



Hi all, I hope all of you are keeping safe, healthy and well at these uncertain times. My name is Stuart Gourley and I have been a Speen Parish Councillor since June 2020, and in my short time on the council I have really enjoyed working on the various projects and responsibilities that we have underway in our Parish, and look forward to engaging further with our community.

I wanted to take some time to write about one of the outcomes of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the new focus being applied to active travel and the associated infrastructure that is required. What do I mean by Active Travel? Active travel is the use of cycling or walking to travel either for utility or recreational purposes.

Across our Parish we are privileged to have a lot of great pathways, footways, lanes and roads that allow us to take part in active travel. We have great rural public footpaths such as the Lambourn Valley Way, and the Speen Moors permissive pathway on the doorstep. And we also have urban links and pathways into the centre of Newbury.

Active travel has many benefits for individuals such as being great for physical and mental health, and also great for saving money instead of fueling a car or taking taxis or busses where possible as well as allowing us to get from A to B.

Another great benefit is that it can help and support the reversal of climate change, which is, and should be a big focus. West Berks Council earlier in the year declared their very own Climate Emergency, and we all have a part to play in supporting the slowing and reversing of climate change. With the housing development to the North of Newbury approved; making a concerted effort to leave the car at home and utilise active travel is ever more important for our Parish and neighbouring Shaw-Cum Donnington Parish to help drive down emissions and relieve pressure from our road network and in turn helping to protect our own community environment.

As part of the Speen Parish Council improvement plan the Parish Council has two projects in process or the pipeline to support active travel, the implementation of the Stockcross recreation ground footpath between the recreation ground car park and the school to help support access from the car park to the school site. And also the Speen War Memorial footpath project (TBC) to join and continue the pavement on the southside of Bath Road - watch this space! And we are always keen to hear more ideas.

Outside of the Parish, across the wider West Berks district an Active Travel Strategy has been published ([Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026 Active Travel Strategy](#)) and there is also a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in development which is helping to highlight, design and implement works and a strategy to support cycling and walking across the district, which is fantastic.

Alongside this West Berks Council have also submitted bids for funding via the Emergency Active Travel Fund for projects as part of the recovery from Covid-19 and both of these will likely highlight potential projects and opportunities across the Parish and support the engagement with Active Travel - and this can only be a good thing!

There are some great groups locally that can help with information on walking and cycling, and could be a great place to look if you want to find out more about active travel, cycling or walking across the parish and district (links included at the end of the article), these groups



will be able to help with any questions or queries - and can also support in getting involved from a recreational perspective.

I am a believer in community involvement and responsibility, and I also wanted to take the opportunity to highlight the West Berks Council online reporting tool that is available if there are issues with footways, potholes, and roads amongst other issues. It's really easy to log an issue via the website and start it on the path to being resolved and helping us to all keep this key infrastructure safe and fit for purpose, below is the link:

[West Berkshire Council Report a Problem](#)

If there is an issue with any Speen Parish Council areas then please make contact with the Parish Council via the Clerk or the Councillors via the below:

[Speen Parish Council Contact Form](#)

Thanks for reading and best wishes!

Councillor Stuart Gourley

Useful Contacts

[Newbury Velo Cycling Club](#)

[West Berkshire Spokes](#)

[Newbury Road Club](#)

[West Berkshire Ramblers](#)

[Berkshire Weekend Walkers](#)