

Opinion – Why not choose to cycle?

Diana Farrell has her own blog. Recently she wrote a really interesting article recognising that there are good reasons why people do not choose to cycle simply as a way of getting around.

She lives in the north west of Edinburgh, and is a lifelong cyclist both for sport and leisure. She is also a cycle coach and volunteers as a Breeze Champion, leading free cycle rides for women. The initiative supports women who want to cycle. Diana has two school age children and is interested in promoting active travel to school. Her blog is called [Mummys Gone A Cycle](#).

In the article she asked why would you not cycle? We asked her to expand on the theme for us.

Diana said: “There are many reasons people choose not to cycle. It’s too cold, too wet, too far, or they just don’t want to. But there is one important reason why people *cannot* choose to cycle, and it has nothing to do with the Edinburgh weather.

“During lockdown 2020 it seemed that everyone was cycling. It was wonderful to see families discovering a

love of bikes for leisure and transport. Now it seems that many are back in their cars. Last week a friend drove her son to meet us for a walk, and I asked why she no longer cycled. The reason was fear.

“She would cycle over by herself, but... “I don’t want my children to die.” She lives by a cycle route, yet she does not feel safe to cycle it with her children.

“For my friend – and thousands like her who would like to cycle but do not feel safe to do so – the only solution is proper infrastructure. We need fully-segregated cycle paths which go to the places people want to get to. Not painted lines, not small sections which dump you back on roads, not heavily parked ‘quiet routes’, and not routes which double the distance. Ultimately, if a five year-old cannot ride it safely on their own bike, then it is not a cycle route.



“This can be achieved. There is enough space to create this. Yes, some roads are congested with motorists, but that is not because of a lack of space but because there are too many motorists. Some of those motorists would choose to cycle if space were given to proper infrastructure, and that would reduce congestion.

“We need change in the way space is allocated. We need to shift to a perspective where the car is not king, where it is unacceptable for pavements to be blocked by cars and road signs. Where it is unacceptable to argue there is not enough space for a safe cycle lane on a road six lanes wide.”

“It is so important I am going to repeat it: If a five year-old cannot ride it safely on their own bike, then it is not a cycle route.”

Read the full “Why Not Cycle?” article at www.mummysgoneacycle.com/why-not-cycle/.

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