

ANSWERS TO BRICYCLES QUESTIONS_SOPHIE_BROADBENT - MP CANDIDATE HOVE & PORTSLADE
23rd June 2024

Answers in green after each question

1. The extraordinary success of Kidical Mass in our city shows many children and adults want the city made safer for cycling because fear of collisions is the main deterrent for cycling. (Note: 565 cyclists have been killed or injured in Brighton & Hove since the last General Election.) Cycle lanes physically separated from motor traffic are safer.

• How will you support delivery of a network of separated, safer cycle lanes as an MP in the city of Brighton and Hove?

I enjoyed attending Kidical Mass with my 11 year old daughter earlier this year, and I would love to cycle with her more in our city every day. However, she is frightened to come with me on the roads because of heavy and fast traffic, and the fragmented cycle lane network. I am deeply shocked at the numbers of people who have been killed or injured while cycling in our city – but not surprised – cycling here can be dangerous for cyclists, pedestrians and drivers.

I am standing as a candidate for the Green Party in Hove and Portslade because I want the campaign for sustainable, active and accessible travel to have a strong voice in Parliament, and I know how important this issue is to our members on many levels. As well as lowering emissions and pollution, being enabled to be active also influences happiness and wellbeing.

The Green Party are proud to lead the political agenda on this issue and building fairer and more balanced travel infrastructure is a key part of our ethos and manifesto. The key to delivery is putting cycling infrastructure at the heart of planning for all new developments, and at the top of the agenda for plans for regeneration and maintenance of our city – including making sure it's considered for access to all public services and spaces.

It's the role of the council to administrate these aims, but if elected, I will support their work in my role as Member of Parliament by advocating for Government spending of £2.5bn a year on building sustainable cycleways and footpaths, support engagement with local communities to help infrastructure in residential areas be more safely balanced towards those walking and wheeling, and adopt the objectives of Active Travel England to deliver 50% of trips in England's towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030.

2. Cycling improves physical and mental health for residents. If journeys are made by bike instead of motor vehicle, the health of the whole community benefits because the air is cleaner so the risk of early deaths are reduced. Good cycling infrastructure also reduces the risks social exclusion and the social problems that it causes.

• What will you do to make cycling more accessible, particularly in the parts of your constituency where poor transport is putting people at high risk of social exclusion?

Cycling needs to be accessible to everyone – which means it must be affordable and safe. Investing in a bike can be expensive, so it's important to look at ways to make bike ownership and shared access like Brighton's Beryl Bike scheme more accessible to all (eg. through funding bike passes). And there needs to be reliable infrastructure for parking bikes safely while at your destination. Cyclists of all ages and experiences also need to feel comfortable on the road – that car and van drivers will be respectful, and the route is clearly defined and straightforward to navigate. Sadly, there is a lot of work to be done before we reach these goals, but the Green Party recognise this and will work hard to meet these objectives.

My daughter has been lucky to receive free cycle safety training at school, and I'd like to see this available for adults too. The physical and mental health benefits of exercise are well known for people of all ages - and we all want to breathe much cleaner air. An investment in cycling is also an

investment in supporting the NHS who often deal with the health problems from so much inactive motorised travel, and it will take polluting, fossil-fuel powered traffic off our roads.

To enable this exciting transition, I'd like to see funding awarded to the many fantastic organisations in this city already doing great work to help include and support people (like me!) to afford and maintain their own bikes. I'd like local businesses to provide safe parking and facilities for riders to stop by briefly and bring custom, or change and freshen up on arrival eg. at work. And I'd like this inclusion expanded to the train services so people can join up longer journeys. All of this would mean that cycling feels like an accessible, appropriate and comfortable option in all weathers and terrains.

3. Last year almost 800 cycle thefts were reported to Brighton & Hove Police but not a single thief was convicted. Cycle theft stops people who already cycle from continuing and it stops many others from starting to cycle.

- What will you do to reduce cycle theft?

My bike was stolen from outside Preston Park train station earlier this year. When I reported it to the police, it could not be investigated without closed circuit TV footage - which was not available, even though it was locked up in the designated public area. Without my bike I was suddenly unable to operate my small business which relies on me being able to travel quickly and reliably around the city: I know how crucial affordable, reliable transport is to working people.

Cyclists need access to safe, designated cycle parking areas. An investment in this infrastructure is an investment in the long-term health of a community. But both the police officers who respond to crime, and those who become involved in offending – often because of a lack of other supportive public services - also need access to pathways to break these events down and re-build them into opportunities for positive, regenerative solutions for all.

The Green Party want to help restore trust and confidence in the Police, and safer streets. We would take a holistic approach to crime by reversing austerity and investing in public infrastructure and services to help stop many of the conditions for crime being created in the first place. Both society and the police force must be inclusive and tolerant, so that lives can be rebuilt rather than condemned to a pattern of repeated spiralling actions.

I'd like to see all businesses building safe cycling infrastructure into their plans – just as car parking, pedestrian and disability access are considered. Central government also need to properly fund councils to carry out this aim for residents – for example by expanding the installation of cycle hangars, which has enabled hundreds of cars to be removed from the roads in this city – lowering pollution and empowering residents to be more healthy and active.