



month. We've been able to share local tips and bike setup advice with other families. One family test rode another family's cargo bike after the ride and went on to buy one. We have volunteer bakers who make the most amazing cakes – and kids who run round passing them out as we socialise after the rides.

The rides aren't only attended by children. We love our marshals, who choose to turn up every month with a smile to make sure the children can navigate the route safely. There are a couple of slightly older gentlemen with recumbent tricycles who join us regularly, too; a city with infrastructure that's safe for children is good for everyone. At Christmas, Father Christmas somehow always manages to fit our ride into his busy schedule.

THE ROAD AHEAD

We have been featured in local newspapers, and after the previous action weekend we were invited onto the local radio. I was able to talk about changes that we need to see so that children can cycle safely to a new local secondary school. Habits set in childhood can last a lifetime, so this could be a high-impact change.

The local council is engaging with us. They clearly want the town to be more cycling friendly, and they are interested to learn more about what that means for children. We have been invited to participate in cycling forums, and several councillors (including the mayor) have come to see the rides.

Nevertheless, change can seem very slow. I look at Reading and I know it is the right size for bicycles and public transport to be the default way to get around. (I know from personal experience that an e-bike

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flattens all hills.) Can you imagine the difference this would make to Reading's carbon emissions and air quality? It would, of course, also clear space on the roads for those few people who have no choice but to drive. But that future is a long, long way from where we are now. Sometimes it seems impossible to find the route between here and there.

As I mentioned earlier, my older son's favourite song from Frozen 2 is 'Into the Unknown'. I personally prefer the quieter but resolute 'Do the Next Right Thing' from the same film. I love the message that we don't have to know all the steps to where we're going, we just have to find and take the next one.

For me, that next step is helping to organise the next Kidical Mass ride, and leveraging it to push for better cycling access to the new secondary school. While I'm here, working for change in my town, I know that there are groups in towns and cities across the UK doing the exact same thing. I'm grateful for every one of you.

We're the adults in the room now. Our generation is coming into the decades where we will hold the economic and political power. It's time to stop kicking the can down the road for children to have to deal with. We have to do the next right thing. ●

kidsonbike.org

Simon Storey with some of his 'passengers'



School run solution

A bicycle bus is when a lead cyclist picks up children and parents along a planned route at predetermined points and the group cycles to school together. Simon Storey founded the Warwick Gates Bicycle Bus in 2020.

"I took my daughter Elise out for a ride during our daily exercise in lockdown and she asked why we didn't ride to school two miles away. I couldn't give her a reasonable answer: 'I've got work, the roads aren't safe, the weather...' They all sound quite lame now.

"So I decided to set up the Bicycle Bus. Initially, I contacted two schools, which are on the same site, and had their support," he says. "I also contacted local councillors, including the then council leader, and had their support.

"The ride now officially starts at Heathcote Park in Warwick. It runs through three estates and takes in four schools: Briar Hill Infant School, St Margaret's C of E Junior School, St Joseph's Catholic primary school and Little Willows pre-school."

thebicyclebus.co.uk



The Bicycle Bus runs through three estates and visits four schools. There are regularly 10-15 riders