



# BRIEFING for MEMBERS of the SENEDD

We are Living Streets Cymru, part of the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a nation where walking is the natural choice for everyday, local journeys; free from congested roads and pollution, reducing the risk of preventable illnesses and social isolation. We want to achieve a better walking environment and to inspire people of all generations to enjoy the benefits the simple act of walking brings.

For over 90 years we've been a beacon for walking. In our early days our campaigning led to the UK's first zebra crossings and speed limits. Now our campaigns and local projects deliver real change to overcome barriers to walking and our groundbreaking initiatives such as the world's biggest Walk to School campaign encourage millions of people to walk. **The Walk to School WOW Travel Tracker, already in schools across a number of Welsh local authorities, will be a key part of the 20mph Pilot Towns currently being rolled out by the Welsh Government to support data monitoring and identify shifts in active travel to school.**

The programmes we deliver in the community directly influence positive behaviour change in families, commuters and older adults by encouraging them to choose active travel for their regular daily journeys. Our policy and research expertise draws together evidence of the issues that matter to people in Wales, such as speeding vehicles, street clutter and parking on pavements, helping you to make informed decisions for your constituents.



## The value of walking

Walking is good for our minds and bodies and good for the places where we live. It connects us to others, to education, and to economic and social life and gives us much needed time for reflection during our busy days. Everyone should be able to choose an active, healthy and stress-free life without a car. But this is not the case in too many places.

The Welsh public have told us that their top three problems for walking were pavement parking, poor public transport and fast or dangerous traffic (reported by 68%, 60% and 57% respectively)<sup>1</sup>. It is disappointing that despite the positive changes we saw to our street environment throughout the lockdown period, as more people discovered the joy of walking locally, traffic levels have now returned to the same levels as they were in the weeks and months before Covid restrictions came into force<sup>2</sup>, now is the time to effect real change.

In Wales, one third of adults do no physical activity at all<sup>3</sup>. Only one in six 11-16-year-olds meet the Chief Medical Officer's target of 60 minutes of activity every day<sup>3</sup> and childhood obesity is rising<sup>4</sup>.

The number of people who reported feeling lonely in Wales was 84% in 2019-2020<sup>5</sup>, before lockdown restrictions even began. In 2019, 227 people were killed or seriously injured<sup>6</sup> on roads in Wales, up from 208 in 2015. And, an estimated 1,000 to 1,400 deaths each year are attributable to human-made air pollution<sup>7</sup>.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed barriers to walking as people struggle with narrow, uneven pavements, unsafe crossings; and growing numbers of private vehicles. The pandemic has also highlighted inequalities and made them worse. Some people of Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage across intersections of low income - already at greater risk from air pollution – have been disproportionately affected. The social isolation of older people and those living with disabilities has become worse.

You can help to turn this around by pledging to create better, walkable streets.



## How you can help

Living Streets Cymru is calling on all Members of the Senedd to hold the Welsh Government to account on its new Programme for Government this Senedd term and to work towards a Wales where:

- **People on foot feel relaxed and safe.**

Invest in street improvements, road space reallocation to walking and cycling, a default 20mph speed limit in urban areas, a ban on pavement parking and more, safer road crossings.

- **People can breathe clean air.**

Prioritise the climate emergency, implement a Clean Air Act for Wales create healthy neighbourhoods with fewer cars on the road, introduce Clean Air Zones around all Welsh schools, deliver anti-idling measures and plan for more urban green spaces and green corridors where people can walk and cycle, contributing towards a goal of net zero carbon emissions in our towns and cities.

- **Families choose to walk to school and work.**

Set ambitious targets for children walking to school and for adults choosing active travel at least three times a week. Increase investment in active travel in Wales to at least £20 per head. Ensure routes to school, work and public transport hubs are safer, cleaner and less congested.



## How we can support you

Living Streets stand ready to make sure that you have all of the information you need for a positive debate on each of these important issues.

We can provide you with briefings ahead of debates and events.

We will share with you evidence and resources that can help you to make informed decisions on behalf of your constituents.

We can invite you to participate in events and discussions on the importance of walking in Wales for our people and places.

We will connect you with schools in your area that are taking part in WOW, our walk to school programme and arrange opportunities to meet with pupils, parents and teachers to hear about their experiences.

We will let you know of programmes we are running in your area and arrange visits so you can see our work in action.

## Our Wales Manifesto for Walking

You can find more details on what Living Streets is calling for and how you can make a big difference this Senedd term on our website at [senedd21-manifesto-en.pdf](#) ([livingstreets.org.uk](http://livingstreets.org.uk))

For further information you can contact [wales@livingstreets.org.uk](mailto:wales@livingstreets.org.uk) or call Rhiannon Hardiman, Wales Manager on 07714 616589.



## References

1. <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/senedd-cymru-election-2021>
2. [Transport use during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
3. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-12/consultation-a-clean-air-plan-for-wales.pdf>
4. [https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-10/healthy-weight-healthy-wales\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-10/healthy-weight-healthy-wales_0.pdf)
5. [https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-01/consultation-document\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-01/consultation-document_0.pdf)
6. <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Transport/Roads/Road-Accidents/Casualties/numberofcasualties-by-typeofvehicle-severity-date-policeforcearea>
7. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-12/consultation-a-clean-air-plan-for-wales.pdf>

**We are Living Streets, the charity for everyday walking. Our mission is to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more.**

Office 128, 1st Floor, Wellington House, Wellington St, Cardiff, CF11 9BE

T: 07714 616589 [www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk) @livingstreets

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