

# JULY 2020

## **Cycling as Lockdown Eases**

Have you enjoyed cycling again recently? Many of us have been dusting off our bikes and taking to the quieter roads during lockdown, as it has been deemed a safe form of exercise, with a very low chance of either spreading, or catching the virus. It's been really enjoyable too, seeing up close the wildflowers in the hedgerows, and at a slower pace to appreciate countryside views. But will you continue this as you go back to work?

The opportunity of more free time may have led many people to work on increasing fitness levels, and to lose any excess pounds; therefore a ride to work now, will result in being less tired or hot on arrival than before. Hopefully we will all want to keep this new fitness; cycling to work, a friend's house or the shops, enables us to fit in a fitness routine that takes very little extra time out of our day, but will greatly improve our long term health, as well as easing some of the congestion during rush hour, and the air becoming clearer as we create a new normal. And if you don't feel fit enough, or the journey is a little too far, an electric bike is a much cheaper way of helping the environment and slowing climate change, than an electric car.

The council are looking to improve safety for cyclists too, and have launched a new interactive map, to find out where you would like temporary social distancing measures for pedestrians and cyclists [www.somersetcovidactivetravel.commonplace.is](http://www.somersetcovidactivetravel.commonplace.is). A second way to input ideas, including where you would like more cycle lanes, is with Cycling UK's "Widen my path" campaign, and this great interactive map where you can input ideas or vote on other people's. At [www.cyclinguk.org](http://www.cyclinguk.org) The Taunton Area Cycle Campaign group are providing free, one to one, cycle confidence sessions, open to all adults, and working with "On Your Bike" to provide "Dr Bike" sessions for key workers, 15

minute time slots to service bikes for free. To book, just contact them.

So, I hope this has encouraged you to cycle and leave the car at home, and if you don't have sufficient safe bicycle parking facilities at your work place, or would like the bathroom to include better washing facilities to freshen up, do take the opportunity to ask your employers for them now. If lots of us ask the question, it is likely that we can improve facilities for all of us in the future.

By Helen Gillingham