

## Road Safety Education Team Newsletter Autumn/Winter 2024

The clocks went back at the end of October. As the days become shorter, the number of accidents tends to increase due to bad weather and poor light, even during daylight hours. Children are more vulnerable too as they are less visible to motorists.

The “**BE BRIGHT, BE SEEN**” campaign, aimed at children between 4 and 11 years old, urges them to wear bright or fluorescent clothes during the day and reflective clothing at night to make sure they can be easily seen. Schools can access excellent resources on the [Think! Government Road Safety Website](#) [Education resources – THINK!](#)



This message is not just for children; drivers also need to be cautious and make sure they use their lights, slow down and look out for cyclists and pedestrians.

In 2022, 14 people were killed, 379 were seriously injured and 1,227 were slightly injured in reported road collisions on Great Britain’s roads when there was rain, snow, sleet or foggy conditions. Over recent years the challenges of storms and flooding have also added to the risks already faced by people driving and riding for work

(source Road Safety GB)

How wonderful would it be if everyone embraced our winter weather with the same enthusiasm as the first hot day of summer? Do we rush to get our wellies and waterproofs from the cupboard in the same way we rush to the shed for the barbeque and tongs? No?

Maybe as parents, carers and school staff we don’t particularly like the cold and the wet, but do we sometimes miss the children’s viewpoint? My son can think of nothing better to do on a wet day than jump into every puddle in sight! I’m worrying about what clothes he is wearing (and what I’m wearing for that matter!) and whether the mud will come out, but the look on his face is priceless as he giggles and shouts.

Yes, it is our role as adults to make sure children don’t get ill from being exposed to wet, cold and windy weather but does that mean we keep them inside (or in the car), or does it mean we make sure they have the right clothing?

The important thing, as all scouts will know, is to *be prepared*. So that means, right footwear, right clothing and most important of all, right attitude! Let’s enjoy winter for what it brings, rain, snow or shine.

Elle, parent and school travel champion.



## Cambridgeshire's Award Winning School Travel STARS



Congratulations to all the schools in Cambridgeshire who have received awards for their school travel plans this year. So far 57 schools have received national Modeshift STARS awards. Huge thanks to the wonderful school travel champions, without you this success would not be possible!

Godmanchester Community Academy had further cause for celebration, we were delighted to learn that they have been awarded the title of **Modeshift STARS Local Primary Authority School of the Year 2024/25!** This brilliant accomplishment reflects the school's hard work and dedication to promoting sustainable travel choices, such as walking, cycling and wheeling for the journey to school. By achieving Modeshift STARS Accreditation, they demonstrated a true commitment to creating a healthier, greener future for your school community. Out of all the schools across England they are one of only **47** schools selected as Local Authority winners, making their achievement even more special!

Wisbech Grammar School has been awarded the Cambridgeshire School Travel Stars Trophy for its outstanding efforts in promoting road safety and sustainable travel within its Prep School. In addition, the school has earned National Bronze level accreditation from Modeshift STARS,

Rosemary Mullen, Road Safety Officer, said: "I am pleased to award Wisbech Grammar School Prep with the Cambridgeshire Travel Stars award this term. The award is given to a school that the Road Safety Education Team in Cambridgeshire recognises as having made significant efforts in increasing active, safer, sustainable travel to school. The amount of work the road safety ambassadors did to promote and support this during the last school year led WGS to being chosen for the award."



Throughout the last academic year, the road safety ambassadors, a team of dedicated Prep School pupils, took the lead in a variety of educational initiatives. These included assemblies, competitions, and interactive activities designed to raise awareness of road safety and encourage their peers to adopt safer, sustainable travel habits.

The school's objectives, developed in line with the Modeshift STARS programme, included: educating children on road safety; promoting sustainable travel methods; increasing the number of users for the Park & Stride scheme (including the installation of a scooter rack for children to scoot from Chapel Road); reducing congestion in the car park, achieving Bronze Accreditation, and organising fun and engaging activities for the children.

Headmaster Barney Rimmer said: "We are thrilled to receive this recognition from Cambridgeshire County Council. It reflects the hard work and dedication of our pupils and staff in promoting a culture of safety and sustainability. The road safety ambassadors have been instrumental in driving these initiatives forward, and we look forward to continuing our efforts towards even greater success in the future."





## Junior and Youth Travel Ambassadors play a big part in road safety education



It has been a very busy but wonderful Autumn term so far. I have been meeting all the new Junior Travel Ambassadors (JTA's), this year we have just over 170 keen year 5's who will be promoting safer and more active travel over this academic year.

We welcome 2 new primary schools to the project, Willingham & Fen Ditton Primaries

The JTA's have been giving the "Be Bright Be Seen" message in preparation for the change of the clocks on the 27<sup>th</sup> October.

Lots of the Junior Travel Ambassadors are also talking with their new reception children, giving them simple road safety messages like remembering to hold hands with their grown up and making sure they **Stop, Look, Listen and Think** before they cross the road with their grown up. They have also given all the reception children a fun activity sheet with a letter for their parents/carers.

As always I am really looking forward to working with all these inspirational young people. *Maree*



Maree meeting the new JTA's at Elsworth



Two of the JTA's from Bar Hill planning in their break time, now that is dedication!

For more information on the Junior Travel Ambassador and Youth Travel Ambassador schemes please contact

[Maree.richards@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Maree.richards@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)



It was great to meet with the new Youth Travel Ambassadors at Impington Village College (IVC). Year 9 had lots of information and thoughts based on their own experience that they wanted to share with me. They have started work on their road safety project aimed at year 6 and their transition to secondary school and safer travel. This is part of IVC's community project and will see 3 different groups working on the project over this coming academic year.

# One amazing day lots of amazing people

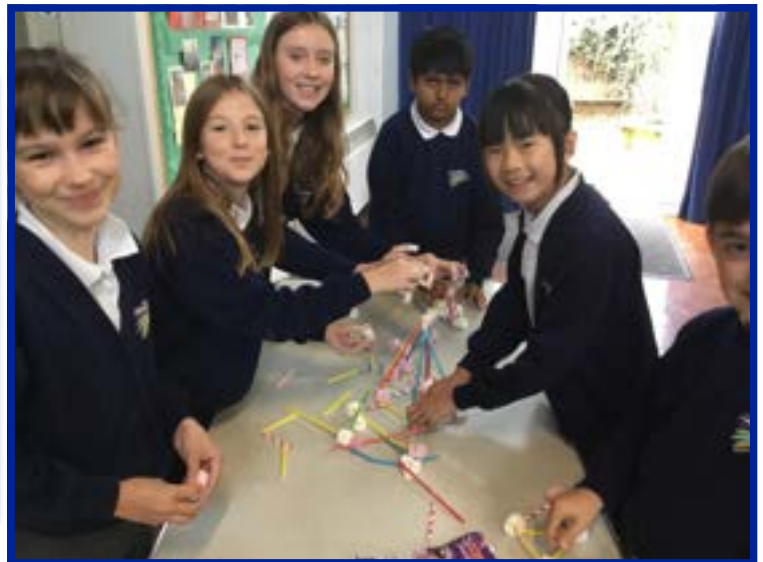
## Bar Hill's STEM day



Milestone Infrastructure, the design and delivery team, the winter and road repair teams and the Cambridgeshire Road Safety team 'took over' Bar Hill Primary School as part of their STEM week, on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October

Inspiring the next generation of highways staff and road safety professionals the event ran highways themed lessons for all year groups, benefitting students aged between 7 and 11 years old. The lessons and activities were a real hit with the children!

Activities ranged from road safety interactive sessions where pupils designed and marketed cycle helmets, and investigated the properties of reflective and fluorescent materials, to giving the pupils hands-on experience in infrastructure, working to build bridges using a range of unusual materials which included spaghetti and marshmallows!



On Wednesday, we took part in the school STEM takeover day. The children explored hands-on STEM activities and worked like real scientists and engineers, solving problems and designing creative solutions !



# One amazing day lots of amazing people

## Bar Hill's STEM day

The highlight of the day was the show & tell aspect, where the pupils got to see a gritter and the amazing pothole repairing machine, a Dragon Patcher, in action. Running a full day of lessons was ambitious, but it turned out to be a huge success.

Nikita Frampton Teacher, JTA Champion and Travel Plan Champion at Bar Hill School, said: "When Milestone approached us to offer a day of STEM activities, we weren't quite sure what to expect. We're so thrilled with the result, our pupils were engaged from the very start, and it was a joy to see them flourish as the day went on."



It was such a wonderful opportunity to be able to offer this experience across the school from EYFS to Yr 6 and see them all engaged and able to take away key messages and experiences. It will certainly be one of the highlights of our school year! our days are never dull! "

**Staff, Bar Hill Primary School**

"I hope all your volunteers enjoyed their day too, thank you for the kind words of appreciation towards school staff too - our days are never dull! "



## Out in all weathers - the School Crossing Patrol Service



School crossing patrols - or lollipop men and women, as they are affectionately known - are there to help both children and adults to cross the roads. They are a very important part of the road safety team in Cambridgeshire.

Negotiating with others on the road has always been a key part of the role. It's actually the reason behind the iconic black and yellow stripes on their lollipop

shaped traffic signs. The black was added so that the officers could write down number-plates of any motorists who they'd had difficulty with. It's an aspect of the job that's now long gone, as the role changed over generations.

I meet up with one of our patrol team, Kirsty who spends her mornings and afternoons at a crossing on Upwell Road in March. The morning I go to see her it's gloriously sunny as Kirsty steps out into the middle of the road, traffic commanding sign in hand, helping people get from one side of the busy road to the other.

One of the major shifts in the job came in 2000. It's no longer just about helping schoolchildren cross; instead they help all pedestrians while they're on shift. Kirsty says this is an incredibly important part of the role because "you'd be surprised at the amount of adults that don't look. Sometimes they're worse than the kids because they're on their phones and they just walk straight out in the road. Or they cross diagonally, and I say 'use the crossing please because it's for your own safety.'"

Technically they're no longer called lollipop ladies and men, but school patrol crossing officers, but this hasn't quite caught on with many people. When the weather is beautiful, it's easy to understand why they enjoy being out there, but the patrollers I have spoken to are no less positive when the traditional British cold and rain kick in. "It's still enjoyable," says Kirsty, "because then you can have a laugh and a joke with the people that come along, they always feel sorry for you. I always say, 'I'm probably the driest person out here because I've got everything covered.' So the bad weather doesn't phase me. The way I see it, when the weather's not great or I might not even be in a good mood, that's the hour when everyone is coming so I've got to get them smiling."

Kirsty has an amazing knowledge of names, she greets most of the kids personally as they cross with a smile. It's not just the younger kids she chats to, but their parents, some cyclists and older pupils. "I feel like I'm a people person," Kirsty cheerfully says, "so I think this is a job that suits me perfectly. It's nice and the community is great."





## Drive Safe, Stay Safe!

After a colourful autumn winter can arrive with a blast!



Winter is a challenging time for drivers, lower light levels, rain, ice and low winter sun lead to potentially dangerous road conditions.

Ice and hail are two of the main hazards to look out for. However, preparing adequately and driving appropriately will help you stay safe.

**Tyres** – most UK cars come fitted with summer tyres, consider changing to winter or all weather tyres. While the legal minimum is 1.6mm, no less than 3mm is recommended for winter driving. Check tyre pressures regularly as they can change once the temperature drops.

**Antifreeze** – check coolant level, top up if it's low or take it to your local garage.

**Battery** – a flat battery is the most common cause of winter breakdowns. Check yours is OK, your local garage or battery dealer can help.

**Fuel** – keep at least a quarter of a tank in case of unexpected hold ups or delays.

**Lights** – carry spare bulbs and make sure all lights are clean and working correctly.

**Windscreen** – renew worn wiper blades and clean windscreen inside and out. Don't try and clear a frozen windscreen with wipers as it can damage the rubber. Don't defrost your windscreen by pouring boiling or hot water over it, as it could crack.

**Screenwash** – use a 50% mix of good quality screenwash to stop it from freezing. Top up regularly – you'll use a lot more in the winter months.

**Locks and seals** – stop doors freezing shut by using Vaseline or similar product on rubber door seals

Keep your distance

Drive in a higher gear in snow and ice Know how to use your lights and heat systems.

Take your time.

Prepare for rain, wind and fog.

Keep your fuel topped up

Carry a breakdown kit, some high viz and warm clothing



As frosty mornings become more common, car windscreens to fall victim to condensation. If you're running late for work in the morning, demisting your car windows will be yet one more thing to do

Condensation occurs when warm air meets a cold surface, something which is a problem with car windscreens, especially over the winter. The worst thing any motorist can do is to get in the car and put the heaters on. The warm air, together with the moisture in your breath, can cause glass surfaces to mist up.



Although it can be an inconvenience to many people who rely on their cars to get around, demisting your windscreen is an absolute necessity, and it's also important that any ice or snow is cleared from all windows, too. The Highway Code, rule 229 states that drivers must:

- Clean all lights
- Demist all mirrors
- Ensure number plates are visible
- Remove any snow which may fall and obstruct the path of other drivers
- Check your planned route is clear

A windscreen covered in ice, or one which hasn't been demisted properly, can stop you from noticing hazards on the roads, narrowing your overall vision while driving. Where it's not illegal to have snow on your roof, if it falls off onto your windscreen or into the path of other drivers, you'll be penalised. Here are a few tips for clearing your windscreen in a rush, so you can be safe and run on time during the cold months.

**Use the defrost button** – whether your windscreen is icy or not, the defrost button can help to demist your windscreen in no time. The combination of heat and air-con rapidly removes moisture from the air, leaving you with a clear windscreen.

**Turn the air-con system on** – the AC will dry out the air, therefore absorbing excess moisture from inside your car.

**Turn off the air circulation** – the air outside the vehicle is cold and (often) dry, and therefore doesn't contain as much water vapour. It would be better to bring air in from the outside to demist your car as opposed to recirculating the air you're breathing from inside the car.

**Open a window** – this will bring the air in from outside, and will work in much the same way as having your air-con on. The window doesn't need to be open all the way – just a crack will do.

**Stand outside the car** – don't leave the car unattended at any time. Instead, turn the air-con on and then wait outside. Your breath is warm and contains water particles – this doesn't help with the demisting process.





## Light in the dark

**Dipped headlights** are the most commonly used headlights; brighter than sidelights, but not as bright as full beam headlights. They get their name as they are angled downwards, towards the road.

The highway code says, "You must use headlights when visibility is seriously reduced", with 'seriously reduced' defined as when you are able to see less than 100m in front of you. This means they should be turned on at night-time and during bad weather. You **MUST NOT** use any lights in a way which would dazzle or cause discomfort to other road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. You should also use dipped headlights, at night in built-up areas and in dull daytime weather, to ensure that you can be seen.

**Full beam headlights** are the brightest type of headlight on normal vehicles. They are angled higher than dipped headlights, allowing you to see more of the road, and are sometimes known as high beams. You should only use full beam headlights on unlit stretches of road at night. When meeting oncoming traffic (including cyclists or pedestrians), following another vehicle, or driving on left-turning bends, you must turn off full beam headlights as they can often be dazzling and may cause accidents.

**Fog lights** are designed to cut through fog and mist, unlike full beam lights that are reflected by fog. You should only use your fog lights when visibility is below 100 metres., that's roughly the length of a football pitch. It's important not to use your fog lights when visibility is better than that, as you risk dazzling other drivers.

**Hazard lights** can be seen at all corners of a car - they're the lights usually used as your indicators. The blinking amber lights are used to warn other drivers of danger or obstructions on the road, and the dashboard button is indicated with a triangle shape. You should only use your hazard lights if your vehicle is stationary, to warn others that you're causing a temporary obstruction. You may also use your hazard lights if you are on a motorway and there is an obstruction up ahead that you need to warn other drivers about.

### Can you have too much of a good thing?

A survey of 2,000 drivers found 89% think at least some headlights on cars today are too bright, of the drivers who complain about the brightness of car headlights, 91% say they get dazzled when driving with 74% saying this happens regularly.

When it comes to the effects of glare on drivers, 67% who suffer say they have to slow down considerably until they can see clearly again, while 64% believe some headlights are so bright they risk causing accidents.

7% say they find headlight glare so bad that they avoid driving at night altogether, a figure that rises to 14% for drivers aged 65 and over.

*(Source the RAC)*



## Keep the pedals turning

### Cycling in winter

It's horrible once the clocks change – winter is really here. It's gloomy and dark, especially on the way to and from school, so you really need to make sure that other road users can see your child and you when you're cycling.

There are several ways to make everyone in your family more visible so that you can all continue to cycle safely through the winter months.

Bike lights might seem obvious, but did you know that all bikes being ridden on the road in the dark must legally be fitted with lights? Rule 60 of the Highway Code states:

*At night your cycle MUST have white front and red rear lights lit. It MUST also be fitted with a red rear reflector (and amber pedal reflectors, if manufactured after 1/10/85). White front reflectors and spoke reflectors will also help you to be seen. Flashing lights are permitted but it is recommended that cyclists who are riding in areas without street lighting use a steady front lamp.*

Wheel lights make cycling in the dark great fun and have the added benefit of meaning traffic will see the bike side on.

High visibility is a good idea and need not cost a fortune. There are high visibility cycle helmets, gloves or waistcoats. These simple things will make cycling in winter safer and in the case of gloves a lot warmer! Winter cycling can have challenges but there are also significant benefits in persevering. It's easy to get less fit in winter and indulge in lots of warm sweet drinks and pastries. Even professional cyclists probably eat some cake or a biscuit or two over the holiday season. So, keeping active over the colder months has significant benefits when we move back into spring. Cycling is part of a way of life, and a way of doing good for yourself. This way you can enjoy the Christmas festivities without any guilt, and when the spring arrives, you will not have to get used to riding your bike again and building up your fitness.

Cycling also helps avoid public transport, and those stuffy crowded busses and trains full of people with coughs and colds, steamed up windows and the smell of wet coats. It's far better to get out on your bike and enjoy the fresh air and see the sights at this time of year, the frosty mornings, the beautiful Christmas lights, the winter sky in morning and evening, the sounds of nature in winter, all of these are much closer when you are out and travelling under your own power.

Cycling can also help you save some money, it's free once you have a bike, apart from some spares and maintenance costs, and you can recoup some of the money you spent on presents and celebrations over the holiday season.

Christmas isn't always an easy time, with some general life challenges for many people, but when you cycle you reduce your body's levels of cortisol, the stress hormone whilst releasing endorphins which help to reduce anxiety and make you feel happier, so give it a try and see how keeping active can help keep you happy and healthy.





## Enjoying a winter walk

During this crisp and cool time of year, it's a perfect opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and create some special memories. Maybe the brisk weather has you looking forward to a walk with the whole family around some picturesque parts of the county, a walk with friends in a peaceful forest, or a solo explore of historic sites.



When planning a walk, it's important to think about a range of factors to ensure everything goes smoothly and enjoyably from picking the right location, to bringing the most suitable food and warm drinks.

Having breakfast before the walk is great for starting off on the right foot, but it's important to bring food along and keep that momentum going.

While you don't want to stop and sit still for too long, a well-timed refuelling break for a warm meal could be just what is needed to recharge. Consider foods that are easy to eat while on the move, like energy bars, and dried fruit or nuts. Bringing along some dark chocolate could make a great on-the-go treat too.

For a special treat while you're sitting and refuelling, you might even consider bringing a pre-prepared flask of hot chocolate or soup to sip.

Because our bodies work a bit harder to keep us warm when we're exposed to the cold, it's important to wrap up as much as possible to minimise that. This is especially the case for any young children, as they aren't as good at regulating their temperatures as older children and adults are.

With the wrong shoes and socks, water from puddles or melting snow might seep in, and wet, cold feet can be a bit of a risk in the winter. Weatherproof boots with thick soles, boots with good ankle support are a good idea.

Padded gloves with a thick outer layer can ensure no numb, stiff fingers, a hat that covers the ears, keeps the head warm, and a padded jacket will trap in body heat. So that you start off a winter walk comfortably wrapped up and have an enjoyable time.

Here are some tips for road safety while hiking:

- **Follow the Highway Code:** If you're walking on roads, use pavements or pathways if available. Keep to the right when facing oncoming traffic, and cross at designated points.
- **Be aware of traffic:** Country roads can have fast-moving traffic, so be extra alert.
- **Walk in single file:** If there is no pavement, keep to the right and walk in single file
- **Be prepared to stop:** If you need to let a car pass, stop walking
- **Be aware of sharp bends:** At sharp right-hand bends, cross the road before the corner, then cross back to face oncoming traffic.
- **Help other road users see you:** Wear a bright coat, fluorescent if walking in the daytime, and reflective at night or have a reflective armband, a reflective patch on your bag or backpack is a good idea. Use a torch, don't wear all dark colours. These little things can make all the difference between being seen and being hit by a car.



## Enjoying a winter walk

When you are out and about enjoying a winter walk, these are some things to be aware of:

**Rights of Way**, “a public right of way is part of the Queen's highway and is subject to the same protection in law as all other highways.” ([gov.co.uk](http://gov.co.uk)).

However, there are a few variations to these rights of ways;

1. **Public footpaths**: these footpaths are only open to walkers.
2. **Public bridleways**: these are open to walkers, horse-riders and cyclists.
3. **Restricted Byways**: these are open to walkers, horse riders, cyclists AND drivers/riders of non-motorised vehicles (such as a horse and carriage).

**Byways Open to All Traffic**, or BOATs for short: These byways are open to all classes of traffic, including motor vehicles, but may not be maintained to the same standard as ordinary roads.

**Pick up after yourselves**

### Rubbish

No matter what it is, always take your rubbish home with you or pop it in a bin. Even food that's finished with – apple cores for example – need to go back with you and not be thrown into a hedge. Did you know, apple cores can take up to 8 weeks to biodegrade?! Your trusty source of energy, the banana, maybe great at boosting you up a hill, but did you know its skin can take up to TWO YEARS to biodegrade?

- **Paper bag**: 1 month
- **Apple core**: 8 weeks
- **Orange peel and banana skin**: 2 years
- **Cigarette end**: 18 months to 500 years
- **Plastic bag**: 10 to 20 years
- **A plastic bottle**: 450 years

**Chewing gum**: 1 million years  
([keepbritaintidy.org](http://keepbritaintidy.org))

One of the easiest ways to keep toasty on winter adventures is with a hot drink or soup in a flask. A steaming cup of hot chocolate is extra special when it's sipped in the middle of a frosty forest (especially when topped with mini marshmallows). Wrapping your hands around a warm mug will help defrost icy fingers too.

Fancy a change from tea or coffee? Dilute squash with hot water to make a warming fruity drink, or have a go at a delicious mulled juice.

[Mulled apple juice recipe | Good Food](#)





## News and events

### The Cambridge Criterium

**Smart journeys**, Sustainable Travel Planning Manager, Sharon Forbes worked in partnership with Monument Cycle for the first-ever pro-cycling event, Cambridge Criterium on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

The event was a great opportunity to close roads in the centre of Cambridge allowing lots of activity on the day, from free family cycling on traffic-free roads, a free-to-attend cycling festival in Cambridge, and an opportunity to watch professional cycle racing in person for free!

The first professional cycling races in Cambridge since the 2014 Tour de France, all on Jesus Green in the heart of the city!

The headline races for men and women featured the country's top domestic riders, including Olympians, national champions and even some former and current world champions.

A traffic-free 2.6km circuit around Jesus Green transformed the heart of Cambridge into a vibrant festival hub for residents and attendees of all ages with a broadcast to a big screen on the Green, where pro and elite riders competed for a £10,000 prize pot!



During the well-attended event, **Smart Journeys** engaged with the general public giving advice on sustainable transport, giving away various Cambridgeshire cycle maps, 'Be Bright Be Seen' freebies, bike lights, and Road Safety leaflets, which were well received.

For more information and results of the race, please visit:

- <https://cambridge.monumentcycling.com/>
- <https://thebritishcontinental.co.uk/2024/08/26/2024-cambridge-criterium-report-and-results/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czdpj8pz712o>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IO0WFvKQxlg>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBz47LxuW5Q>



## Sustainable Travel Launch Event Monday 30th September 2024



Sharon Forbes, Sustainable Travel Planning Manager, Sustainable Travel Launch event

### Skylark, Wisbech has arrived!

Platform Housing Group hosted their official Sustainable Travel Launch Event at Skylark on Monday, 30th September. Skylark is a fantastic example of how partnership working is helping deliver much delivered affordable housing.

Working with R G Carter and Fenland District Council, Platform have been able to develop 137 affordable homes for the Wisbech area. This modern development is mix of 1, 2, 3 bedroom flats and houses, comprising social housing, and shared ownership schemes.

Platform housing have around 49000 homes across England however this Skylark development, is their first in Wisbech.

**Smart Journeys** who work in partnership with Platform Housing Group facilitated the drop-in session held by the play park where residents were provided free bike repair sessions and bike repair demonstration, delivered by **Outspoken**. The torrential rain and strong winds did not deter participants, some of the local parents and their enthusiastic young children alike who were fully engaged in learning more about sustainable travel and road safety when going to school or playing out with friends.

Many of the local young children made the most of the free bike repair service, free 'Be Bright Be Seen' snap bands, reflectors, and bike lights to help them keep safe, bright, and seen when walking or cycling and the road safety leaflets, 'Tales of the Road' and Safer Routes for Children'.

The Sustainable Travel Launch event was also graced and honoured to have the newly appointed **Mayor of Wisbech** and Chairman of Wisbech Town Council, Sidney Imafidon in attendance who braved the wet weather to give his support.

For more information, visit: <https://www.platformhg.com/article/boost-fenland-new-affordable-homes-are-completed>

