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Reflections & projections

As COP26 has shown, it's never been more important to make everyday cycling mainstream. **Sarah Mitchell** discusses how Cycling UK is doing that

As 2021 draws to a close I've been reflecting on my first year at Cycling UK. It's been a strange year to start and, in many ways, I still feel very new. But in recent months I've been able to attend my first events and get a much better sense of the range of work we do as an organisation. And what a broad range of work that is!

In this magazine you can read about the many powerful projects we are running that help people start cycling or get back into cycling as an adult. This work is so important to us because it enables us to inspire many more people to discover the love of cycling that we all enjoy as Cycling UK members. This can transform their lives.

Our results speak for themselves: I am incredibly proud of the data we now produce, which helps us to show the impact we are having in getting more people cycling, as well as enabling us to learn from and continuously improve our projects. This level of data and evidence is very rare and really sets us apart. It helps us to develop ever more effective projects all across the UK.

Underpinning all our work are our volunteer supporters. In addition to our member group volunteers, who put on thousands of rides all through the year, we welcome volunteers who support our day-to-day work, our community cycle clubs, and our campaigns. In October we held our annual volunteer celebration, which many of you may have virtually attended or watched. This important event was a chance to look back over the year, to remind ourselves of the powerful contribution that our volunteers have made across all our work, and to say a huge 'thank you!'.

This autumn the volunteers in our new Cycle Advocacy Network [CAN] really came into their own. CAN welcomes



cycle campaigners from across the UK and supports them to campaign locally and nationally. Against the backdrop of COP26, CAN has been raising the profile of cycling with local rides and activity to remind governments about the centrality of cycling to reaching our goals to achieve net zero and combat the climate crisis.

We projected that message onto Glasgow landmarks to make sure it couldn't be overlooked.

The CAN network is still keen to welcome new members so don't be shy – whatever your interest in cycle campaigning and however active you want to be, there is a home for you in CAN. You can find out more here: cyclinguk.org/CAN.

Along with many of our members, CAN has been instrumental in galvanising support for our current legal challenge. As you may know, Cycling UK, through the Cyclists' Defence Fund, is taking action against West Sussex Council because it removed a popular temporary cycle lane without considering the government's statutory guidance on the reallocation of road space for cycling. This was in contrast to the conduct of many other councils, which installed temporary or permanent new cycle lanes during the Covid pandemic. We decided to take legal action because we saw it as an important test case that could then act as a precedent to deter councils from removing high-quality cycle lanes across the country.

Despite much to-ing and fro-ing in the courts, we now have the green light to pursue this judicial review in January. You can support this action and future actions in this vein by donating to our Christmas appeal (p14). We couldn't take these important legal cases without your vital support.

1.1kg CO₂
Emissions saved per day by cycling a 2.5-mile commute and back instead of driving. cyclinguk.org/cop26

“Cycling is central to combatting the climate crisis. We projected that message onto Glasgow landmarks so it couldn't be overlooked”

Main photo: Ryan Buchanan