



# *Bedford*

## *Cycling*

### *Quotes/Facts*



**Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire**

# Why Cycle?

**Cycling is fun**

fastest mode of transport for door to door short journeys - environmentally friendly - saves money on parking and fuel

**Cycling is good for my health**

**Cycling is great for my fitness**

Cycling offers mobility for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities and creates safer and more pleasant streets

## **CYCLING CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE**

*Founded 1992*

*A selection of cycling quotes and facts published to mark the 25th Anniversary of the campaign group.*

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## **Cycling Facts Contents**

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## Usage

Bedford has always been a '**Town of Cyclists**' since the beginning of the bicycle.

In 1935 cyclists accounted for 80% of the total daily traffic in the town.

After the Second World War the number of people cycling in Bedford has been claimed to have approached Dutch levels.

Bedford in the 1970s had more cyclists than any other town of a similar size.

Bedfordshire County Council's 1976 urban transportation study was believed to be the only one in the country which included cycling as a quantified mode of travel.

Today, around 32,000 adult residents cycle at least once per month and 22,500 at least once per week. Cycling to the railway station is at the same level as it was in the 1960s with around 10 percent of commuters arriving by bicycle.

Over the last 12 years cycling has increased by nearly 90 percent.

For a number of years sales of bicycles have exceeded that of cars.

## Safety

Cycling is a relatively safe activity.

Cycling for one hour has a similar risk to walking or gardening and is less riskier than playing tennis or football.

One cyclist is killed on Britain's roads for every 29 million miles travelled by bicycle - the equivalent to cycling over 1,000 times around the world.

## Infrastructure

The urban area of Bedford has an extensive cycle network of off-road paths and tracks, quiet roads and on-road cycle lanes along more busier roads.

More than 100 signalled crossings are available for cyclists to cross busy roads.

All parts of Bedford including Kempston and the suburbs of Biddenham, Bromham, Clapham, Elstow, Great Denham, New Cardington and Shortstown are within a 15-20 minutes cycle of the town centre.

## Security

When leaving a bicycle unattended always lock it to a permanent structure or cycle stand in a well-used and properly lit area where it is visible to passing pedestrians.

There are around 500 cycle stand spaces in Bedford town centre and more than 600 at the railway station on which to secure a bicycle.

Unfortunately a bicycle is a desired item for 'spur of the moment' thieves or the professional. It is almost impossible to stop the latter but good locks can deter the former.

Use a good quality lock that matches the value of your bicycle. If necessary, use two different types - a D-lock as well as a flexible one.

## Benefits - Health

Regular cycling is a valuable, healthy form of exercise under a person's control which strengthens heart and lungs, and puts no strain on the body.

Cycling gives a person a better mental health and well-being by reducing stress and helps you to live longer.

## Benefits - Environment

Cycling produces no harmful pollutants, virtually no noise and with walking is one of the cleanest forms of transport.

Cycling can make for more pleasant communities with better air quality, lower carbon emissions and reduced congestion as well as promoting social interaction.

## Benefits - Cost Savings

Cycling is the most inexpensive form of independent door to door transport, apart from walking, with no fuel or parking costs and negligible maintenance costs.

A good bicycle will last for years, if not decades.

The average weekly household expenditure on transport in 2018 was £80.80 (14.1% of total expenditure). Up to £4,200 per year could be saved using a bicycle.

# Cycling to School

Cycling to school:

- encourages independence and builds confidence.
- reduces congestion – especially around school gates, making it safer.
- provides an active start to the day, making pupils more alert in lessons.

Nationally only around 1% of children aged 5 - 10 and 3% of children aged 11 - 16 cycled to school in 2017.

In the urban area of Bedford the figure for lower and primary schools is 3.8%, nearly 4 times the national average, although in 'hands up' surveys more than 7 times this number on average would like to cycle if allowed by their parents or guardians.

For middle and secondary schools the figure is 9.7%, just over three times the national average.

All borough schools now have travel plans in place through which actions can be taken to encourage more pupils to use sustainable transport to get to school.

## Climate Change

Climate change is a change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.

Effects are an increase in natural disasters - forest fires, droughts and floods - sea temperatures, levels and acidification. Melting glaciers, shrinking ice sheets, changes in rainfall, global inequality and bio diversity are also being experienced.

Solving climate change can not be left solely to big businesses and international and national governments or even local governments such as Bedford Borough Council. It is also the responsibility of all residents living in the borough.

Cycling instead of using a car can not solve the problem but it can go some way in helping to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to save the planet.

# Pollution

Air pollution is the unseen killer.

Unlike the smogs of the 1940/50s, created by coal burning power stations and fires, it is today mainly derived from the emissions of small molecular particulates and nitrogen oxides from diesel engine motor vehicles and is invisible, cannot be smelt or tasted.

Bedford town centre is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to its high nitrogen dioxide emissions. This is particularly acute on many daytimes in the High Street when shoppers are about.

Pollution is linked to a wide range of potential health problems - strokes, heart disease, lung cancer, dementia, chronic and acute respiratory diseases including asthma and premature deaths.

In the borough pollution was estimated to accelerate the early deaths of at least 70 people in 2015.

As for climate change cycling can not completely solve the problem but it can go a long way to help reduce the level of toxic emissions to improve peoples health.

## 20mph Speed Limits

Lowering the speed of traffic around schools, in residential roads and the town centre area is one of the most effective and economical ways to making streets safer and more pleasant for all residents from young children to the elderly and encourages more cycling and walking.

It is a major factor in reducing the frequency and severity of collisions and can result in lower vehicle emissions and ease congestion, the latter making the overall journey in many cases shorter.

Bedford Borough has introduced numerous schemes over the last few years but there are still many more to implement.



# 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.



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