

Road Safety Education Newsletter Spring 2024



Spring has arrived and it's an opportunity to reduce time spent in a car and enjoy warmer weather and see the natural world after the dark days of winter. Jumping into the car is often thought of as the easiest option, but many people's happy childhood memories are of enjoying walking, scooting or as they got older, cycling. On the school run, spending time chatting with friends is an important part of growing up and learning and active travel gives great opportunities for this.

Walk to School Week 20th – 24th May 2024

Walk to school week is a great way to promote walking to school and encourage more people to get active on the school run. The official theme for the Living Streets spring week this year is **The Magic of Walking**. There are lots resources available from Living Streets;

<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/walk-to-school/primary-schools/walk-to-school-week>

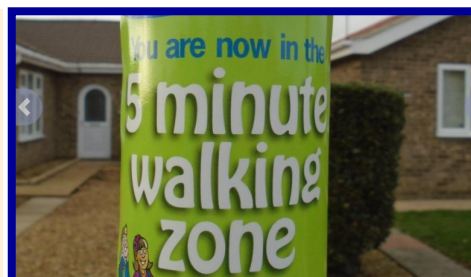
There are lots of activities to help promote the week. These are some things schools have done:

- ◆ A decorated shoes day, take photos of the shoes and put on the class pages.
- ◆ Ask drivers to park away from school and walk, scoot or wheel the rest of the way.
- ◆ Offer healthy breakfast options to all walking and wheeling part or all of the way to school, including the adults.

How about a Take 5 Walking Zone Scheme at your school?

For information contact the Road Safety Education Team

road.safety@cambridgeshire.gov.uk



School Travel STARS in Cambridgeshire

The Modeshift STARS travel planning system is very successful in Cambridgeshire with 71 Schools actively taking part. It's a great way to encourage sustainable travel and involve the whole school community as well as gaining national recognition for the travel planning.

Schools can achieve five levels of award: Approved, Good, Very Good, Excellent and Outstanding accreditation. Very Good and Excellent awards recognise schools that achieve a reduction in single-occupancy car journeys to/from their site and Outstanding recognises schools that achieved an increase in active travel modes.

March saw the Modeshift STARS national awards event which was held in London. We were delighted that Highfield Littleport Academy were one of the shortlisted schools. The annual awards ceremony recognises schools who have done inspiring work to promote active travel. This year, 22 schools were invited to attend. One of these was Highfield Littleport Academy who had already received the prestigious SEN School of The Eastern Region award. Whilst they were not national winners this year the outstanding work that they have been doing to promote sustainable, independent and independent travel where possible made them a natural choice for the selection panel.



“Over the years we are now proud to say that although many of our students come to school in shared taxis we have local children who walk and staff that bike, walk and those who now car are sharing. We endeavour to continue supporting our students in the future with these skills in travel training and safety that are key to promote the independence of our learners and support them in preparing for adulthood.”

Yvonne Skillern, Headteacher



For more information about how a STARS travel plan can be helpful for your school please contact:
rosemary.mullen@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Junior Travel Ambassador News



The Junior Travel Ambassadors have been very busy this term here are some of the things they have been up to!

Sustrans Big Walk & Wheel



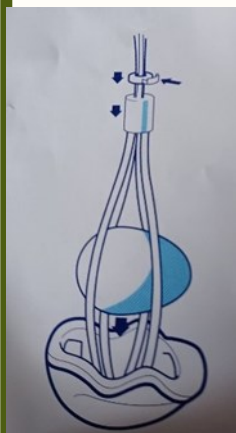
This event used to be called the Big Pedal, and though the event has a new name, it still has the same aim: to encourage more families to travel to school actively to help create healthier and happier communities. On each day of the challenge, schools compete to see who can record the greatest proportion of their pupils walking, using a wheelchair, scooting or cycling to school.

To support the event at their schools, the JTA's have been doing all sorts of fun activities to encourage more active travel to school, including the exciting golden lock competition,

Each day during Big Walk & Wheel the JTA's choose a bike or scooter at their school and put the golden lock on for the owner to find.. This year all the children who found the golden lock on their bike/scooter received a wind-up torch.



Other fun activities included, treasure hunts, bling your bike and obstacle courses



and a special session on why it is good to use a cycle helmet .

The JTA's used a mini helmet and an egg in a demonstration to show how helmets can protect your head in the event of an accident! It's a fun way to learn about the benefits of cycle helmets. The egg is placed in the helmet and then dropped, the helmet protects the egg from breaking.

The talented JTA crew at All Saints Interchurch Primary in March created this colourful bunting for the Big Walk and Wheel Week. What a great idea!



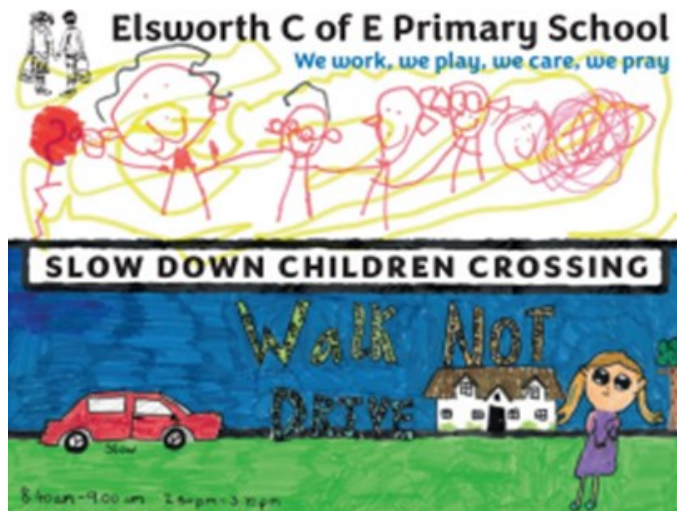
Junior Travel Ambassador News

The Junior Travel Ambassadors at Elsworth have been busy doing lots of special road safety things and also spent time writing letters to the Parish Council and the Highways Agency to make suggestions on how to improve road safety on roads around the school.

They met with Parish Councillor Mr Tim Egan, following a letter the JTA's sent about making the road crossing from Franks Farm safer.



The dedicated and talented youngsters did not stop there, they also held competitions, and designed some wonderful banners as well as creating a fun obstacle course for wheeling in the playground.



Fun obstacle course created by the JTA's at Elsworth



Junior Travel Ambassador News



The JTA's at Robert Arkenstall from last year continued doing a community project that was launched at the end of January. These are the JTA's aims;

Hettie "To help make sure everyone has a safe journey to and from school".

Joseph thanked the Parish Council for their support and for organising a school visit from hauliers Turners of Soham.

Charlotte acknowledged "A grant from the Community Safety Partnership to fund the project."

Holly thanked local businesses and farmers for their support and displaying the poster on vehicles.

Leila explained that "We are providing free wheelie bin stickers to every family in school and pre-school who live within the 20-mph zone."

Emily explained parents may sign up to a "Parent Pledge" and read out the pledge – "As a parent I promise to drive slower, be safe, be more aware, to use my eyes and not to take risks. I promise not to use my phone when driving and to respect lives."

This initiative is a great example of collaborative working between three different council entities, local businesses, schoolchildren, parents and villagers with a shared aim to make our roads safer for all.

Big congratulations to the JTA's and their village community!



Barhill Primary School

Did someone say they saw a Giraffe?

The JTA's at Barhill School had a fun day out, using active travel. They had to work out the bus timetable, use map skills and were able to put their road safety knowledge to good use, finding safer places to cross! All in search of Giraffes, including one designed by their school.



The JTA's at Caldecote did an assembly about keeping safe near the roads. Each class had been able to ask Spike the Road Safety Hedgehog mascot questions, here are some of them;

- ◆ Why are there different coloured lines on the road, for example white, yellow and red?
- ◆ Why do I have to look left and right more than once when crossing the road?
- ◆ How do you keep people safe when they are crossing a road?
- ◆ What do you have to do for your job?
- ◆ Do you normally see people being safe?
- ◆ Were you a JTA once?

Great questions, I wonder how Spike did answering some of those?

Maree Richards, JTA Road Safety Champion



Youth Travel Ambassador News



Youth Travel Ambassadors show the way to go!

This year three secondary schools, Linton Village College, St Bede's Inter-Church School, and Impington Village College are taking part in a new Youth Travel Ambassador project focussing on the yr 6/7 transition and their journey to and from school.

A group of Yr 9 students at each of the schools have been carrying out surveys with the current yr 7's as well as focus groups. They are now preparing a session around journey planning as well as cycling/walking/bus and taxi travel/safety information. They will be doing this with the yr 6's on their transition days.

The Youth Travel Ambassadors will also be meeting with some of the Junior Travel Ambassadors after Easter break to ask for their help and advice.

The Youth Travel Ambassador programme empowers young people to make a positive impact on travel in their school and local community.

For more information about YTA contact Maree

Maree.richards@cambridgeshire.gov.uk



Phoebe, Vandhana & Anna 3 of the 7 Youth Travel Ambassadors (YTA) at Linton Village College working on a secondary school transition project re journey to school.



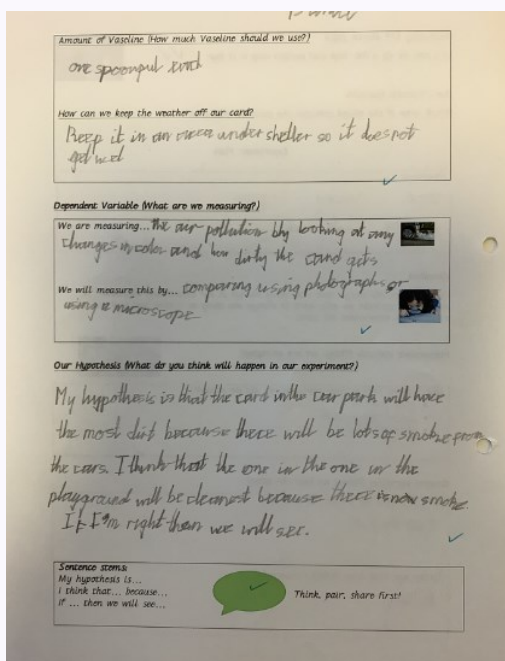
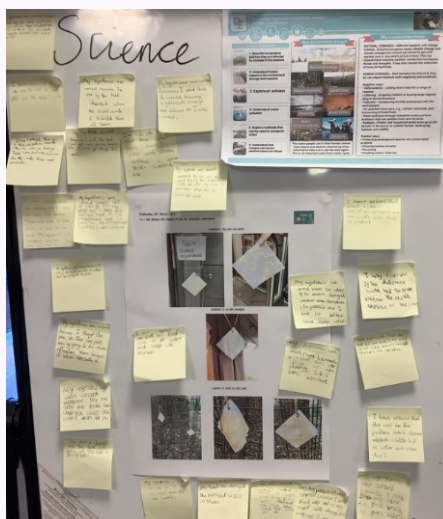
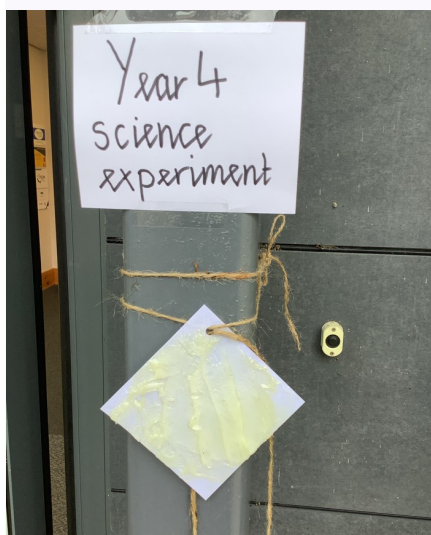
Show the Way 2 Go!

One of the had working STARS schools in Cambridgeshire shared some of the inspirational work that they do to promote healthy, sustainable, safer school travel.

A big thanks to School Travel Champion Julie Wilde for this super article.

With each day being a busy day, and the curriculum full to the brim, we are still keen to promote safer, active travel. To manage this, we have found natural links between established lessons and activities relating to Modeshift STARS travel planning. Putting ideas in to local and personal situations often helps to drive home a point and so using our local environment has proved to be a good learning tool too.

As we begin to enjoy the Spring sunshine and spend more time outside, pupils at KHEF have been considering their own local environment. Year 4 pupils were interested in the air that we breathe and set up a science experiment to see if they could find air quality varied around the school, including on the perimeter fence near to the main road. A rather sticky experiment allowed for lots of talk about variables, making any test fair, writing hypotheses, collecting results, using microscopes and then considering the outcomes.



We have always found that our younger children enjoy a survey and getting to stand out near our main road and count different vehicles is always undertaken with enthusiasm and pride. There is then much to talk about and surprise with the numbers of vehicles passing by and of course the involuntary “wow” when a noisy motorbike speeds past.



And, for Nursery the joy of seeing a bus pass right in front of them, was so exciting. It led to questions about our journeys to school, different ways to move around, places we would like to visit and so on.



Back in the classroom, a bike repair shop was very well used and it opened the children's eyes to bicycles all around them.



The Take 5 Zone at Kings Hedges Educational Federation



Last year, we introduced the idea of the 'Take 5 Zone', designed to encourage those who still drive to school, to park safely just a small distance from the school and then walk the last section. Parking around school was increasing and becoming dangerous. Couching it in very positive terms, we spoke with pupils about what they liked about walking and they came up with some lovely ideas, which was encouraging and we were able to feed back to parents/carers.



Having been provided with such a super map as part of the project, we decided to send one home to every family while also using them in school for Geography work on the local area. Laminated prompts can still be found on lampposts marking out the 5 minute zone and hopefully they continue to give a gentle reminder to try and have everyone's part in giving parking around school the boot!



Water, water everywhere...

As spring approaches after one of the wettest winters on record, it is perhaps a good time to reflect on the future sustainability of river management in our region. On a global scale, climate change is going to add around 7% more water vapour to the atmosphere for every degree Celsius that global temperature rises leading to more rain.

On a shorter timescale, ocean oscillation effects such as El Niño also influence weather patterns in Britain to varying degrees and are cyclical. 2023 to 2024 was an El Niño year so the combination of climate change and El Niño is the probable cause of the abnormally wet winter we have just experienced. For those who like their figures, in February, the East of England received over 200% more rainfall than the average over the last 30 years which led to the prolonged flooding we have just experienced.



How we have coped this winter depends on where you live. For those who are fortunate enough to live on higher ground, the impacts have generally been less compared to those who live closer to the lower Great Ouse or the Nene. Existing flood defenses such as the Ouse Washes and floodplain zoning have largely worked this winter but even so, St Ives has been particularly badly flooded and the Hundred Foot Washes roads have been closed for record periods of time.



Looking ahead, decision makers are going to have to carefully consider the effects of economic and urban development on our region's rivers if we are not going to create larger problems in the future. Studies have shown that in its natural state, typically 10% of rainfall in a river catchment ends up as surface runoff (the major factor in river flooding) but this increases with urban development. Roughly speaking, for every 1% increase in impermeable urban surface, surface runoff also increases by 1% leading to rainfall reaching rivers quicker, amplifying the flood potential downstream.

Impermeable urban surfaces upstream also decrease both shallow and deep infiltration which is the source of a river's normal flow. In its natural state around 50% of rain infiltrates but can be as low as 15% in a heavily built-up area. This can be seen during dry periods as river levels gradually drop.

Whilst the impacts of this on wildlife and the leisure industry are perhaps most obvious, low river levels are also an industrial problem for businesses which rely on water and are trying to stay within their permitted discharge levels. Increasingly warm summers due to climate change and lower river levels, will make it more challenging for water authorities to remain within permitted effluent dilution levels. Potentially leading to increased river pollution and negative environmental impacts; in part, an unintended consequence of increased development.



However, with careful planning hydrological sustainability can be achieved by deliberately designing features which mimic natural processes. For example, using water absorbent sedum roofing and constructing wetland areas in and around developments to encourage infiltration as opposed to runoff. Such holistic soft engineering approaches upstream will reduce expensive hydrological and environmental impacts downstream.

The challenge is huge, the East of England is undergoing massive economic and urban growth, but this must be done responsibly and sustainably if we are not to pay for today's insensitivities in the future.

Mike Smith FRGS



School Crossing Patrol Service News

The school crossing patrol service are important and valued members of their communities, and provide a vital link to a safer journey to and from school for many children. This dedicated group of staff cross children and families to and from school come rain, hail or snow, in safety each school day. We were sad when a valued member of the school crossing patrol service decided to hang up her lollypop after 40 years.

At the beginning of the spring, Patrol Officer at Upwell Road, Sue Lambert said farewell to all of the children she has worked with. Sue spent 40 years working with schools in March both as school crossing patrol officer and also 38 years as a midday supervisor and cleaner at Cavalry Primary School. She will be very much missed. Parents described Sue as a resilient, professional and, above all, a caring, friendly person who has always been there to help and support others.

One mum said

"Sue leaves a big gap to fill, we can't imagine how it will be without her, we will all really miss her cheerful hello and her kindness."



Spring is here! Some tips for your travels

Winter undoubtedly brings some pretty challenging driving conditions, but spring in the UK is the one season that can subject you to every weather condition on the same day!

April Showers

Rain is an all too familiar occurrence throughout the year, but April is the month most associated with sudden downpours. Heavy rain that follows a dry spell can be particularly treacherous for drivers, with rainwater mixing with contaminants such as oil and grease left on the road. The result is slippery road surfaces and stopping distances that increase significantly.



Spring driving tip: After heavy use during the winter, the start of spring is the perfect time to give your windscreen wipers a health check. Make sure your wipers are clean and check the blades for wear and tear. If they leave streaks of water across the glass or judder, they need replacing. You should also use screenwash rather than just water to help maintain your visibility.

Gusting winds

It's not just torrential rain that can cause problems in the spring. It's also storm season in the UK, with heavy winds introducing a number of new hazards to look out for. Branches, debris from loose loads and other objects can appear in the road. You should also take particular care in built-up areas, with sudden gusts potentially pushing cyclists, other vehicles or even pedestrians into your path.

Spring driving tip: In strong winds, try to avoid overcompensating with your steering. Slowing down will give you more time to react to unexpected hazards and reduce your stopping distances.

Potholes

The heavy winter weather can take its toll on our roads and create new potholes in areas they've not been before. Spring showers can then fill them with water to make them more difficult to see. Hit a pothole at high speed and it can cause substantial damage such as punctured tyres, bent wheel rims, suspension damage, poor alignment and problems with your exhaust.

Spring driving tip: Slow down. The faster you hit a pothole, the more damage it will do. If you do hit a pothole, avoid the temptation to brake as that places extra stress on the suspension and increases the likelihood of damaging your car. Keeping your tyres inflated will also reduce the risk of a puncture or a blowout.

Low sun

After a long wet winter, it's certainly good to see the sun again, but being greeted by a very low sun during the morning and evening rush hour can seriously reduce the visibility of you and other drivers.

Spring driving tip: Keeping your windscreen clean, wearing sunglasses and using the overhead visor can all reduce the glare and improve visibility at sunrise and sunset. The most important tip is to slow down to give yourself more time to react to potential hazards you might not see until the last minute.

Aquaplaning

Spring showers create pools of surface water on the roads that can lead to aquaplaning. Aquaplaning occurs when a film of water builds up between the tyres and the road surface, causing a temporary loss of steering, braking and power control. Aquaplaning is most likely to occur during the first ten minutes of light rainfall.

Spring driving tip: Keeping your speed low in wet conditions will help to reduce the risk of aquaplaning. However, if you find you have lost control of your car, try to keep calm. You should ease off the brakes, take your foot off the accelerator, keep a firm grip of the steering wheel and try not to steer. Once the tyres regain traction, you will feel the steering return to normal.



Looking out for others

You may see more people out on the road enjoying the spring weather.



When there are cyclists on the road you must leave a safe distance. 1.5m is a minimum safe distance for overtaking in slow moving traffic. If you cannot allow the minimum distance, do not overtake until you can. At speeds of 30mph or above, the Highway Code recommends a car width may be needed to overtake safely.

Rule 139 of the Highway Code states “give cyclists at least as much room as you would a car when overtaking”.

Rule 188 of the Highway Code states “When passing a cyclist give them plenty of room”. If they look over their shoulder while you are following them it could mean that they may soon attempt to turn right. Give them space and time to do so.

Leave extra space for cyclists as they may need to move to avoid uneven road surfaces or obstacles. Take care if you need to overtake cyclists and leave more space, especially at night or in bad weather conditions.

Pedestrians may be out and about more often with the sun coming out. This can make streets busier and cause more potential hazards. In areas where there are more pedestrians, its important for drivers and cyclists top take time and be aware of what is going on. A lot of road safety is just plain common sense but sometimes you have other things on your mind and common sense takes a back seat!

Many people use mobile devices when they are walking and these can seriously distract their attention from the road. Even just looking at other people can distract a person’s attention from the road. So its important for all road users to be aware of each other to ensure that everyone has a safer journey



During the Spring and Summer months and with longer days, it is likely that more **horses** and their riders will be on the road

Motorists know that they must stop at a zebra crossing for pedestrians and give cyclists ample space when overtaking, but many don't know the best way to drive around horses.

Vehicles can be dangerous for both horses and their riders, and sadly sometimes fatal, too. The British Horse Society found that in 2022 alone, 68 equine deaths were logged on the road, as well as an additional 125 being injured and 139 human injuries. They also received reports of 3,552 equine related road incidents over the past year.

Horses have a much keener sense of hearing than humans, and they can hear low to high frequencies ranging from 14Hz to 25 kHz. In comparison, humans can only hear 20Hz to 20kHz (Rutgers). Alongside this, a horse's ears can move 180 degrees using 10 different muscles, allowing them to isolate specific sounds.

Therefore, they are much more likely to hear and react to the sounds of a car. That's why it's essential that drivers reduce their speed and remain patient, as beeping your horn or revving your engine will only spook a horse. When approaching a rider, slow down to 10mph or less and wait until it's safe for you to pass. Bicycles can also spook horses and it's wise to slow down if possible, and give them room. It's also not a good idea to cycle up behind horses as they may react by kicking out.

Give them space

Horses have 350-degree vision, meaning they can see far and wide. This is often a good thing for horse riders as it means the horse can clearly see obstacles ahead. However, horses can often be easily spooked by things in their sightline, which can be dangerous when they are being ridden. So, to help them stay calm and safe on the road, it's essential that car drivers give horses enough space so they can slip past without an issue.

When it comes to how much space to give them, ideally the more the better. The Highway Code recommends giving horses at least two metres of space. The average car width is around 1.82 metres wide, so try to give a little more than a car's width of space to the horse and rider, and only overtake when it's safe to do so.

Learn the highway code changes

In January 2022, the Highway Code was updated with a selection of new rules, giving more safety to cyclists, pedestrians, and horse riders. It's always a good idea to refresh your knowledge of the Highway Code every so often, for the safety of both yourself and other road users, but especially when changes have been implemented.

[Advice for motorists | The British Horse Society \(bhs.org.uk\)](https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-for-motorists)

