

## Chief Executive

# EVERYDAY TRAVEL FOR EVERYONE



**PAUL TUOHY**  
Chief Executive

Along with our partner organisations in the worlds of cycling and walking, Cycling UK is pressing the Government to prioritise active travel. **Paul Tuohy** explains



Cycling needs to be a natural choice for short journeys

Right: Joolze Dymond

**IN THE LAST** issue of *Cycle*, I mentioned that we were working on our new five-year plan. Since then, I have held numerous workshops with the Trustees and my management team and I am excited about the aspirations and challenges that this new plan will present. We've already achieved so much in the past two years. Cycling UK has become known as the charity that champions cycling for all and isn't afraid to campaign and lobby for change where others cannot. Our Trustees have been highly engaged in the planning process, as it is they who ultimately determine our direction.

A key theme to our plan will be partnerships. In early May, I attended a meeting with Jesse Norman, the Transport Minister with responsibility for walking and cycling. With me were some of Cycling UK's friends from the worlds of walking and cycling: Sustrans, Ramblers, Living Streets, and the

**“Active travel is better for our economy and our wellbeing”**

Bicycle Association. We were there to submit requests for action in walking and cycling that we believe the minister can support. We are frustrated that the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) is not moving quickly enough to motivate the nation to walk and cycle more.

## ACTIVE TRAVEL ALLIANCE

One of the biggest barriers that stops people cycling is the fear it's unsafe. Whilst this perception of cycling's safety doesn't match the reality, it is nevertheless a serious deterrent. So we got together with like-minded partners to form an Active Travel Alliance, with the objective of achieving action today and a vision for tomorrow. I should add that while British Cycling could not be present at this meeting, their CEO, Julie Harrington, is very much part of the Alliance. She helped us agree these shared goals, along with CEOs Xavier Brice of Sustrans, Joe Irvin of Living Streets, Vanessa Griffiths of Ramblers, and Phillip Darnton, Chairman of The Bicycle Association.

For too long our towns and cities have been designed around motor vehicles, leaving them unattractive and difficult to navigate on foot or by bike, and less safe than they should be. It

is widely accepted that active travel is better for our economy, our health and wellbeing, and our environment. Despite this, walking and cycling have suffered from insufficient and inconsistent investment and a lack of national leadership. The UK Government's CWIS is a step in the right direction, and there are pockets of excellence in towns and cities across the UK, but the opportunity to transform our society calls for a clear vision and clear action.

As an alliance of the UK's leading walking and cycling organisations, we have come together to present an ambitious vision of the future and to propose some first steps. We know what can be achieved and we want to help make it happen – today. So this is what we presented to the minister.

## A VISION FOR TOMORROW

*Everybody is able to live, work, and play in places that are healthy, vibrant, and that make walking and cycling the natural choice for short journeys – now and for future generations.*

- Every town and city is served by a core network of segregated cycle routes and networks of walkable routes to and within centres.
- Every community has access to green spaces and is connected by traffic-free cycling and walking networks for all.
- Every rail and bus station is attractive for people travelling on foot or by bike, and has facilities that prioritise cycling and walking.
- Every child is able to walk and cycle to school in safety and with confidence, gaining essential life skills.
- Everybody has opportunities to take up walking and cycling, through programmes in schools, workplaces, and local communities.

The cogs of government don't move quickly, but we hope that by sharing our expertise, together with that of our partners, we can exert more pressure to bring about the changes we all want in our communities. We want everyone to enjoy cycling in our towns, cities, and countryside. That's why we are Cycling UK – and we will not stop until we win!