

Our Streets – song and video to promote safer cycling

A new single and video have been released by Edinburgh resident Dan Abrahams. The purpose is to highlight the need for safer and better infrastructure for those who want to cycle.

Cycling is a free method of travel and so cost effective against a backdrop of rising inflation and a cost of living crisis. The track is accompanied by the video showing a 9-year-old cyclist in Edinburgh along with a cast of locals.

The video for ***Our Streets*** also illustrates the all-inclusive Edinburgh cycling event held at the end of each month and footage of other similar events from numerous cities across the globe, from Kampala to Kyiv, Berlin to Brussels – Critical Mass.

There are more than 300 Critical Mass rides across the world every month. The concept is simple; bring your bike and ride through the city streets reclaiming the space, getting to know the city, meeting other like-minded people, and generally having fun.

In the video the nine-year-old girl is shown without a helmet – a decision taken by her and her parents. This highlights the danger of cycling in the UK – as opposed to cycling in Holland where children do not need to wear helmets as a result of the safe segregated cycle lanes. Crew were on standby throughout

the shoot to mitigate the dangers of any traffic.

Dan is one of the organisers of Edinburgh's monthly Critical Mass, where on the last weekend of every month, thousands of cyclists of all ages and on all types of bikes take to the streets to ride safely, peacefully, and happily.

Dan Abrahams said: "I wrote Our Streets because I feel passionately that so many problems in our world, from health & happiness to climate and pollution, can be tackled by getting people cycling. The song talks about how, in Holland during the 1970's, in the wake of the Middle East oil crisis and with so many child deaths due to cars, people protested for better bicycle infrastructure. It is not because Holland is flat, or because it is has 'always been in the culture' that they cycle so much. It's that they have made it easy and safe to cycle.

"Young people are struggling with the cost-of-living and with anxieties of facing up to the climate crisis. As a musician I want to play my part in making positive changes, in the tradition of musical greats such as Woody Guthrie and Nina Simone."

The single is supported by Bikes for Refugees. A spokesperson said: "We were very happy to be a part of Our Streets. As an environmentally focussed project that aims to get New Scots cycling, we heartily agree; for everyday travel, fitness, socialising, healthier streets and having fun...BIKES ARE THE ANSWER!!"

Head of campaigning at Cycling UK, Duncan Dollimore, said: "From the climate to the cost of living, air pollution and obesity, we face multiple crises. But people cycling some of their short journeys instead of driving offers a cost-effective solution to help resolve many of those burning issues. We all want to live on safe, vibrant streets, but too many people are currently put off cycling. Politicians and decision makers need to hear Our Streets' message that for the

people and the planet, the bicycle really is best.”

In the Netherlands, 25% of all roads have physically segregated bike lanes, with the remaining 75% having other measures in place to provide safe cycling routes. The result is that 27% of trips there are done by bicycle, rising to 60% in some cities such as Groningen. The popularity of cycling in the Netherlands has reduced deaths by 11,000 per year and yields economic health benefits of €19 billion per year (despite the government only spending €0.5 billion on cycling infrastructure).

Dan Abrahams grew up in Sheffield. Since the age of 8 when he received his first guitar, he has been writing songs, forming bands, playing gigs, and recording albums. In 2007 he moved to Edinburgh to study Engineering with Renewable Energy. After working in Engineering for 12 years on wind turbines, hybrid buses and trains, he decided in 2022 to take the plunge and pursue a full-time career in music.

He has played at major festivals across the UK, including Edinburgh Jazz Festival, Brecon Jazz Festival and Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Many of his compositions have been featured on radio stations such as BBC Scotland and BBC Radio 3 and he has recorded on over 13 albums.

He has written music for both theatre and film, including original scores for productions at the Edinburgh Festival, the soundtrack to the 2015 film *Wild Hearts* and the soundtrack to last year's *Re-Drawing Edinburgh*, a highly acclaimed presentation of archive material from the Edinburgh area.

The lyrics for the song are:

We need a critical mass, if we're going to address
The trouble on our streets, cos they're in a bloody mess
Too many cars, no space for the rest
For the people and the planet then the bicycle is best

On Our Streets
They're Our Streets
On Our Streets
They're Our Streets

Little kids on the road, gotta fight for their life
Cos the 4x4's give them such fright
They're going to fast and they're way too big
But we're gonna fight back, cos we gotta have the right

On Our Streets
They're Our Streets
On Our Streets
They're Our Streets

Look at Amsterdam like a mini-paradise
With the streets so quiet and the air so nice
They had to take to the street, with their bikes and their
feet
Cos you can't change a thing sitting in your car seat

Two wheels good, four wheel bad
Keeping our balance in a world gone mad
For the health of your body and the health of the world
Join us on your bike and we'll tell them all

They're Our Streets
They're Our Streets
They're Our Streets
They're Our Streets

Obesity Crisis – Bikes are the answer
Climate Crisis – Bikes are the answer
Noise pollution – Bikes are the answer
Safer streets – Bikes are the answer
Air pollution – Bikes are the answer
Mental health – Bikes are the answer
More prosperity – Bikes are the answer
Local economy – Bikes are the answers



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