



Haslemere Herald column - August 2010

Can we make the school run a walk?

A recent energy audit of a local primary school carried out by an engineer for Transition Haslemere revealed that around 30% of the school's carbon footprint came from the school run. While the school is making efforts to improve its energy efficiency by doing things like installing lower energy lighting and turning off equipment that is not being used, reducing carbon from all the car journeys of parents delivering their children to school run is far more difficult.

Many parents say they would like their children to be able to walk or cycle to school, but won't allow them because the roads aren't safe. Adults too say they would like to walk or cycle more, but are afraid to do so. With the problems of parking, many commuters would like to have alternatives to driving to the station in the mornings.

These aren't easy problems to solve. The narrow winding hilly roads surrounding Haslemere are at present dominated by cars. You have to be a confident cyclist to get on your bike and make your way in the traffic. Even the town centre is ruled by cars, with only one pedestrian crossing in the High Street, one on Lower Street and none on the Petworth Road. The Haslemere Museum is campaigning again to have a pedestrian crossing installed outside its building to give its visitors a safe passage from the pavement opposite.

Transport is currently the third largest, and fastest growing, source of UK greenhouse gases. But for those of us who want to use our cars less to reduce our carbon emissions, or to improve our health, or to have less stressful journeys, we need safe accessible alternatives. Transition Haslemere is looking at ways we might improve the sustainability of local transport. One of our ideas is to organise cycle training sessions to help people gain the confidence to cycle more. What other things might we do?

We want to hear from you about your transport concerns and any ideas you might have for improvements. To this end, we are conducting a survey to find out what the major transport issues are for the people of Haslemere. Please let us have your views by going to our website – www.transitionhaslemere.org – and completing the questionnaire. It should take less than five minutes.

We are also planning to hold a public meeting in the autumn where we will invite people to put forward their ideas for a more sustainable transport system in Haslemere and, hopefully, we will eventually enable more children to walk or cycle to school.

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