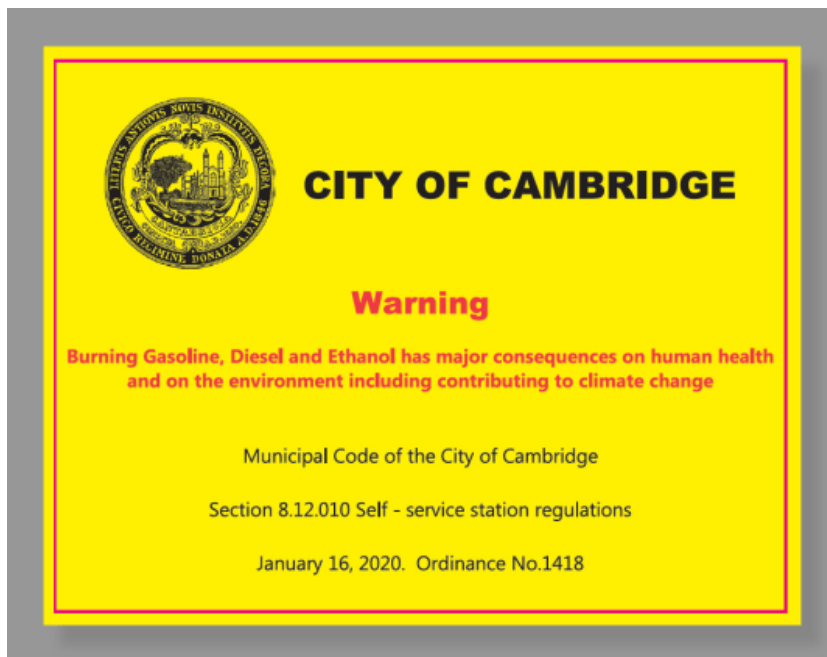
The latest report for 2020 can be seen at:

<https://bbcdevwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/Environmental%20Issues/Noise%20Nuisances%20and%20Pollution/2020%20Air%20Quality%20Annual%20Status%20Report.pdf>

# Fuel Pump Pollution Warnings

Cambridge, not in England but a city in Massachusetts USA, across the Charles River from Boston, the home of Harvard University and the HQ of the company that your Editor worked for and visited on many occasions, has been putting pollution health warning labels on all fuel pumps at service stations to remind people about climate change while they are filling up.

The idea was put forward in 2016 but was only moved forward when an ordinance was passed in January 2020 requiring all pumps to have a label.



Will this change behaviour by encouraging people to use their vehicles less or turn to using sustainable transport? Only time will tell.

A similar scheme is also due to start this year in Sweden.

In the UK last year Doctors for Extinction Rebellion branded a number of petrol pumps in Southampton with 'public health warnings'. Although there was a lot of negative reaction at the time a recent British Medical Journal has stated "There is an opportunity for national and local governments to implement labelling of fossil fuels in the run-up to COP26 in Glasgow, and in particular for the UK Government, as the host of the COP, to show leadership, as part of a package of measures to accelerate progress on getting to 'Net Zero' emissions.

# UK E-Bike Sales Surge

Almost 20 years ago, Hannes Neupert, known to his many disciples as the Electric Evangelist, wrote *Das Powerbike*. In it the German cycling advocate stated that the future of urban transport belonged to electric bikes. He then went on to say that: “Electrification will kill the mechanical bicycle,” and that pedal bikes would become “fossilised cult objects” like typewriters and record players. It was enough to make a cyclist weep.

At that time riding an e-bike was seen at best as cheating and at worst as a sort of bonkers social eccentricity.

His predictions have not come true (yet), but last year sales of e-bikes in The Netherlands outstripped sales of regular bikes for the first time while in the UK, sales of e-bikes also rose at a fast rate.

Retail shops saw sales grow by 60% since March 2020 and e-bike sales more than double with one pound in five spent on bicycles during the pandemic was spent on the latter.

However this phenomenal increase with the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant lockdowns saw, as in the most of Europe, a shortage of new bikes in the shops.

The typical buyer of an e-bike is in their 50s although a significant number have also been sold to the elderly. An e-bike allows a person to cycle more effortlessly and extends the age at which they feel they must give up. It also means that it is easier to cycle off from a junction and up an incline or hill although Bedford is blessed with being a relatively flat town apart from the Manton Heights area.

The cost of an e-bike although more expensive than a basic bike is mainly dependent on the mileage expected between charging which then determines the size of the battery required.

## Bicycle Access

Two fifths of people have access to a bicycle (c.20 million people). In England, 42% of people aged 5 and over owned or had access to a bicycle in 2017 to 2019 combined. This proportion has remained the same as previous years. Bicycle ownership is most prevalent amongst people aged under 17 years old. People aged 40-49 also indicated high bicycle ownership, 49%, in line with this being a peak age for cycling activity.

Bicycle ownership by age for England can be downloaded from NTS0608 available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts06-age-gender-and-modal-breakdown#cyclimg-and-motorcyclimg>

# E-Unicycle

CCNB Newsletter Issue 84 (July 2018) was a special edition on E-Bikes and other modes of micromobility. One mode missing was an E-unicycle. Late last year your editor cycling along a residential road had a sudden surprise when at high speed he was passed by an e-unicycle, the first he had seen in Bedford.



An e-unicycle is a self-balancing personal transporter with a single wheel. The rider controls speed by leaning forwards or backwards, and steers by leaning and twisting the unit side to side with their feet. The self-balancing mechanism uses gyroscopes and accelerometers. Most types do not have brakes but are claimed to be safe. They can however travel at an average speed of 15mph with some models having a maximum speed of 31/37mph. As per all other micromobility modes of transport except e-bikes they are currently illegal in the UK and can be only used on private land with the owner's permission.

They are available throughout the world from many manufacturers with 14, 16 or 18 inch wheels and weights between 22 to 60 lbs.

## E-Skateboard Variant

A variant of the four wheel e-skateboard also mentioned in the previous newsletter is the one wheel e-skateboard illustrated below.



# Western Street Cycle Contraflow

Western Street has always been a quiet route for cyclists to reach Bedford railway station from the riverside (Kempston in the west and Priory Park area and beyond in the east) via Commercial Road and Alexandra Street and Woburn Road. Unfortunately the return trip due to the current one way system of Western Street cyclists have to use a longer route via Alexandra Place, Priory Street and Costin Street.

The introduction of a cycle contraflow along Western Street has been one of CCNBs and the borough's priorities for a number of years and has only been held up waiting for the appropriate budget. The item is one of the schemes listed for improvement in the 2013 Cycle Network background paper to the previous and current Local Plans.

The scheme was planned to be carried out by last October but was stopped at the last minute by an adverse safety audit saying that the street was too narrow.

However the street has a similar width to its neighbouring roads - Battison Street, Maitland Street and Costin Street, the latter of which has had a successful contraflow (south to north) for a number of years. The street also has a similar carriageway width to Howbury Street and Bower Street which were made contraflows in 2013 and other roads off Castle Road which are due to be converted shortly.

The latest update to the government's cycle infrastructure design guide, LTN 01/20, states that contraflow cycling is allowed on quiet low speed roads and for roads with parking allowed on both sides the carriageway should be at least 6.6m wide. Western Street (see below) is wider. The borough has been asked to reconsider their position.



# St Cuthbert Street Cycle Lane Loss

Last November Bedford Borough Council introduced ten short-term parking bays across the town centre, to allow shoppers to take advantage of click & collect in the Borough. During the lockdowns, non-essential retailers have had to close. Some have remained open to click & collect services which have been pre-ordered.

The parking bays allow free parking for up to 15 minutes enable drivers to pick up hot food deliveries promptly.

Unfortunately the one created in St Cuthbert's Street (see below) has meant the removal of a cycle lane which is used as the lead in to the advanced stop line at its junction with St Peter's Street necessitating cyclists to ride almost in the centre of the road to pass any parked vehicles.



## Quote - Alan Bennett

"You always know when you're going to arrive. If you go by car, you don't. Apart from anything else, I prefer cycling. It puts you in a good mood, I find."

Unfortunately Alan has disclosed in his recently published diary that due to physical incapacity over the last 12 months he can no longer ride.

# Government's Latest Plan for Cycling

Last November the government announced a Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution - Building back better, supporting green jobs, and accelerating our path to zero carbon. The 5th point was:

*Public transport, cycling and walking: Making cycling and walking more attractive ways to travel and investing in zero-emission public transport of the future.*

Under this point it was stated that all towns and cities would be funded to give cycle lanes worthy of Holland to improve the air we breathe and increase both mental and physical health as well as reduce emissions. It then went on enthusiastically to say that hundreds and then thousands of miles of segregated cycle lanes would be built and more low-traffic neighbourhoods created to stop rat-running to allow people to walk and cycle in addition to expanding school streets which have caused dramatic falls in traffic and pollution around schools.

The transformation had already started with £250 million spending this financial year and £2 billion to be spent over this Parliament.

A national programme of support was also to be launched to increase the uptake of e-bikes.

The target milestones set were that by 2025:

- Over 1,000 miles of safe and direct cycling and walking networks delivered with network plans developed and being built out in every town and city in England.
- Cycle training available to every school child and adult who wants it
- Cycling rates will be doubled from 2013 levels to 1.6 billion stages per year

The policy paper can be downloaded from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/936567/10\\_POINT\\_PLAN\\_BOOKLET.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936567/10_POINT_PLAN_BOOKLET.pdf)

## Ban of Petrol and Diesel Cars

The government announced as part of their 10 point green industrial revolution the bringing forward of the ban on petrol and diesel cars by 10 years from 2040 to 2030.

The phasing out of combustion engine vehicles is a key part of the UK meeting its goal of net zero emissions by 2050.

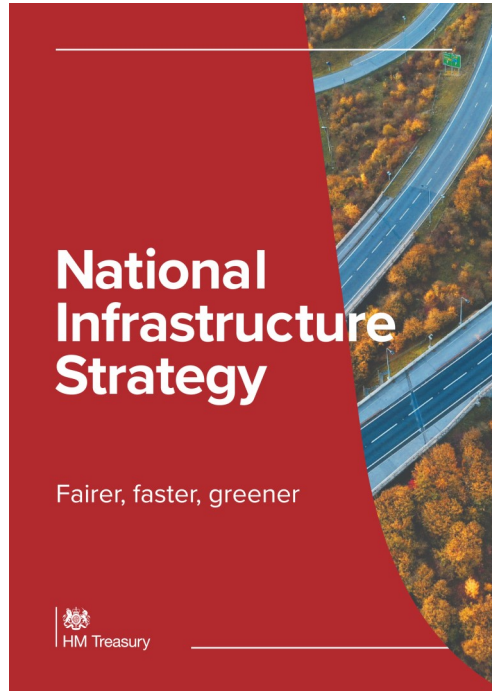
There is huge pressure on the UK to show that it is a leader on tackling climate change ahead of hosting the COP26 climate conference in November 2021 when the world aims to agree to ambitious pledges to reduce greenhouse gases.

# National Infrastructure Strategy

Three days after the government's 10 point plan was announced last November the long delayed National Infrastructure Strategy was also published by The Treasury.

The document can be seen under;

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/938049/NIS\\_final\\_web\\_single\\_page.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938049/NIS_final_web_single_page.pdf)



The strategy talks about road transport which is responsible for over 90% of domestic transport emissions and is also one of the biggest contributors to poor air quality in the UK's towns and cities and how decarbonising is particularly important for meeting interim carbon budgets, as well as cleaning up the UK's air (see also page 8).

Covid-19 pandemic has shown that many people need to think harder about their health, and the lifestyle changes which might help them be more active and stay fit. Investment in active travel is critical to this. Government support for cycling and walking helps tackle obesity by providing ways for people to exercise as well as getting from A to B. Measures to decarbonise the economy will help improve air quality – and therefore health – as well as reduce congestion across the UK.

# Bromham Road Railway Bridge

The decision by the Secretary of State for Transport on Network Rail's Transport and Works Act application to confer powers on Network Rail (NR) to help implement the London to Corby electrification and capacity upgrade project was finally made on the 29 October 2020 and published on the Department for Transport's website on 7 December 2020.

## **To recap:**

The application had originally been made on 22 June 2018 with consultation to the general public up to 3 August 2018. As a result of the number of complaints made including those of CCNB to the absence of a cycleway across the bridge the Secretary of State for Transport announced on 31 August 2018 that a local public inquiry would be held. The date was set for Tuesday 5 February 2019. A preliminary hearing with the Inspector appointed to lead the inquiry was held on 11 December 2018 where it was learnt that CCNB would be the only objector represented at the inquiry. The Inquiry lasted two and a half days. A period of just over 20 months lasted before a decision on a modified Works Order was made.

Network Rail raised a planning application with the Borough on 5 March 2019 (19/00370/FUL) for approval to rebuild the bridge as originally planned. This was approved by the planning committee on 26 July 2019 with very little discussion. The officer's report had recommended approval and had stated "the issues of lack of a cycleway should be weighed against the public benefits of the development (that is, the electrification of the railway line north of Bedford)".

The first phase of work on the bridge had already started on 4 March 2019. The second phase resulting in the complete closure of the bridge for almost a year started in 24 June 2019 and lasted until the new bridge fully opened on 9 June 2020.

## **Inspector's Report**

The report under Sections 4.25-4.28 showed that Network Rail had been made aware two years prior in 2015 of CCNB's possible objection if a cycleway was not included. Although DfT's remit was for a 'like for like' bridge they submitted two plans to the Borough, one without and one with a cycleway, the extra cost of the latter to be borne by the Borough.

A Design Services Agreement was drawn up by both parties but was never signed by the Borough and the work did not progress. At the consultation into the Order to carry out the work without a cycleway the Borough alongside CCNB and many others objected but at a later stage withdrew it after a decision was taken and agreed to build a separate bridge at a later date. As a result they took no part in the Inquiry.

The cost of the proposed bridge was put at £5,127,281. To design a wider bridge to accommodate a cycleway Network Rail claimed would add a further £3-5m to the existing cost, a level that would have to be bourn by the Borough who owned the bridge but at the time had no budget for such a scheme.

CCNB believed the extra cost for a new wider bridge was not necessary. The proposed bridge was already 600mm wider than the original bridge and a 3.5 metre dual use path could have been installed by redistributing the roadbed. A similar proposal had been put forward by the Borough in 2012 but had never been put in place.

It is noted that the Borough's proposal to build a separate cycle bridge is at a similar cost and will meet the same problems as Network Rail put forward in its submission.



*Roadbed of  
original bridge*

## Decision Letter

The original works order was 'The Network Rail (London to Corby) (Land Acquisition Level Crossing and Bridge Works) Order 2018' but was changed to 'The Network Rail '(London to Corby) (Land Acquisition and Bridge Works) Order 2018' prior to the inquiry.

As a result of CCNB's concern to DfT that the bridge had already been rebuilt following the Borough's approval of a planning application by Network Rail while waiting for the decision DfT requested Network Rail to modify the order again. The approval decision given on 29 October 2020 was therefore to the order 'Network (London to Corby) (Land Acquisition) Order.

The letter also asked that in the future Network Rail ensures the Secretary of State is kept up to date with all the necessary facts relating to an application he is being requested to make a decision on.

The documents can be downloaded from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/london-to-corby-transport-and-works-act-order>

# Separate Cycle Bridge/East West Rail

As previously stated further action on the creation of a separate cycle bridge across the Midland Railway line at Bromham Road is dependant on the detailed plans for the new East West Rail line which will pass through Bedford Midland railway station and under the new Bromham Road bridge and whether or not the recently rebuilt bridge will have to be modified to cater for the increased capacity of the line. To view an interaction preferred route option map see:

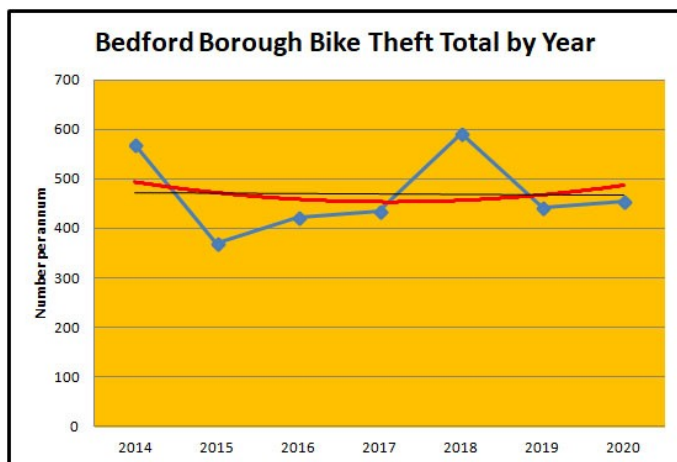
<https://ewrco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d01b3ce2491d452c97e420029ba23b25>

The current proposed alignment of the new section of line between Bedford and Cambridge leaves the main line near the bridge carrying the Great Ouse Way over the mainline, then crosses Clapham Road just past the water works, across Carriage Drive to the west of Clapham Park Wood, skirting north of the Woodlands Park estate where the alignment widens to between Cleat Hill and Highfields House, north or south of Ravensden and Wilden to the A1 Great North Road between Eaton Socon and Tempsford. A new St Neots/Sandy station will be built at the point it crosses the main East Coast line.

Designs on the best alignment are in progress with consultations expected shortly. Construction is not likely to start before 2025 with completion towards the end of the decade.

## Bedford Borough Cycle Thefts

The total number of bike thefts in Bedford borough for the year was similar to last year. The five top areas are Town Centre (109), Harpur (46), Midland Road West (41), Cauldwell (38) and Kingsbrook (32).



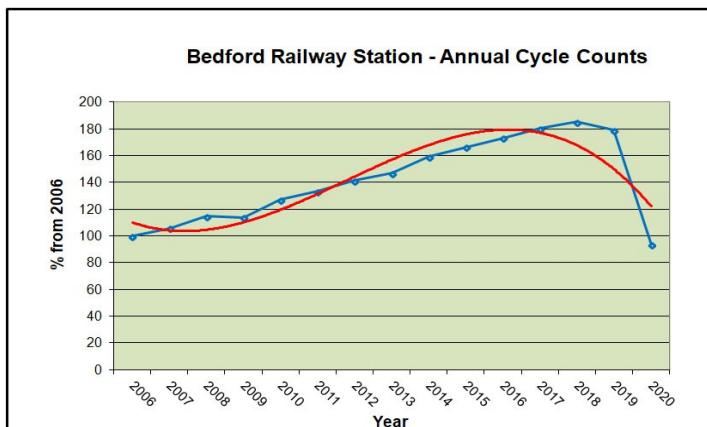
# Bedford Station Cycle Security

The cycle parking area at Bedford railway station between the station building and the main car park was made more secure last November by installing a mesh fence across the front with access from a central gate only. The installation was funded from the passenger benefit fund. Access in the future will be made by signing up for an access card or mobile phone app. The system will then record who has had access to the area which in turn will hopefully eliminate any further cycle thefts.



## Bedford Station Cycle Counts

The number of cycles parked at Bedford station after a promising increase of 7% in January/February 2020 compared to 2019 fell sharply with the lockdowns due to Covid-19. The final figure for the year ended 5% lower than 14 years ago in 2006.



# Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund

## Second Tranche

The outcome of the bids for the Second Tranche of the Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund submitted on 7 August 2020 was announced on 13 November 2020.

Across England as a whole it amounted to £175 million of the £2bn fund announced in May 2020 for cycling and walking. Since this time surveys and independent polls had shown strong support for high quality schemes such as:

- 'School Streets', where streets around schools are closed to motorists at school times
- low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), where residential side streets are closed to through traffic to stop rat-running
- segregated cycle lanes
- pedestrian improvements

to give people more opportunities to choose cycling and walking for their day-to-day journeys, as part of wider government plans to boost active travel.

Tough conditions were set on councils receiving funding, one in particular being that all schemes were properly consulted on to help avoid the problems seen in a minority of the schemes developed in the first round of funding. If the conditions were not met by a council, the Transport Secretary made it clear that future funding allocations would be reduced and if necessary claw-backs imposed.

Bedford Borough Council had been allocated a potential allocation of £485,000 for Tranche 2. The amount allocated on 13 November 2020 was for £363,750, 75% of the potential amount, for the scheme to create an improved cycleway on Goldington Road from the Norse Road roundabout to its junction with Perkins Road at an estimated cost of £500,000+.

Neighbouring councils Central Beds and Milton Keynes were also allocated 75% and Luton 95%. Due to the lateness of the announcement the schemes now have to be completed by the end of March 2022 instead of March 2021.

The scheme was chosen as it was unlikely to generate adverse objections by the general public like previous schemes by other local authorities. A brief public consultation as required by the DfT was opened on the scheme between 5 and 18 January 2021.

CCNB believes that a more important scheme could have been chosen as this route is not likely to generate significant increases in the number of cyclists using it. Others routes would be more beneficial.

# Cycling Infographic



# Outstanding Cycle Infrastructure

The Bedford Cycle Network (BCN) is a network of 27 strategic radial routes focused on the town centre and 2 (inner and outer) orbital routes. It links up individual existing roads or paths to create viable cycle routes. This is in addition to the Green Wheel which circles the outer urban area and the National Cycle Route No 51 which traverses the town on its way between Oxford and Cambridge and the east coast.

Overall the BCN including links to the main routes is just over 200 kilometres consisting of 105 kilometres of off-road cycle routes and 95 kilometres of on-road routes (using cycle lanes or quieter streets).

At the present time only around 15% of the network is adequately signed with route numbers but when completed most residents will be no more than 400 metres (and typically 200 metres) from a signed route which will enable them to cycle into and out of the town centre and from the town to any other area of Bedford and Kempston.

There are some gaps and sections which require improvements to bring them up to the latest standards. Major gaps are the Bromham Road railway bridge, the A6/A421 junction to the Wixams and the High Street as well Bromham River crossing and Ford End Road railway bridge.

In 2017 an audit of the network was carried out which earmarked 276 items (not including the above major gaps) for improvements to improve the safety of the network at a cost of nearly £8.5 million.

The Borough's Local Plan 2030 adopted in January 2020 includes a supporting document (No 49) - Infrastructure Delivery Plan - which includes the cost of improving the Bedford Cycle Network at £8.328m and the Green Wheel at £5.250m, both to be delivered by 2030.

This complemented the 54 items listed in the 2013 cycle network background paper to the Allocations and Designations Plan which is also part of the current Local Plan. Up to the end of 2020 only 11 of these items had been completed.

The above is also supplemented by CCNB's Infrastructure File which currently has a further 150 items for improvement.

The 2017 audit information has been used to draft a Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP), a requirement by the Department for Transport as laid out in their Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) published in 2017. The CWIS sets out ambitious plans to make cycling and walking the natural choices for short journeys, or as part of a longer journey, by 2040 and had been introduced as part of the 2015 Infrastructure Act.

As mentioned in the last newsletter CCNB still has not seen the 2018 draft which was supposed to be available for consultation.

# Town Centre Investment Plan

The final draft of the Bedford Town Investment Plan was published in October 2020 and submitted to the government for approval. The plan calls for £24.995m from their Towns Fund to enable an ambitious package of investments to support growth and resilience in Bedford.

One of the seven projects put forward at a cost of £5.0m is **Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure**. This states that:

*'The cycle network within Bedford is disjointed with many routes situated along main roads alongside traffic. The investment will deliver a package of pedestrian and cycling network improvements, including further development of the 'Green Wheel' of routes around the town and cycle links to Bedford Midland Station. This project complements the Town Deal and Accelerator Fund Cycling Enhancements project which will deliver signposting for cycling routes and secure cycle parking in central locations'.*

The eleven cycle route improvements listed in the plan are:

- Mowsbury Walk - Kimbolton Road to Hawk Drive
- Brickhill Drive - Kimbolton Road to Eagle Gardens
- Greyfriars to Ashburnham Road via Alexandra Place, Alexandra Road and Woburn Road
- Bromham Road railway bridge
- Track from St Neots Road Pegasus to Bridleway behind the Asgard Drive estate
- Allotment path - Bromham Road to Westbourne Road
- London Road from Wilmers Corner to Mile Road
- Circular path parallel to and north of Abbeyfields
- Glastonbury Abbey (off Riverfield Drive) to Route 51
- Parallel path to Riverfield Drive - corner improvement
- Barker Lane/Brunel Road roundabout improvement

The improvements are expected to start in Spring 2022 and be completed in Winter 2025.

Cycling is also mentioned under a £2.0m **Transporting Bedford 2030** project. This will see improvements at two key junctions; St Peter's Green and Greyfriars. At St Peter's Green the John Bunyan Statue is to be moved further back into the green to allow a more safe left turn from the Broadway into St Peter's Street as well as a safe crossing of the junction for cyclists from the Dame Alice Street contraflow. At Greyfriars a signaled junction is proposed in place of the current roundabout next to the bus station.

The full document can be seen from:

<https://www.councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/documents/s51657/Agenda%20Item%205%20-%20Appendix%20i%20-%202009.10.20%20Bedford%20Town%20Investment%20Plan%20-%20Final%20for%20issue.pdf>

# Bobo Doll

Last year people in Bursa in Turkey were surprised to see novel two-wheeled vehicles on their streets.

These are an invention by a fellow citizen, Hasan Duman, who has given them the Turkish name "Hacıyatmaz" which in English means 'Bobo Doll'.



*Two seater version*



*Single seat version*

# A Cat called Nala

Following last year's internet sensation of one man and his cat cycling around the world, a new book '**Nala's World**' by the cyclist Dean Nicholson was published in October 2020 by Hodder & Stoughton.



Dean had left his hometown of Dunbar in Scotland in September 2018 to cycle around the world. In the mountains of southern Bosnia he heard a meowing behind him which turned out to be a small scrawny kitten with large green eyes. Afraid that it might be run over or eaten by a bird of prey he picked it up and placed it into his front basket. The kitten immediately jumped out, climbed onto his shoulder and fell asleep.

He was so enthralled that he christened it Nala, after one of the characters in The Lion King.

Nursing Nala back to health with local vets the cat has now accompanied him on all his journeys through eighteen countries in Europe and Asia.

Dean said they "encountered obstacles from bad weather to crazy bureaucracy, from flat tyres to assorted illnesses and injuries. But they also struck up memorable friendships and experienced the incredible kindness of strangers, performing good deeds themselves as well, rescuing dogs, cleaning up beaches and spending time with refugees. Above all, they've transformed each other's lives, and enjoy whatever the new day brings."

For other pictures and stories on one man and his cat see:

<https://www.1bike1world.com/>

# Modeshift National Travel Awards 2020

At the 2020 Modeshift Sustainable Travel Awards last October, Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedford Borough Council and Luton Council in conjunction with GTR (Govia Thameslink Railways) won the Best Partnership Award for '**Recycled Bikes for NHS Keyworkers**'.

The awards recognise and reward businesses for projects, events or activities that support and encourage sustainable travel, by highlighting best practice, showing innovation and being inspirational.

The Best Partnership Award was received following the successful collaboration work between the three councils and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) earlier this year. Over 30 donated bikes helped hospital staff get to and from work through exercise whilst maintaining social distancing.

Provided by GTR from bikes abandoned at Bedfordshire stations and the STARS Bike recycling project, the bikes were renovated for NHS key workers at Luton and Dunstable University, Bedford and Biggleswade Hospitals through the 'Bikes for Bedfordshire Health Heroes' scheme. The scheme gives a 'thank you' to NHS workers and promotes safe, sustainable travel, all at the same time.

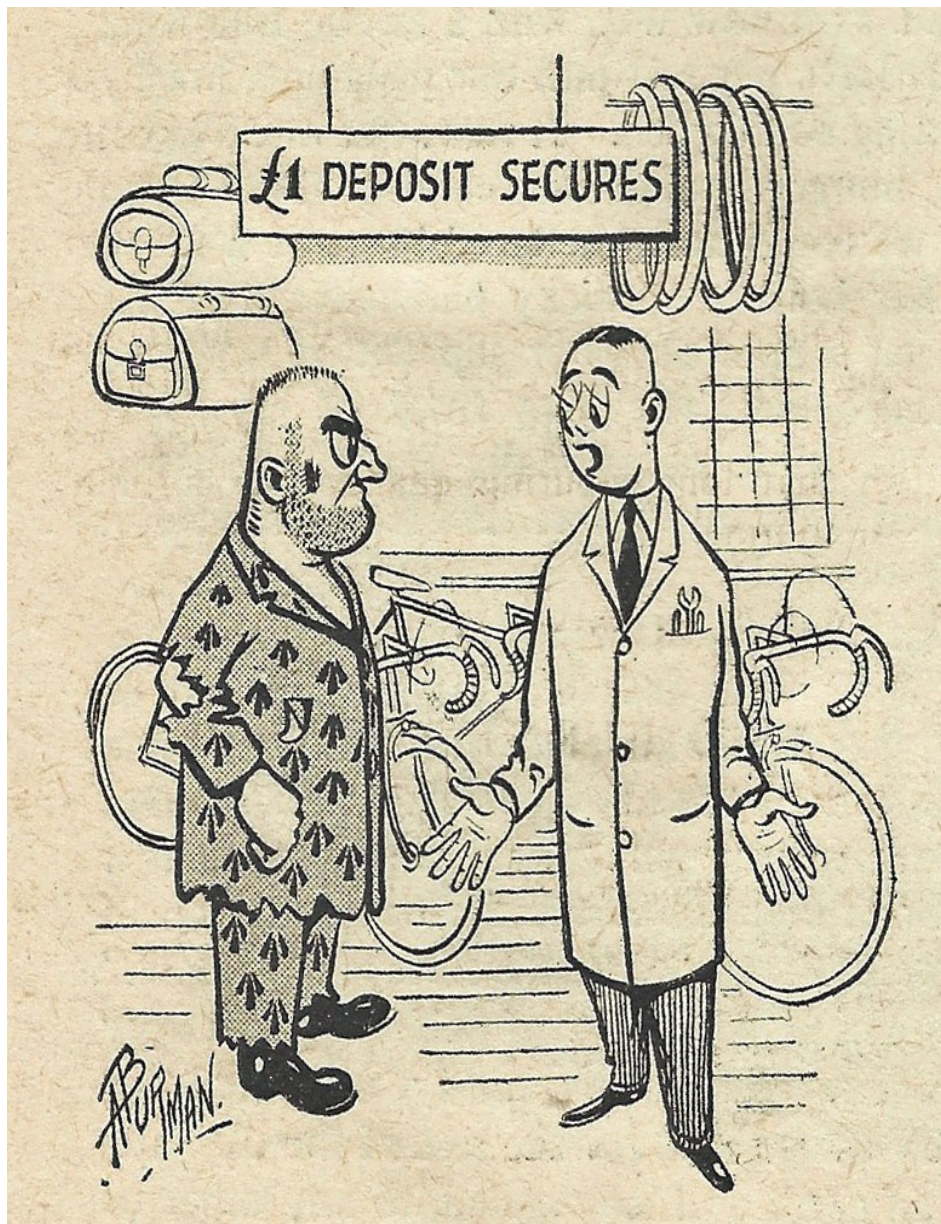
The whole award ceremony, virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic, can be seen on the you tube video:

[https://youtu.be/1ufdpAw\\_5NI](https://youtu.be/1ufdpAw_5NI)[https://youtu.be/1ufdpAw\\_5NI](https://youtu.be/1ufdpAw_5NI)



By mid November 2020 100 bikes had been donated to the NHS by Bedford Borough Council in conjunction with Sustrans.

## 1950s Cycle Cartoon



*"I must insist on the deposit even if you do require it urgently"*

# 20mph Latest News

One of the major concerns of people when asked why they do not cycle is the speed and volume of traffic on today's roads. Whether a person cycles or not is also the top concern of the majority of people who live in Bedford borough. As a result the borough has been deluged over the last few years by villages and streets in urban areas requesting average speed cameras. The installations costs are high and all fines have to be given to the Treasury with local authorities not receiving a penny.



Recent figures released by Bedfordshire Police show that 72,784 offences were recorded in the county during the year 2019-20 while across the whole of England and Wales the figure was 2.6 million. This accounted for 95% of all motoring offences in Bedfordshire compared to 85% in the whole of England and Wales.

This is why it is important that 20mph speed limits continue to be introduced in the borough to help improve the safety of the road network for all users but particularly cyclists and pedestrians.

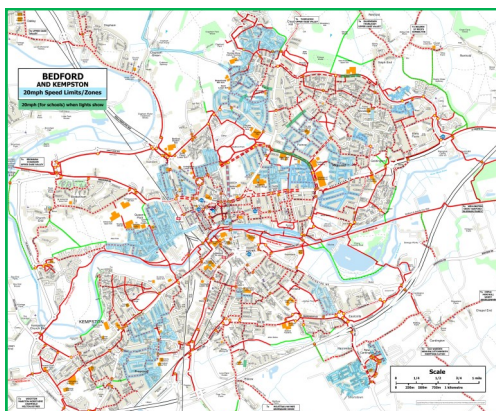
We know that even this action does not ensure that the limits will be completely obeyed although studies have shown that drivers previously breaking the law at high speeds are more likely to reduce their speed than drivers already within the previous limits.

A drop in speed of just 1mph has been shown to give a reduction in casualties of up to 6% saving a lot of misery for those people and their families affected as well as saving £1,000s of the previous NHS budget.

In November 2020 Bedford Borough Council proposed to reduce the speed limit in the Wendover Drive area of Bedford. Roads affected are Wendover Drive, Risborough Road, Aylesbury Road, Hatfield Crescent and Harpenden Close.

There are still many areas still outstanding including in the town centre. A map of the Bedford urban area which currently have or are in the process of having 20mph limits/zones can be seen on the right and on the CCNB website:

[http://www.ccnb.org.uk/20mph\\_SpeedLimits\\_Map.jpg](http://www.ccnb.org.uk/20mph_SpeedLimits_Map.jpg)



# Volt E-Bikes

Last summer the electric bike manufacturer Volt in between two Covid-19 lockdowns managed to open its new facility in Milton Keynes to allow them to centralize production, and produce up to 25,000 e-bikes a year.



Volt was founded in 2010 by two brothers – James and Lyle Metcalfe. Both keen cyclists they had been travelling in China and noticed that everyone was riding early versions of e-bikes. Aware that these did not really exist back in the UK, they spent a year travelling the country and researching their product, before going into business themselves.

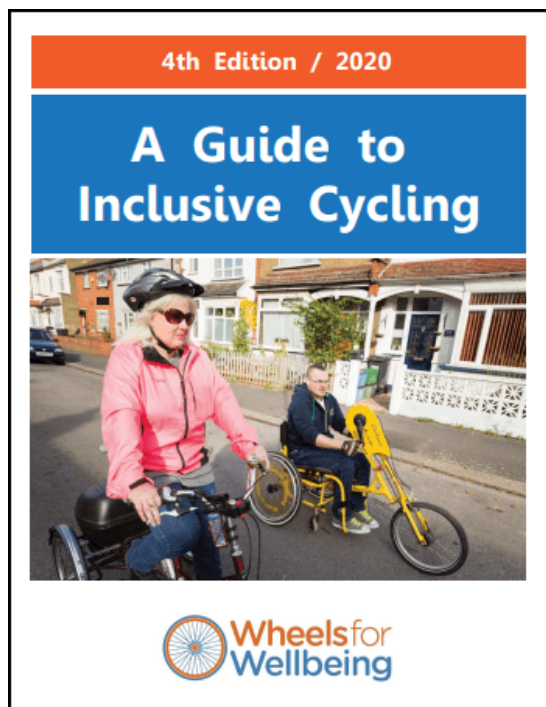
The brand began life in the family's garage in Buckinghamshire. After testing bulky and inefficient machines that often had batteries that barely got them round the block, the Metcalfes took up the challenge of reinventing and improving the urban e-bike. Rather than simply bolting unwieldy motors and heavy power packs to existing bikes, they started from scratch, designing their frames from the ground up. They believed that just because a bike was electric did not mean it could not look elegant and be a pleasure to ride. Today, Volt is at the forefront of the e-bike business and, as far bigger firms add e-bike models to their line-up, it is Volt's pioneering bikes they are often emulating.

It had always been their aspirations to have their own offshore facilities but with Brexit looming and all its possible ramifications they decided it would be best to manufacture locally - hence the new Milton Keynes factory.

Their latest brochure of 16 e-bike types from folding, step through, hybrids and mountain types can be downloaded from:

<https://voltbikes.co.uk/brochure/#VOLT-e-bikes-Brochure-2020/page1>

# Inclusive Cycling Update



In early December 2020 **‘Wheels for Wellbeing’**, the charity supporting disabled people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the benefits of cycling, unveiled its latest edition of its **‘Guide to Inclusive Cycling’**. Now in its fourth edition, the guide was first published in 2017 to bring together their experience and expertise of all things inclusive cycling. While the fourth edition builds upon the work of the previous three, the circumstances during which it has been published marked the achievement of a significant milestone for the charity and its stakeholders.

The year 2020, the start of the new decade, had been extraordinary in many ways. While the Covid-19 pandemic had encouraged government to prioritise cycling over other modes of transport, a slow but steady shift towards providing more inclusive cycling infrastructure here in the UK was already underway. Wheels for Wellbeing had positively contributed towards this shift, through the ideas encapsulated in the Guide to Inclusive Cycling directly influencing government policy.

The government’s consultation on its Accessibility Action Plan in 2017 led to two commitments relating to *cycling* being included in the **‘Inclusive Transport Strategy’**. The first was that accessibility for disabled people as cyclists would be considered as part of the planned update of the technical guidance for cycling (this has now been published as Local Transport Note 1/20). The second commitment which is still outstanding was to “explore the feasibility of amending legislation to recognise the use of cycles as a mobility aid in order to increase the number of Disabled people cycling by 2020”.

The updated guide can be downloaded from:

[https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FC\\_WfW-Inclusive-Guide\\_FINAL\\_V02.pdf](https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FC_WfW-Inclusive-Guide_FINAL_V02.pdf)

# Bike Chain Sculpture

One of the exhibits at last October's Mayfair sculpture trail event in London. The huge artwork by Seo Yeong Deok has been made out of bicycle chains.



# Hastings Pier Cyclist

Hastings Pier, a pleasure pier in Hastings, East Sussex was built in 1872. It enjoyed its prime in the 1930s and in the 1960s became a popular music venue.

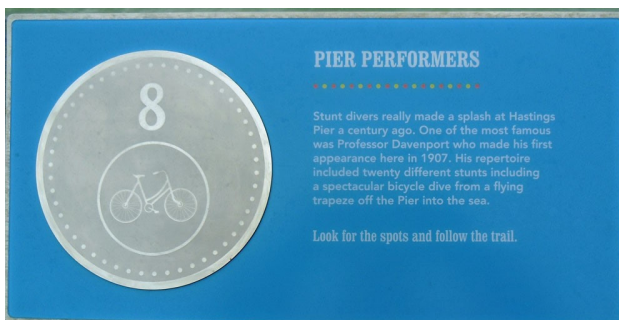


The structure suffered major storm damage in 1990, and was closed to the public for a time before closing completely in 2008. It was 95% destroyed by a fire in 2010.

A few years later Hastings Pier Charity oversaw a rebuilding project and the pier reopened on 27 April 2016. In 2017 won the Stirling Prize for architecture. The charity went into administration that year and in 2018 the pier was sold to a private buyer and re-opened on 1 April 2019.

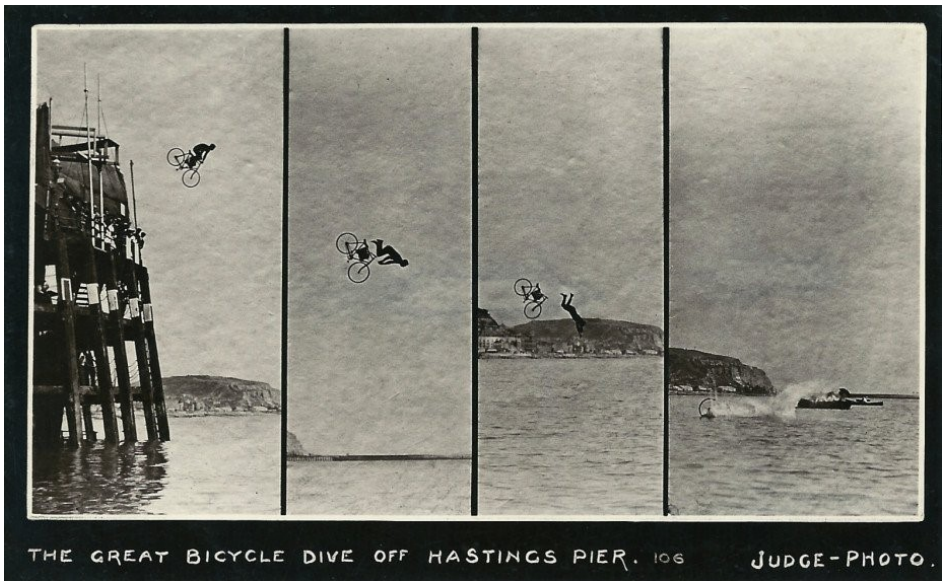
## Pier Plaques

A number of plaques have been installed on the pier over the last few years. One of these is to commemorate **Pier Performers** (below).



The inscription on the plaque states:

*'Stunt divers really made a splash at Hastings Pier a century ago. One of the most famous was Professor Davenport who made his first appearances here in 1907. His repertoire included twenty different stunts including a bicycle dive from a flying trapeze off the pier into the sea.'*



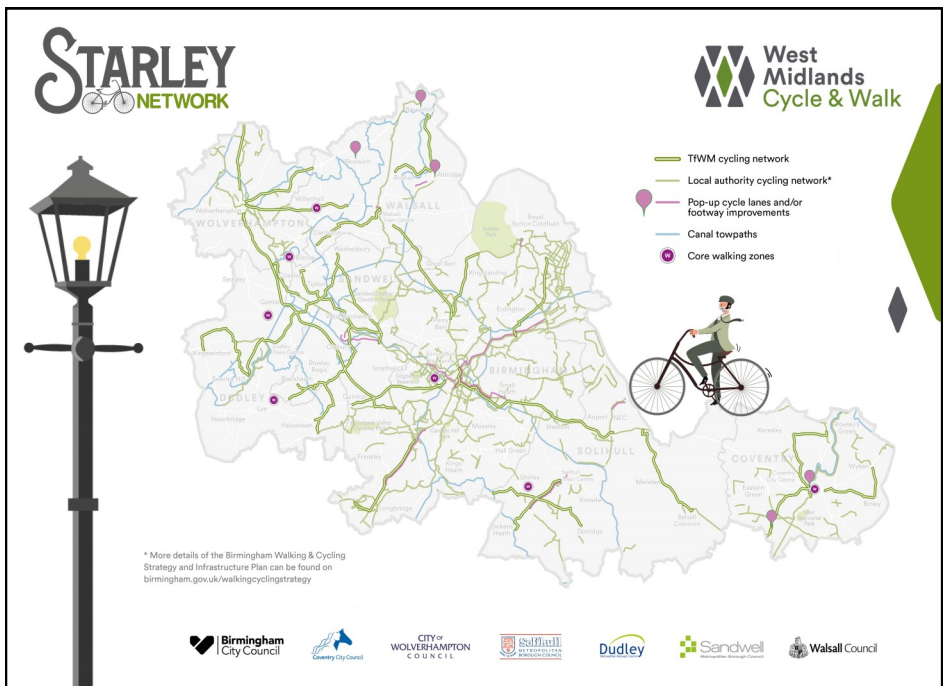
# The 'Starley' Network

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) on 11 August 2020 unveiled a new 500 mile cycle network for the West Midlands to be known as the Starley Network.

It has involved seven local metropolitan authorities getting together and linking their local cycling plans into a region wide network.

TfWM took the decision to enhance its cycling vision following a rise in the popularity of two wheels after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. The network will have all the routes either traffic free away from the highway or within roads but physically separated from traffic. It also incorporates pop-up cycling lanes that have been set-up by the local authorities with more of these lanes to be added following the multi-million pound bid for further funding as part of the second tranche of the government's recent Emergency Active Travel Fund.

TfWM plans to invest more than £260m in the network over the coming years and local authorities are expected to add to this figure as they develop their local network.



A larger copy of the map can be downloaded from:

<https://www.wmnetwork.co.uk/media/3487/starley-network-map-pdf.pdf>

The launch took place at Coventry Transport Museum which proudly displays Starley bicycles and tells the story of a city which changed the world through transport.

The bicycle that we know today started in the UK with the diamond shaped frame called the '**Rover Safety**' designed by John Kemp Starley in 1885 and manufactured in Coventry.

The bicycle featured two wheels of the same size and a chain drive to the rear wheel. With the rider's centre of gravity over the centre of the frame it was possible to touch the ground with both feet making it extremely safe to ride.



It is therefore fitting that the network should be given the name - Starley.

Before then there had been the '**draisine**' invented in 1817 which consisted of two in-line wooden carriage wheels held together by a wooden bench on which the rider straddled. It had a very basic steering mechanism and was ridden by paddling with the feet along the ground. This type was also known as the '**hobby horse**' or '**dandy horse**'.

During the 1860s, pedals and cranks were fitted to the front wheel and the

'velocipede' was born. This evolved in 1870 into the fashionable '**ordinary**' or '**high-wheeler**' which later became known as the '**penny farthing**'.

Towards the end of the 19th century it is claimed there were up to 450 bicycle manufacturers in the city but with the coming of the motor age their number significantly declined and many become motor manufacturers.

TfWM recently launched its Roll & Stroll campaign, which aims to encourage more people to use two wheels and their two feet in light of the coronavirus pandemic. The behavioural change campaign offers practical support for new cyclists and those returning, as well as safety advice.

*Editor - The Coventry Transport Museum is worth paying a visit.*

 HM Government



**WASH  
YOUR  
HANDS**



**COVER  
YOUR  
FACE**




**KEEP  
YOUR  
DISTANCE**

For full government details of latest coronavirus guidelines see

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home?priority-taxon>

### Local Cycle Rides Contact:

Cycling UK (CTC) - North Beds Section - (01234) 214958

# 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)