



Press Statement: Responses to Cycling UK Suffolk Questionnaire on Cycling and Active Travel in Suffolk

Just after the nominated candidates were announced for the Suffolk County Council election to be held on 6th May 2020 we contacted the four main parties and as many independent candidates as possible to ask them to complete an online questionnaire on Cycling and Active Travel in Suffolk.

The idea was sparked from the success of a similar initiative from the Cambridge Cycling Campaign which has done this for every election for more than five years.

We received 46 responses out of 258 candidates which, while quite a low response rate was to be expected given we had never done this before and had little time to follow up. Some parties were quite difficult to engage with. That is reflected in the responses

We will repeat the exercise for future elections and we hope candidates will better engage in the process.

For the record the number of responses by Party was:

The Conservative Party 4

The Labour Party 13

The Green Party 19

Liberal Democrats 3

Independents 7

We supplied a link to a page of information on the subjects of this questionnaire in case they were previously unaware of this.

We also sent links for Police and Crime Commissioner candidates but received no responses.

We tried to do the same for the other candidates in District, Parish and Town Council elections. However only 9 Green Councillors responded. Their responses are detailed at the end of this document

The results are interesting, the support for investment in cycling and Active Travel seems to be fairly strong, which will hopefully mean, if elected, the supporting candidates will support planning and investment in Cycling Infrastructure in Suffolk.

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The first question was a series of statements where we asked candidates if they agreed with the following statements based on evidenced benefits of safe cycling infrastructure.

1) Do you agree with the following statements about Investing in and enabling safe cycling infrastructure?

It will remove motorised traffic from the roads of Suffolk. thus reducing congestion and road maintenance costs.

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
Strongly Agree	0	6	13	0	0	19
Agree	2	7	5	2	5	21
Not Sure	0	1	1	1	1	4
Disagree	2	0	0	0	0	2
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	1

Total = 46

It will reduce air pollution from cars in Suffolk

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
Strongly Agree	1	8	15	0	3	27
Agree	2	5	3	2	3	15
Not Sure	0	0	1	1	0	2
Disagree	1	0	0	0	0	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	1

Total = 46

Help meet Climate change goals.

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
Strongly Agree	1	7	15	0	2	25
Agree	1	6	4	4	3	18
Not Sure	1	0	0	0	0	1
Disagree	1	0	0	0	0	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	1

total 46

It will improve the health of Suffolk People, reducing demand for NHS resources.

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
Strongly Agree	0	10	17	1	1	29
Agree	4	3	2	2	4	15
Not Sure	0	0	0	0	1	1
Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	0

Total 46

It will improve the mental health of people who cycle. This will reduce the NHS Mental Health burden.

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
Strongly Agree	1	4	15	1	2	23
Agree	3	7	4	2	4	20
Not Sure	0	2	0	0		2
Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0

Total 46

It may improve retail footfall and thus the local retail economy.

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
Strongly Agree	0	2	7	0	0	9
Agree	0	6	10	1	3	20
Not Sure	2	5	1	1	3	12
Disagree	2	0	1	1	0	4
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	1

total 46

Easier commuting by bike will improve productivity among workers in businesses.

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
Strongly Agree	0	4	11	0	0	15
Agree	2	6	6	2	2	18
Not Sure	2	3	2	1	4	12
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	1

Total 46

It will have a positive benefit on Urban and Rural Communities as it enable easier interaction between residents.

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
Strongly Agree	0	8	12	0	0	20
Agree	2	1	5	3	6	17
Not Sure	2	4	1	0	0	7
Disagree	0	0	1	0	0	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	1

Total 46

It will reduce the need for parents to drive children and students to school.

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
Strongly Agree	1	6	15	1	2	25
Agree	2	7		1	3	15
Not Sure	1	0	1	1	1	4
Disagree	0	0	1	0	0	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	1

Total 46

2) Do you support the pathway 2 and 3 aims in the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership transport to reduce car use by 25% by 2030?

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
Support	4	12	18	3	6	43
Not Sure	0	0	0	0	0	0
Do not support	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	1	1	0	1	3

Total 46

Comments

“This is a great initiative, and I think we can afford to be more ambitious with our goals with regards to environmental protection. We should seek to reduce car use even further in such a long time frame as 2030 gives us.” *Olivia Hughes, Labour, Stour Valley*

“We should be aiming higher than this particularly as the Chelsea Tractor has become the vehicle of choice and its impact on cyclists and the planet is substantially greater than smaller cars” *Ralph Carpenter Green Party Long Melford*

“There is a lot more to this question than a straightforward yes or no” *Frank Stennet, Independent, Tower Division.*

3) Suffolk County council refused to sufficiently fund planning by SCC Officers which is a Government requirement for Active Travel funding. Do you commit to ensuring this funding is in place?

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
I commit	0	13	19	3	5	40
Not Sure	2	0	0	0	0	2
I do not commit	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	2	0	0	0	2	4

Total 46

Comments

“We need to do more to increase cycling but I am not so sure that the current plans in bury are up to standard, you can’t remove car parking and road space that hinders enterprise. There must be a better way and it’s this better way I would support.” *Frank Stennet, Independent, Tower Division.*

“Would definitely be on my list along with others” *Tony Knights, Independent, Oulton Division.*

“This is my first time standing as a SCC so I would have to see what funding is available as Covid has reduced the available budget significantly” *Simon Sudbury, Conservative, Sudbury Division.*

“Review Policy constantly” *Christopher Hudson, Conservative, Belstead Brook Division*

4) Do you support the cycle path and Low Traffic Neighbourhood changes made in Suffolk in 2020 to enable social distancing and make cycling safer?

	Conservative	Labour	Greens	Lib Dems	Independents	Total
Support	4	12	17	1	5	39
Not Sure	0	1	2	2	0	5
Do not support	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0	1	1

Total 46

Comments

"I can't support the changes made in bury as there not even the recommended width there the minimum and take away parking spaces and hinder delivery to business. These current cycle lanes in my opinion are not fit for purpose. I do support safe cycling" *Frank Stennet, Independent, Tower Division.*

5) Any other comments on cycling in Suffolk?

"Cycling will always be a key part of town and rural life. If we do not have policies to reflect this we will only suffer further congestion, noise and air pollution. For an area like Sudbury, with is surrounding greenery, high pollution should not be a problem we have to deal with. Improving access and support to cycling is one element about how we go about achieving this." *Mr Jake Thomas, Labour, Sudbury Division*

"Cycling measures should be integrated with measures to support walking and public transport. 20 mph limits in towns and villages should be the default position throughout Suffolk" *Ian Perry, Labour, Samford Division*

"I as keen cyclist am angry at the lack of speed control around Felixstowe. Drivers are increasingly driving far too fast and making me, as a cyclist feel very unsafe." *Richard Reaville, Labour, Felixstowe Division.*

"Get on with it! Have been working on a cycle route Horringer to BSE but painfully slow." *Robin Davies, Labour, Thingoe South*

"I 100% think that the cycle paths need improving and kept clean and that there need to be more." *Katie Parker, Labour, Thingoe North*

"I cycled often (shortish distances) before C-19 struck, when there were more places to visit. Less currently." *Eddie Dougall, Labour Hartismere Division.*

"Positive actions need to be taken to increase cycling wherever possible in Suffolk. However, this should be done with the consultation and consent of local residents. Much upset has been caused by West Suffolk Council's trial cycle lanes which have been extended after results disappointed the Council. It should be acknowledged that for some reasons only motorised transport can be used and this should be developed with electric buses and other vehicles (plus infrastructure required) where possible. Safe cycle parking is also required." *Marilyn Sayer, Labour, Tower Division*

"Cycling is a great way of preserving the legacy of the 2012 Olympics in London and is all the more important in revitalising the mental well-being of Suffolk. I will certainly keep cycling, as a mode of transport, under review if elected." *Phillip Faircloth-Mutton, Conservative, Sudbury East & Waldingfield*

"We need clearly demarcated cycle lanes on all roads to indicate that even where the road is too narrow for cars and bikes, the bike always have priority. The surfaces within these demarcated lanes must be free of pot holes, lumps and bumps, all of which make cycling much more challenging and potentially offputting to all but the most committed" *Ralph Carpenter, Green Party, Long Melford Division*

"Currently I can't support these poorly thought out cycle lanes around Bury St Edmunds. Please do come and take a look at them. So much better could have been achieved." *Frank Stennett, Independent, Tower Division*

"I do not generally support the construction of roundabouts in urban settings. On the new roundabouts on the A140, Brome Suffolk. I secured design changes to better accommodate cyclists." *Guy McGregor, Independent, Hoxne & Eye*

"Excellent sustainable transport for those able to do it." *Christopher Hudson, Conservative, Belstead Brook Division*

"The general state of Suffolk roads is atrocious and dangerous for all road users but large potholes put cyclists particularly at risk as they swerve to avoid cycling into them. Or when cars do the same and end up in the path of other road users." *Theresa Munson, Green Party, Sudbury East & Waldingfield*

"I understand the reaction of drivers to changes in priorities toward cycling and walking but the climate emergency is with us now and will be worse for the future generations. Change is hard but changes will be much harder later if we don't act now. Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council must be bold. Other towns and cities have been so. We can do it too." *Stephanie Cullen, Green Party, Bixley (Ipswich) Division*

"I believe very strongly that cycling should be given a high priority in this area." *Judith Rook, Green Party, St. Johns Division*

"Am all for making cycling safer and easier for all ages both for work and socially, but cases like the Valley walk need to be done in a sympathetic way to accommodate walkers as well as cycling and not to spoil the natural beauty." *Trevor Cresswell, Labour, Sudbury Division*

"A life long non-Driver, much of my work as a Councillor and this Campaign is being carried out by bicycle. Coming out of lockdown, the roads seem both busier and scarier. An education programme is also required." *Alistair McCraw, Independent, Peninsula Division*

"I am a great fan of cycling, and I would like to see a lot more bikes on the road, but under current traffic volumes, safety issues are numerous. Many drivers are not confident when overtaking cyclists, for example. As a cautious cyclist, I am very happy to speak to you regarding travelling by bike from my perspective, as I believe it is slightly different to those of you who are confident on the road and experienced enough not to 'wobble' through anxiety in heavy traffic." *James McPherson, Labour, Bosmere Division*

"I want many more recognised cycle paths. Cycling on our pavements is dangerous for pedestrians - but unfortunately is not enforceable." *Bruce Davidson, Independent, Haverhill East & Kedington Division*

"Cycling infrastructure in urban areas provides safe space for cyclists in dense traffic. These would be used for commutes to work, school and shops but allow for short distances only. Most sport and recreational cycling is carried out on country roads in the countryside. These tend to be narrow, not well maintained, and with the national speed limit imposed. These roads need to be made safer for cyclists." *Mick Fraser, Conservative, Hadleigh Division*

"We need to redistribute the space on roads to stimulate active travel. More road space needs to be used for cycle lanes and pavements, making it safer and more convenient to travel by bicycle or foot. Also, the 20mph speed limit is fundamental to reducing the amount of road casualties that destroy so many lives every year." *John Mann, Green Party, Whitehouse Division*

"We have a wonderful example in Suffolk - my old school Kesgrave High, which apparently had the highest percentage of home to school journeys made by bike of any school in Europe. If we can re-create the circumstances that lead to this (good cycle paths, culture of supporting cycling) elsewhere it would make a massive difference" *Andy Mellen, Green Party, Thedwastre North Division*

"Proposals need to be worked through with communities not implemented top down." *Andrew Stringer, Green Party, Upper Gipping Division*

"I'd love to be able to cycle more with my little girl. Our bikes came out with the silent roads of the first lockdown. Passing other cyclists and families on bikes had a healthy, community feel to it. I know two people who were injured in collisions when on their bikes in recent months though - we need the infrastructure set up fast. People thrive with exercise doing something worthwhile like travelling under their own power. And developing the infrastructure for cycling could start to address the large number of deaths in Suffolk linked to long-term exposure to air pollution." *Helen Bridgeman, Green Party, Thredling Division*

"Cycle routes have been provided in a piecemeal fashion; cycle commuter routes need to link housing areas with business areas, town centres and stations.

Employers need to be encouraged to provide safe and secure cycle parking, showers, changing rooms and areas to dry and store clothing." *Kevin Welham, Green Party, Stowmarket North and Stowupland*

"If we provide the infrastructure and funding to make cycling a viable alternative to motorised transport, we won't just be improving the life of existing cyclists, but opening the door for many to get into cycling. We must not neglect one of the most sustainable transport methods when seeking a solution to the climate crisis." *Olivia Hughes, Labour Party, Stour Valley Division*

"I would support stronger messaging for all road users about cyclists and road safety (eg. safe passing) as that may encourage beginners (of all ages, including myself) to feel more confident cycling on the roads." *Emma Bishton, Labour Party Great Cornard*

"We at Oulton Parish Council are in the motion of including new cycle routes within our Neighbourhood Plan." *Tony Knights, Independent, Oulton Broad Division*

"I have been working with Copdock PC and SCC to create a dedicated cycle route from Capel St Mary through to Ipswich by making use of one of the carriageways of the Old London Road. Reducing speed limits on country roads will also improve the safety of cyclists." *David Busby, Liberal Democrats, Belstead Brook*

"Hadleigh has a good track record on providing safe cycle routes across town and i would like to see this built upon in other towns. We must do more to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Electric vehicles are not the answer unless more use of solar power can be made.

I believe self powered transport should be the normal mode for short journeys especially within the urban environment." *Trevor Sheldrick, Liberal Democrats, Hadleigh*

"I find the general lack of support from central government at the moment extremely disappointing, it seems the present government have no real commitment to climate change or more greener forms of travel at all, which is reflected in local government at County Council level. Also as an ex cyclist i feel that highway safety is now at an all time low and it is now almost to dangerous to try to travel on cycle amongst the motorised vehicles that always have prominence. I feel the present measures to cut traffic are just paying lip service to what is a real problem. I think we need to tax fossil fuel more and rebuild

our public transport system. A mixture of small electric buses with a carrot and stick approach to encourage people to use them and free up our highways and byways to encourage other forms of travel." Bryn Hurren, Liberal Democrats, Stour Valley Division

"I have fully supported proposals made at SCC to improve the cycling experience within the County"
Richard Kemp, Independent, Long Melford Division

"Joined up cycle and path ways, not just for commuting, but for shopping, visiting high streets, going to school and getting from A to B has to be a priority for Suffolk County Council. Linking cycling and walking routes with a not for profit public transport system must be on the council's agenda and would improve tourism, local business, health, pollution, traffic jams and imaginative and creative ways of using already existing roadways/ shared spaces etc. Hadleigh is a good place to start with any projects and ideas to take this forward." Angela Wiltshire, Labour Party, Hadleigh Division.

Some comments that were effectively message to the organisers (in the best possible way) have been edited out.

The candidates who responded to this questionnaire were:

Mr Jake Thomas, The Labour Party, Sudbury Division
Mr Ian Perry, The Labour Party, Samford Division
Mr Richard Reaville, The Labour Party, Felixstowe central Division
Mr Robin Davies, The Labour Party, Thingoe South Division
Mrs Katie Parker, The Labour Party, Thingoe North Division
Mr Eddie Dougall, The Labour Party, Hartismere Division
Mrs Marilyn Sayer, The Labour Party, Tower Division
Mr Philip Faircloth-Mutton, The Conservative Party, Sudbury East & Waldingfield Division
Mr Simon Sudbury, The Conservative Party, Sudbury Division
Dr Chris Dexter-Mills, The Green Party, Hardwick Division
Mrs Nicola Forsdyke, The Green Party, Haverhill Cangle Division
Miss Rachel Morris. The Green Party, Rushmere Division
Mr Tom Wilmot, The Green Party, St Helens Division
Mrs Jenny Rivett, The Green Party, Gainsborough Division, Ipswich
Mrs Gale Pryor, The Green Party, Hadleigh Division
Dr Simon Harley, The Green, Peninsula Division
Miss Jessie Carter, The Green Party.
Mr Ralph Carpenter, The Green Party, Long Melford Division
Mr Frank Stennett, Independent, Tower Division
Guy McGregor, Independent, Hoxne & Eye Division
Councillor Christopher Hudson, The Conservative Party, Belstead Brook Division
Mrs Theresa Munson, The Green Party, Sudbury East and Waldingfield Division
Mr James Killbery, The Green Party, Great Cornard Division
Ms Stephanie Cullen, The Green Party, Bixley (Ipswich) Division
Mrs Jude Rook, The Green Party, St Johns Division
Mr Jack Michael Ellis Blomfield, The Green Party of England and Wales, Mildenhall Division
Mr Trevor Cresswell, Independent, Sudbury Division
Mr Alastair McCraw, Independent, Peninsula Division
Mr James Macpherson, The Labour Party, Hardwick Division
Ms Suzanne Britton, The Labour Party, Bosmere Division
Mr Bruce Davidson, Independent, Haverhill East & Kedington Division
Cllr Mick Fraser, The Conservative Party, Hadleigh Division
Mr John Mann, The Green Party, Whitehouse & Whitton Division
Mr Andy Mellen, The Green Party, Thedwastre North Division
Mr Andrew Stringer, The Green Party, Upper Gipping Division
Ms Helen Bridgeman, The Green Party, Thredling Division

Mr Keith Welham, The Green Party, Stowmarket North and Stowupland Division
Miss Olivia Hughes, The Labour Party, Stour Valley Division
Ms Emma Bishton, The Labour Party, Great Cornard Division
Mr Tony Knights, Independent, Oulton Division
Mr Peter Coghill, The Labour Party, Halesworth Division
Mr Dave Busby, The Liberal Democrats, Belstead Brook
Mr Trevor Sheldrick, Liberal Democrats, Hadleigh Division
Mr Bryn Hurren, Liberal Democrats, Stour Valley Division
Mr Richard Kemp, Independent, Melford Division
Ms Angela Wiltshire, The Labour Party, Hadleigh Division

Responses from Candidates in other Elections

There were 9 responses all were from Green Candidates.

1) Do you agree with the following statements about Investing in and enabling safe cycling infrastructure?:

It will remove motorised traffic from the roads of Suffolk. thus reducing congestion and road maintenance costs.

	Green Party
Strongly Agree	6
Agree	2
Not Sure	1
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

It will reduce air pollution from cars in Suffolk.

	Green Party
Strongly Agree	7
Agree	2
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Help meet Climate change goals.

	Green Party
Strongly Agree	8
Agree	1
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

It will improve the health of Suffolk People, reducing demand for NHS resources.

	Green Party
Strongly Agree	7
Agree	2
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

It will improve the mental health of people who cycle. This will reduce the NHS Mental Health burden.

	Green Party
Strongly Agree	7
Agree	2
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

It may improve retail footfall and thus the local retail economy.

	Green Party
Strongly Agree	6
Agree	1
Not Sure	2
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Easier commuting by bike will improve productivity among workers in businesses.

	Green Party
Strongly Agree	6
Agree	2
Not Sure	1
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

It will have a positive benefit on Urban and Rural Communities as it enable easier interaction between residents.

	Green Party
Strongly Agree	7
Agree	2
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

It will reduce the need for parents to drive children and students to school.

	Green Party
Strongly Agree	8
Agree	1
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

2) Do you support the pathway 2 and 3 aims in the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership transport to reduce car use by 25% by 2030?

	Green Party
Support	7
Not sure	1
Do not support	0
Other	1

Comments

“This target is utterly inadequate” Julia Wakelam, Green Party, Abbeygate ward

3) Do you support the cycle path and Low Traffic Neighbourhood changes made in Suffolk in 2020 to enable social distancing and make cycling safer?

	Green Party
Support	9
Not sure	0
Do not support	0
Other	0

4) Any other comments on cycling in Suffolk?

“Suffolk is a great county for cycling - for recreation and transport. I don't own a car, so I fully recognise the importance of good infrastructure for cycling and public transport. Cycling will never be for everybody, but personally I find it convenient and rewarding; and of great benefit both physically and mentally. I'd like to see more people enjoy these benefits. We need safe and enjoyable routes across town, and in particular to schools.” *Edmund Harrison, Green Party, Whitehouse Ward*

“I feel there should be more consultation/education with people before cycle paths etc are introduced. This should help public acceptance of change. Car use near schools should be drastically curtailed. This should encourage cycling & walking. Schools should ensure students are taught safe cycling “ *Julia Wakelam, Green Party, Abbeygate ward*

“I would love to see more interconnected, safer cycling routes around the county, and for traffic-reducing goals to be integral to any future planning.” *Rachel Morris, Green Party, Rushmere*

“I support the implementation of segregated facilities for cyclists AND measures taken to slow vehicle speeds on most roads by all traffic calming measures, including the increased use of speed cameras. This should allow cyclists to feel safe on all roads where it is necessary for them to share space with motor vehicles. “ *Lucy Williams, Green Party, Ipswich Borough Council Gipping Ward*

“Cycle infrastructure must be prioritised for the benefit of all transport and road users. More people cycling = more efficient transport for everyone.” *Tom Wilmott, Green Party, Alexandra Ward Ipswich Borough Council*

“My issue is that so far I do not see a positive enough outcome in Ipswich. In fact the school run today was as bad as I have seen it. We need a move more towards vehicle-free towns as Oxford and Cambridge have tried to do with better public transport infrastructure for those unable to cycle. Both my sons have commuted by bike and I used to in Cambridge but the roads never feel safe with other motorized traffic on them. As for rural cycling we have not participated (apart from in lockdown) since we left Germany where there are amazing cycle paths all over and residential areas had 20kms speed limits.” *Jenny Rivett, Green Party, Holywells Ward, Ipswich Borough Council*

“Cycling is an enjoyable, sociable and environmentally friendly form of transport and, as such, should be strongly promoted by the Council.” *Jude Rook, Green Party, St. Johns Ward, Ipswich Borough Council*

“Suffolk should aim to be the cycling capital of the uk.” *Adria Pittock, Green Party, Bridge Ward (Ipswich Borough Council)*

“We need to redistribute the space on roads to stimulate active travel. More road space needs to be used for cycle lanes and pavements, making it safer and more convenient to travel by bicycle or foot. Also, the 20mph speed limit is fundamental to reducing the amount of road casualties that destroy so many lives every year.” *Jon Mann, Green Party, Westgate Ward (Ipswich Borough Council)*