



WALKING

IS

THE

ANSWER



OUR STRATEGY 2026-2029

WHAT'S AN EASY WAY TO GET
MOVING MORE?
HOW DO WE TACKLE RISING
CONGESTION?
HOW WE CAN IMPROVE ROAD
SAFETY?
HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR LOCAL
HIGH STREETS THRIVE?
HOW DO WE IMPROVE OUR
WELLBEING?
HOW CAN WE GET TO NET ZERO?
HOW CAN WE BRING PEOPLE
TOGETHER?
HOW CAN WE REDUCE THE RISK
OF ISOLATION AND
LONELINESS?
HOW DO WE UNITE OUR
COMMUNITIES?

» **WALKING IS THE
ANSWER**

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FOREWORD

Why is walking the answer? Because few things have the power to connect people, strengthen communities and improve lives in so many ways at once.

Walking and wheeling create opportunities to spend time with family, connect with neighbours, improve workplace culture, support our physical and mental health, and experience the places around us. It can help tackle loneliness, reduce pressure on our health services, lower the cost of everyday living, improve children's health and independence, and help people feel welcome in a new community. All of this while supporting a healthier planet.

For almost 100 years, Living Streets has championed the simple but transformative right to walk and wheel. The challenges facing our streets are significant, but so too is the opportunity. As we approach our centenary, we are inspired not only by what has been achieved, but by what remains possible. By bringing together people, communities, partners, policymakers and supporters around a shared vision, we can create places where everyone can thrive.

I am excited about what we can achieve together and confident that this strategy will help us build a future in which walking and wheeling are at the heart of healthier people, stronger communities and a more sustainable UK. Let us celebrate 100 years together by protecting, strengthening and growing a right we have all held since birth.

CATHERINE WOODHEAD
Chief Executive
Living Streets



What we mean when we say walking and wheeling

When we refer to 'walking' in this title, we include people 'wheeling' - using wheelchairs and other wheeled mobility aids.

Sometimes this document explicitly refers to both 'walking' and 'wheeling' to make it clear that our streets need to be designed to be accessible for all.

WHY WE EXIST

Walking is one of the simplest and most instinctive things we do. Most of us take it as much for granted as we do breathing.

But because of its very ordinariness, we often forget how vital walking is; to each of us individually and to society. It isn't just a means of getting from A to B, it's a way of experiencing the world around us and engaging with the people we share that world with.

You may wonder why we need a charity for everyday walking. Well, think for a moment about some of the regular trips you make. What do you encounter? Broken paving slabs or other trip hazards? Side street junctions that are much too wide? Poorly-lit areas? Proximity to fast, noisy and polluting motor vehicles? A lack of safe and convenient places to cross or crossings where the green man takes an age to appear? Obstacles like bollards, parked cars, abandoned hire cycles or maybe even a delivery robot?

You wouldn't think that, by law, it's only people walking and wheeling who are allowed to move along our pavements. Nor would you think that most council transport policies feature a 'sustainable travel hierarchy' that has people walking/wheeling at the top. Despite its formal importance, walking is routinely neglected or ignored, hidden in plain sight.

That's why Living Streets works to promote the safety, comfort and general amenities of the walking public. We want to turn the theory into practice, so that as many journeys (or parts of journeys) as possible are walked. And that's because the power of walking is immense.

Walking is a 'miracle cure' that reduces the risk of certain cancers, heart disease and depression. It can bring joy and calm, connect us to nature, history and culture, and foster a sense of community while also giving independence. Walking helps reduce traffic congestion, decrease air and noise pollution, cut carbon emissions and boost local economies.

The simple truth is that walking is essential for 100% of trips. It isn't just a transport mode in its own right, it's the start and end of every journey by every other mode. That's why I call walking the Mode Supreme!

The time is long overdue that we thought, acted, talked, invested and designed with this truth about walking's fundamental importance up front and central. So, as Living Streets approaches its centenary, we want to greatly increase awareness of the endless benefits walking brings and of the need for streets that are attractive and accessible to all.

We want people to demand safe, attractive streets for their community. We want to equip and enable people not just to walk more, but also to have a greater say in how the streets they use are designed and managed.

Nothing works without walking, and Living Streets exists to release the power of walking for the benefit of everyone.



JOHN DALES
Chair
Living Streets



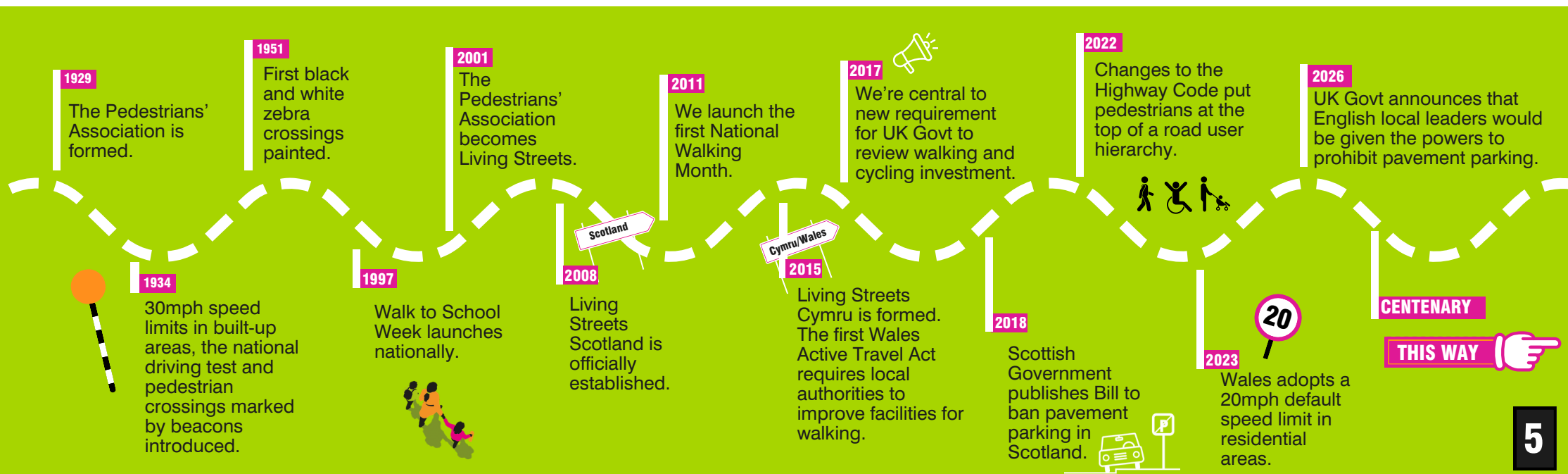
A HISTORY OF BIG DIFFERENCES

Since 1929, Living Streets has been the leading voice for people who walk. For almost a century, we have helped shape the policies, standards and public attitudes that make our streets safer, healthier and more accessible.

From campaigning for the introduction of zebra crossings and contributing to the development of the Highway Code, to helping secure action on drink driving, our work has helped create many of the foundations of the walking environment people benefit from today. More recently, we have continued to combine evidence, public engagement and on-the-ground delivery to achieve lasting change.

Our contribution has helped secure major improvements, including:

- Changes to the Highway Code that place pedestrians at the top of the road user hierarchy.
- 17.8 million walk to school journeys through our programmes, removing an estimated 55 million kilometres of car travel from roads in England.
- A ban on pavement parking in Scotland and new powers for local authorities in England to tackle obstructive pavement parking.
- Support for the introduction of 20mph default speed limits in Wales, contributing to reductions in road casualties.
- The development of the first national Road Safety Strategy in more than a decade.



A HISTORY OF BIG DIFFERENCES

These achievements demonstrate more than our influence. They reflect our unique ability to understand how people experience streets, mobilise communities behind change, and translate evidence into practical solutions.

We are trusted by policymakers, practitioners, businesses and local communities because we combine strategic insight with real-world delivery.

Our authority is rooted in three things: what we know, what we influence and what we deliver.

- Through our programmes, we create change in communities today.
- Through our research and evidence, we demonstrate what works.
- Through our campaigning and policy leadership, we help create the systemic and cultural change needed to ensure progress happens at scale.

Creating streets where more people can walk, wheel and spend time safely cannot be achieved through local action alone. Delivery on the ground is essential, but without policy change, investment and a shift in how we design and value our streets, progress will be too slow.

This strategy sets out how we will use our expertise, influence and delivery capability together, ensuring that every local success contributes to a wider movement for healthier, more accessible and more walkable communities across the UK.



VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

VISION

Walking is safe, easy and the natural choice for everyone, everywhere.

MISSION

To create streets, communities and places where people want to walk and wheel.

For the next three years, we are going to be focused on achieving policy change to create more accessible streets, enabling more people to walk more.

OUR VALUES ARE EPIC

EXCELLENT

We are knowledgeable, evidence-based and totally focussed on our mission.

POSITIVE

Our attitude is confident, enthusiastic, 'can-do'. We will constructively challenge, question and find solutions.

INSPIRING

We will lead the charge for walking, building momentum with every step.

COLLABORATIVE

We work with others towards common goals because we can do more together.



IMPACT AT SCALE

To create streets that work for everyone, we need both the freedom to influence decision-makers and the practical programmes that demonstrate what works.

By growing and diversifying our income through project delivery, fundraising, partnerships and commercial services, we will generate evidence, insight and reach that help us improve streets and walking opportunities across the UK.



Every project we deliver will contribute to wider change, while every pound we generate will help us expand our impact, strengthen our evidence base and accelerate progress towards safer, more walkable neighbourhoods.

During this strategy period, we will:

- Deliver the new walk to school challenge, improving children's access to school by walking, wheeling and scootering, and reach more than 5,000 primary schools.
- Grow income through products and services that support walking, active travel and safer streets, enabling greater impact and influence.
- Develop new fundraising approaches, commercial products and strategic partnerships that expand access to walking and wheeling across the UK.
- Generate evidence, data and learning through our programmes that strengthen our campaigning, advice and policy influence.



STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

STEPS to long-term changes Living Streets seeks to achieve.



SAFER STREETS



THRIVING COMMUNITIES



EVERYDAY WALKING



PUBLIC SUPPORT



SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

OUTCOME ONE: SAFER STREETS

The UK's streets, transport systems and planning decisions prioritise people rather than vehicles.

Success looks like:

- Accessible pavements free from obstruction
- Safer street design and lower traffic speeds
- Walking embedded in transport and planning policy
- Technology supporting, rather than hindering, accessibility.

STEPS

We want pavements to be for people. We celebrated a win in Scotland when a ban on pavement parking was introduced following years of our campaigning. The ban has transformed the lives of Susanne and her 15-year-old son, Joseph.

“My son is a power wheelchair user and navigating pavements for him was horrific. When we encountered cars parked on pavement, we would need to find a dropped kerb and then walk in the road. It was so very dangerous for all of us and meant Joseph didn't have the freedom to travel independently.”

However, that all changed when their council started to implement the ban.

“Overnight the pavements were emptied of cars – the change really was quite dramatic. Our walks around the local town are now less stressful and free from danger. Finally, my son can wheel freely from one end of the road to the other, which has been brilliant for his independence. This new law has really changed our lives. What was a nuisance for some people, was life-limiting for us.”



OUTCOME TWO: THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Communities benefit from a better walking environment and understand the many improvements it can make for local economies, environment and health.

Success looks like:

- Walking recognised in public policy
- Increased investment in walking infrastructure
- Vibrant high streets and local businesses that strengthen community identity
- New developments designed as walkable communities
- Community participation and co-design
- Equity and social justice (for disabled people, women and girls' safety, all ages and for marginalised groups)
- Well-connected public transport links increasing access to opportunities.

Living Streets' Pedestrian Pound research shows how making streets better for walking and wheeling can support declining high streets.

Pedestrians visiting Uplands Market in Swansea boosted trade for local restaurants, improving the local economy and encouraging more walking.

Gwydr Square, a car-dominated side road, was seen as an ideal location for a market by making it traffic-free for a few hours each month. Work began to make it happen with the first market taking place in July 2013.

Alongside local produce, the market provides a regular neighbourhood meet-up point for community groups, local councillors and charities, along with musicians and open-mic performances.

The first market attracted 30 stallholders and was so successful that there was a waiting list of 200 traders for future markets. At its peak, the market averaged 65 stalls. There can be over 3,000 people on warm sunny days.

Surveys of 300 visitors found 67% of people had specifically been attracted by the markets; a fifth spent money in surrounding local businesses; and 77% thought the market had given them a more positive view of the Uplands area.

STEPS



The Uplands Market has been a massive boost to trade and to the Uplands in general. Market days are lively and vibrant, there is always a really good atmosphere and the huge increase in footfall is good for everyone.

– local restaurant owner

OUTCOME THREE: EVERYDAY WALKING

Walking and wheeling become the natural choice for more everyday journeys.

Success looks like:

- Increased short journeys walked or wheeled.
- More children walking, wheeling and scooting to school
- Greater confidence in walking among all communities
- Reduced inequalities in access to walking.

Our work with schools supports more children and their families to choose healthier ways to travel, while benefiting the local community, too.

At St Luke & St Philip's Church of England Primary School in Blackburn, we carried out a School Route Audit (SRA) to see what could be done to improve local streets for walking and wheeling.

The SRA revealed significant environmental and safety concerns surrounding the school, including the build-up of waste on the streets, which was attracting vermin. The pavement alongside the school grounds had deteriorated and was often flooded, forcing pupils to step into the road and there was no safe crossing point at the rear entrance.

Following the SRA, we prepared a report for the local authority outlining key recommendations to improve the area. The council went on to implement several of these infrastructure improvements, including a safer junction with added railings, changes to the layout of the street, double yellow line road markings to avoid congestion and a revitalised play area, enabling more active journeys to school.

Working with Living Streets has had a positive effect on our borough and the number of children choosing to walk or wheel to school. On average, 60% of journeys to school in Blackburn with Darwen are now walked or wheeled, which is a brilliant outcome and one which we hope will increase.

- Heather Farmer, Service Lead,
Blackburn with Darwen Borough
Council

OUTCOME FOUR: PUBLIC SUPPORT

People have a stronger voice in creating safer and more accessible neighbourhoods.

Success looks like:

- Communities influencing local decisions
- Strong local campaigns for better streets
- Greater public demand for walkable places
- More partnerships supporting local change
- Stronger evidence of walking's social and economic value
- Walking viewed as a solution to major societal challenges.

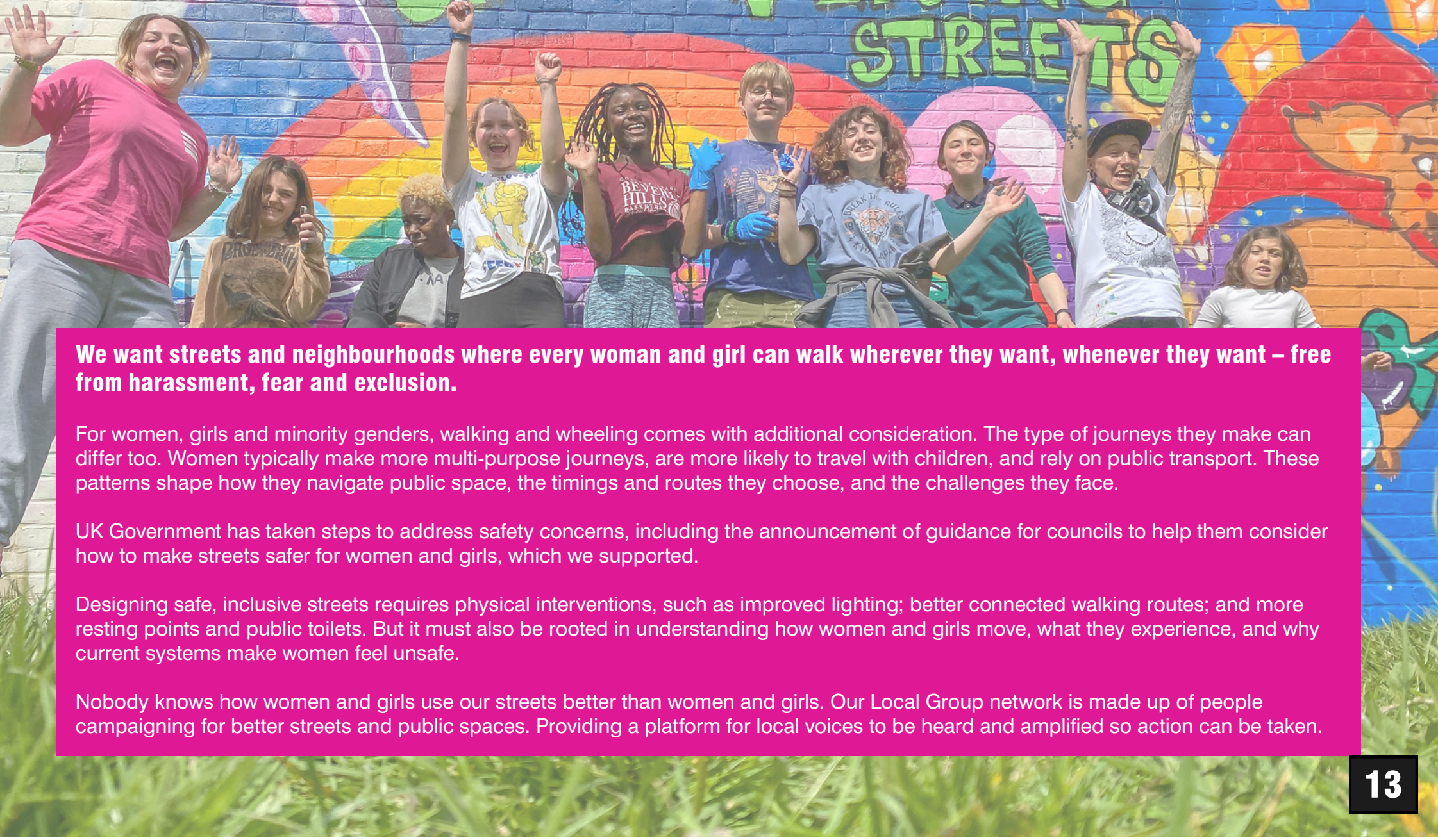
With private motor journeys expected to increase by up to 54% by 2060, we can't delay in making walking and wheeling the easiest and most convenient choice for all.

Simple side road zebras give pedestrians clearer priority at side streets, reinforcing the Highway Code. With council budgets tight, side road zebras have been proven in trials as a low-cost intervention that increase pedestrian safety when applied at suitable junctions.

We supported successful trials in Cardiff, London, Manchester and Sheffield with supporter actions and consultation responses.

In March 2026, the Senedd gave local authorities new powers to rollout side road zebras across Welsh communities. The UK Government followed, authorising the use of 'simple zebra crossings' and committing to 10,000 safer crossings, connecting homes with schools, high streets and local services by 2030.



**OUTCOME FOUR:
PUBLIC SUPPORT**

We want streets and neighbourhoods where every woman and girl can walk wherever they want, whenever they want – free from harassment, fear and exclusion.

For women, girls and minority genders, walking and wheeling comes with additional consideration. The type of journeys they make can differ too. Women typically make more multi-purpose journeys, are more likely to travel with children, and rely on public transport. These patterns shape how they navigate public space, the timings and routes they choose, and the challenges they face.

UK Government has taken steps to address safety concerns, including the announcement of guidance for councils to help them consider how to make streets safer for women and girls, which we supported.

Designing safe, inclusive streets requires physical interventions, such as improved lighting; better connected walking routes; and more resting points and public toilets. But it must also be rooted in understanding how women and girls move, what they experience, and why current systems make women feel unsafe.

Nobody knows how women and girls use our streets better than women and girls. Our Local Group network is made up of people campaigning for better streets and public spaces. Providing a platform for local voices to be heard and amplified so action can be taken.

OUTCOME FIVE: SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The charity increases support and unrestricted income for greater independence.

Success looks like:

- Increase unrestricted income across commercial, fundraising and partnership opportunities
- Improve systems and ways of working
- Strengthen equity, diversity and inclusion
- Movement to net zero
- High-functioning team.

STEPS

We have taken steps to increase unrestricted income, strengthen EDI and move towards Net Zero. These threads will continue throughout our 2026-29 strategy.

Fundraising

In 2025, we hired our first-ever Fundraising Manager to support a broader mix of income streams and secure our long-term financial sustainability and independence. Fundraising is carried out through activities, including individual giving, community fundraising, grants and trusts fundraising, corporate partnerships, events and digital campaigns.

All Walks of Life

We want streets that are attractive and accessible for all. We have prioritised being an inclusive organisation to ensure all voices are heard when it comes to having a say about our streets. We began to review how we worked in 2020, looking at where we focus our time and the stories we tell and holding ourselves accountable for when we fell short of our aim to be inclusive. We have worked with campaigners, communities and our Local Group network to reimagine our work - asking ourselves whose voices are being heard and whose aren't.

Sustainability

As a charity dedicated to creating healthier, more sustainable communities, we recognise that sustainability must be reflected in the way we operate as well as in the changes we seek to achieve. Our revised Sustainability Policy commits us to operating in a way that monitors and minimises negative environmental impacts while increasing positive environmental outcomes. It recognises the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion and long-term financial sustainability, ensuring that Living Streets can continue delivering its mission for future generations. The policy also seeks to foster a culture where sustainability is embedded in day-to-day decision-making and operations; and where climate and ecological justice are understood and valued by staff, trustees, volunteers, supporters and funders.

OUR ACTIVITIES

WHAT WE WILL DO IN 2026-2029

We will achieve these STEPS through four strategic objectives:

LEAD the evidence
GROW the movement
SECURE policy change
BUILD organisational resilience

And four pillars:



This strategy will be delivered through annual delivery plans in England, Scotland and Wales.

ACTIVITY	WE WILL	LEAD PILLAR
LEAD THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR WALKING We will be the UK's most trusted authority on walking and walkable communities.	• Deliver high-quality research and insight • Publish thought leadership and recommendations • Measure and evidence the benefits of walking • Identify barriers faced by different communities • Build partnerships with academic and research institutions • Generate insights from delivery programmes	RESEARCH & DATA
GROW A MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE We will grow public support for walking and mobilise people to improve streets where they live.	• Increase membership and supporter engagement • Expand local groups and community networks • Grow our walk to schools, workplaces and communities support • Equip campaigners with tools, evidence and training • Share stories that demonstrate the impact of walking • Strengthen partnerships across sectors	COMMUNITY CAMPAIGNS & MOBILISATION
SECURE POLICY AND SYSTEMS CHANGE We will influence governments, transport bodies and local authorities to create more accessible and walkable streets.	• Campaign for pavement parking reform • Champion safer streets and road safety measures • Advocate for investment in walking • Influence planning, transport and street design policy • Ensure accessibility is embedded in decision-making	ADVOCACY
BUILD A RESILIENT ORGANISATION We will strengthen Living Streets so we can deliver greater impact as we enter our second century.	• Increase unrestricted income • Develop new products and services • Expand fundraising and partnerships • Develop commercial opportunities • Improve systems and ways of working • Strengthen equity, diversity and inclusion • Strengthen leadership, foster accountability & wellbeing	RESEARCH & DATA

FINAL WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

For years I have preached about the power of walking – both as prevention and a cure.

It's a free and simple way for us all to get more activity into our day. It boosts mood, can fend off chronic conditions and can help those in recovery – as it did for me after surgery. If you're looking for a positive step to take for your health and wellbeing, walking is the answer.

But what's the power of walking if our streets aren't places where we feel safe, happy and able to walk or wheel?

We can't take this simple act for granted when so many of our streets aren't accessible, because our pavements are cluttered with obstructions or overrun with traffic and congestion. And we can't assume that our streets serve every community in the same way. I'm acutely aware of the different considerations members of my own family must make on what I might consider a very simple journey, for example.

We need streets that are safe, accessible and free from fear and exclusion. For everyone. As Living Streets' President, I am committed to supporting the charity in their work to make that happen.

To join me in support of Living Streets, please visit livingstreets.org.uk/join

Together we can make their vision of walking being the safe, easy and natural choice for everyone, everywhere, a reality.

DR HILARY JONES MBE
President
Living Streets





LIVING



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We are Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking.

LIVINGSTREETS.ORG.UK  **@LIVINGSTREETS**  **LIVINGSTREETSUK**  **@LIVINGSTREETS.BSKY.SOCIAL**

info@livingstreets.org.uk | 020 7377 4900