

The lesson from all of these pioneering places is that as well as cutting car use, they have provided citizens with real choice for everyday journeys. In the UK we need better, fairer and more affordable transport systems, where people have more choice in how they travel and aren't forced to rely on a car for day-to-day journeys.

### NOT SO FAST, DRIVERS

Policies and measures to make places people friendly and to deprioritise and calm traffic are cropping up around the UK. They are popular – despite what some newspapers say. For example, in Scotland 20mph zones were created in more than 90 villages and towns across the Borders Council area in 2020. Data shows they've been successful in reducing traffic speeds.

Ross Hall from Galashiels in the Borders frequently rides a bike and is a committee member at the Gala Men's Shed, which loans e-bikes to people in the area. He believes that the 20mph limits have potentially improved safety. He said: "E-bikes are ideal in Galashiels as it is situated in a valley and every journey has an uphill section at some point. It is important to respect other road users, and the extra e-power helps riders to keep up with vehicles travelling at 20mph. This boost makes people feel safer and confident to cycle for local journeys rather than having to use a car."

Scott Runciman, who runs Cycling UK's Rural Connections projects in the Borders, echoes Ross. "I've noticed a real change in attitudes in the Borders since I grew up here. A lot of people are rediscovering cycling and wanting to take the car less. Slower traffic makes my role easier but most importantly it makes a real difference to people's lives and to the local area."

### THE SWITCH TO CYCLING

High traffic levels and a lack of quality cycling infrastructure are not the only barriers to cycling; many people can't ride because they lack confidence or skills, or they don't have access to a bike. Cycling UK's projects aim to address these challenges head on and get people cycling. What's more, many of our projects are explicitly designed to help people to cycle as an alternative to jumping in the car for short local journeys. We want people to be free to live healthy lifestyles and cut their carbon footprint as much as they feel able.

Erika Ikeda from West Yorkshire used to rely on a mix of car and public transport to get around but was looking for other



Pedal on COP ride in Glasgow, 2021. Once again the cars are queued up while the cyclists make progress

transport options. She went along to a Cycling UK Big Bike Revival event, and since then has been using her bike to commute along the canal. She returned to the project, run in association with the Margaret Carey Foundation, to get her bike serviced and learn how to maintain it herself. "It's important for my confidence that I know my bike is safe and working well," she said. "Now I will try and ride further. I feel more comfortable and confident to go on the road, but this has always been a bit of a worry due to traffic and not feeling confident."

Sheffield stonemason Steve Roche – whom we mentioned last issue – began cycling to work through Cycling UK's Making cycling e-asier project. Fed up with spending his morning commute stuck in traffic at rush hour, he signed up for a free e-cycle loan. In just a month, he was pleased to discover that he lost over half a stone and also saved £25 per week on fuel.

"My commute is perfectly doable on an e-bike," he said. "It now seems like madness that I was driving around, running an engine and getting stuck in traffic every day. Sheffield is very hilly, so I do need the extra assistance to be able to carry my tools and materials, and my job is quite physical, so it means that I don't arrive at work absolutely knackered. I can't believe that more trades people are not doing it."

The vast majority of people can be part of the solution by cycling more or taking public transport where available. We can also benefit from measures designed to make cycling easier than using a car. There's a strong case for change, and cycling can be at the heart of it. Enabling more people to cycle is one of the positive outcomes of policies designed to reduce car use, and it is also one of the ways to have fewer cars on the road. ●

Donate now to ensure a cycle friendly future: [cyclinguk.org/donate](https://cyclinguk.org/donate).

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### Be an advocate for cycling

Do you want to help get more people cycling? Do you want to share the joy of riding a bike? Do you want to see real change – with separated cycle lanes, safer roads, and shops, offices and homes all accessible by bike? So do we!

The Cycle Advocacy Network (CAN) brings together people with a shared interest in creating the conditions that enable more people to cycle, including better infrastructure for cycling and safer roads.

The CAN resources, events and tools on the Cycling UK website are open to all, and there are specific ways to get involved listed there. Join us on the journey to get more people cycling.

For more information, visit the CAN website: [cyclinguk.org/CAN](https://cyclinguk.org/CAN).