

# Unaffordable Electric Dreams?

Cheaper routes to low-footprint travel

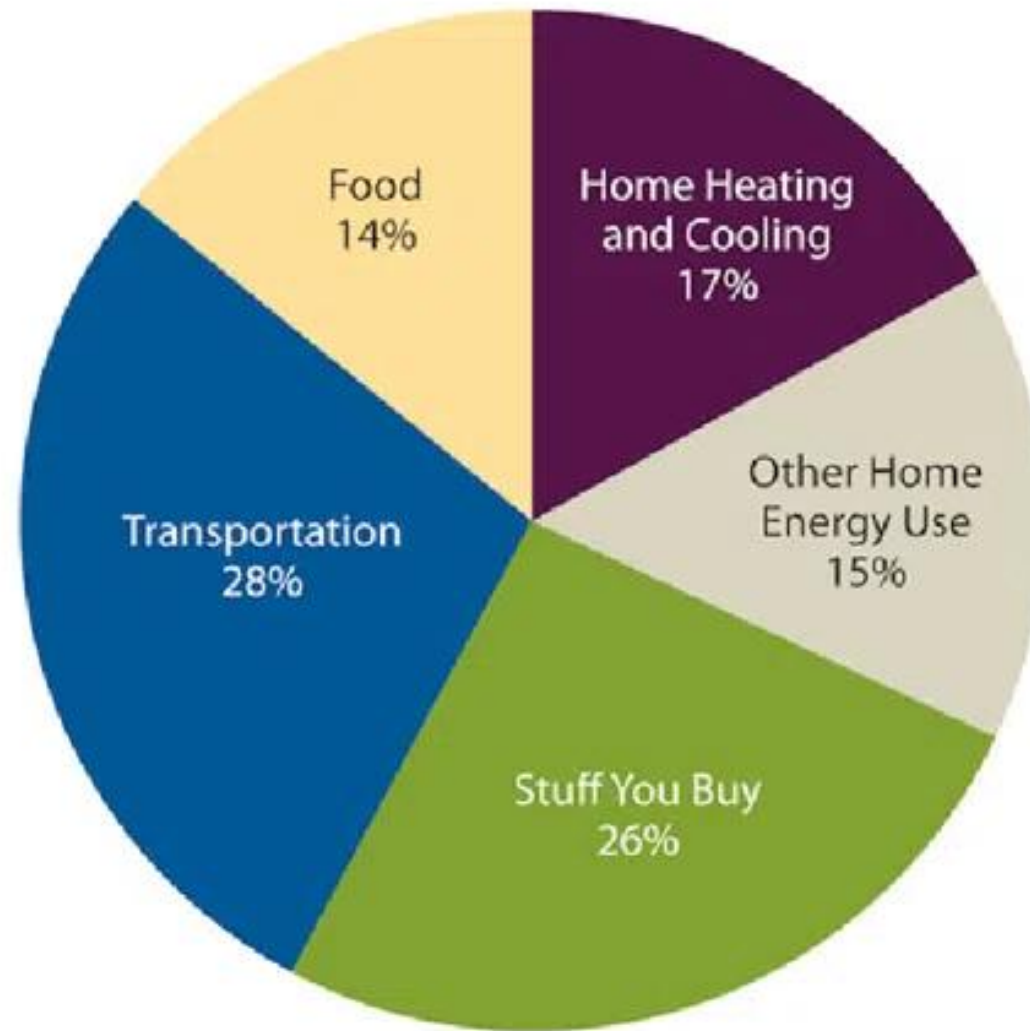
by Miranda Fyfe, local Green Party candidate

# Overview:

- what we'll discuss

- A look at Transport's contribution to emissions, and EVs
- Consider why people drive cars
- Think about how to change that
- Review other modes of transport
- My Top Tips
- Take-away Actions

# Average person's carbon emissions

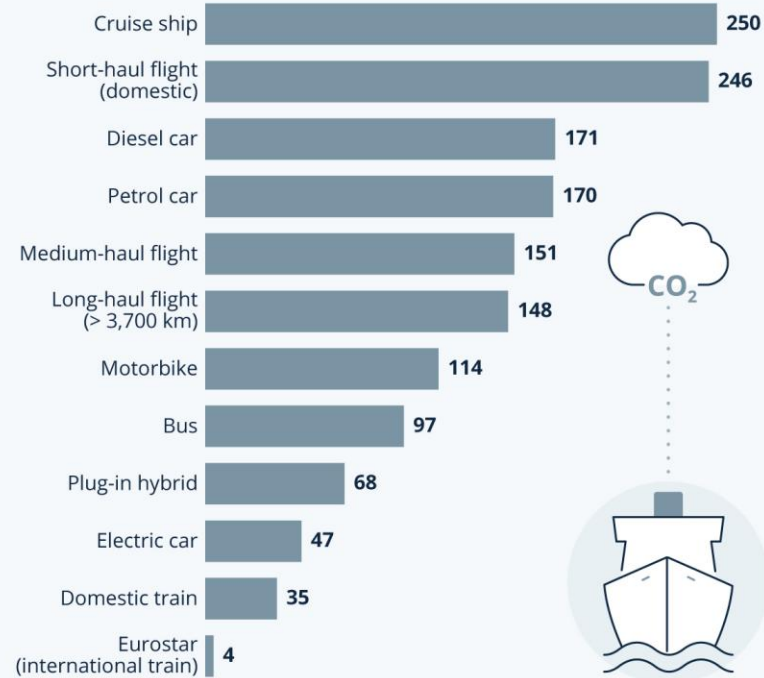


Petrol or Diesel cars are 3 or 4 times 'worse' than EVs

- but EVs are infinitely worse than walking or cycling!

## The Carbon Footprint of Passenger Transport

Greenhouse gas emissions by mode of transport, in grams of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per passenger-kilometer



Sources: OWID, ICCT and British government via Visual Capitalist



statista

# Consider Lifecycle emissions and impact of EVs

- Huge carbon footprint of manufacture
- Other dire impacts such as mining for battery materials
- Heavier than fossil fuel equivalent = more road damage
- Car manufacturers play all this down
- **“Electric cars are not here to save the planet – they will only save the Car Industry”**
- See the Arctic Death Spiral website for a ‘calculator’ to help decide when it makes sense to keep your old fossil fuel car:  
[https://www.arcticdeathspiral.org/electric\\_car\\_carbon\\_comparison\\_calculator.htm](https://www.arcticdeathspiral.org/electric_car_carbon_comparison_calculator.htm)

# What's the alternative?

**“Make the car you own now the last car you ever own”**

- Heard this in a BBC Look East piece several years ago
  - Offered as ‘one of the best things to do for the planet’
  - It inspired me!
- How to go about this?
  - Keep the car well maintained
  - Reduce the miles you do drive
- But how easy is that...?

# Why do we change our cars?

- Practical
  - Household/personal needs change over time
  - Tend to allow for maximum usage
- Emotional
  - FOMO?
  - Anxiety about safety?
  - Pleasure seeking?
- Status
  - What does your car say about you?
- Marketing
  - Selling a Lifestyle vision
  - How realistic is that?!

**But if the car is good and well-maintained, it could last a lifetime!**

Apply the  
“Zero Waste”  
mentality  
to driving

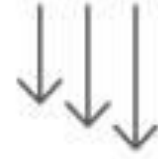
**ZERO  
WASTE**



RETHINK



REFUSE



REDUCE



REUSE



REPURPOSE



RECYCLE



REPAIR



ROT

What are  
different  
reasons  
we choose  
to drive?

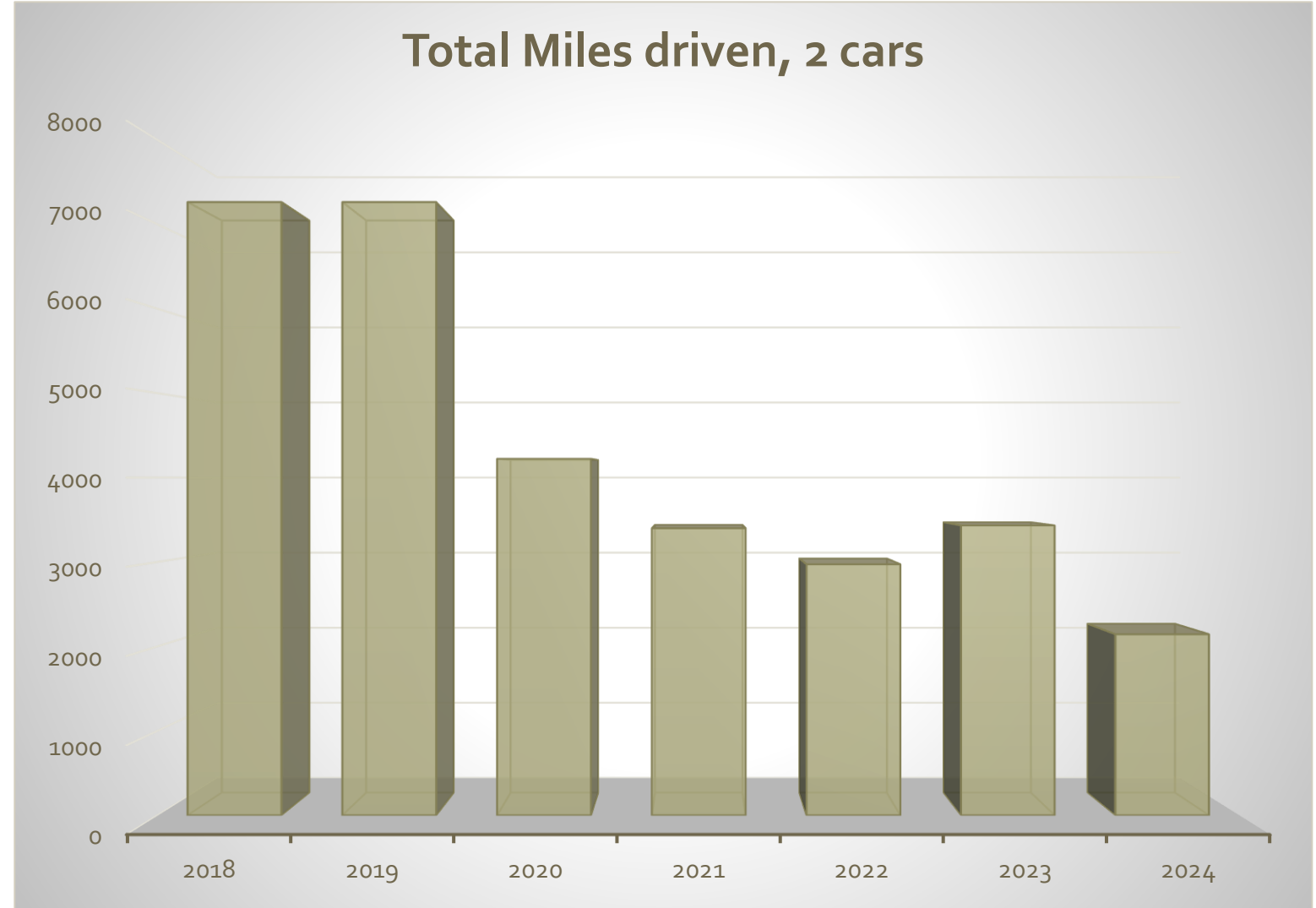
**“When all you have is a car, everything looks like a drive”**

- Habit?
- Availability?
- Lack of other options?
- Self-image?
- Emotional?

# Change is Hard!

- Changing any ingrained habit takes time and effort
- We have to learn new things
- Researching alternatives takes a lot of time
- We will experience some discomfort
  - Practical / Physical
  - Especially hard the first few times
- Doesn't have to be "All or Nothing"
  - Chip away at it
  - Form new habits over time
  - May be surprised how much change you can make long-term!

# Our Household Mileage records



# Options for travel avoiding cars

“On the Buses” ?

or

“On yer Bike”?

# Holidays!

- Infuriating assumption that 'a holiday' equals Flying Abroad
- So many lovely places to visit and stay in the UK
  - And it benefits the UK Economy to holiday here.
- UK self-catering holidays were a big contributor to our miles (having cut out flying)
- Trains are great!
  - An extra challenge to find holiday locations by train
  - Logistical planning to book groceries and so on
  - Huge payback in terms of reduced driving hassle.
- Still drive when needed. Again: "Do it if you think it's worth it"

Buses:

What's  
stopping you?

- Reputation for unreliability
- Lost sense of control
- Seen as expensive
- Status
- Slower than driving



# Buses:

## Barriers De-bunked

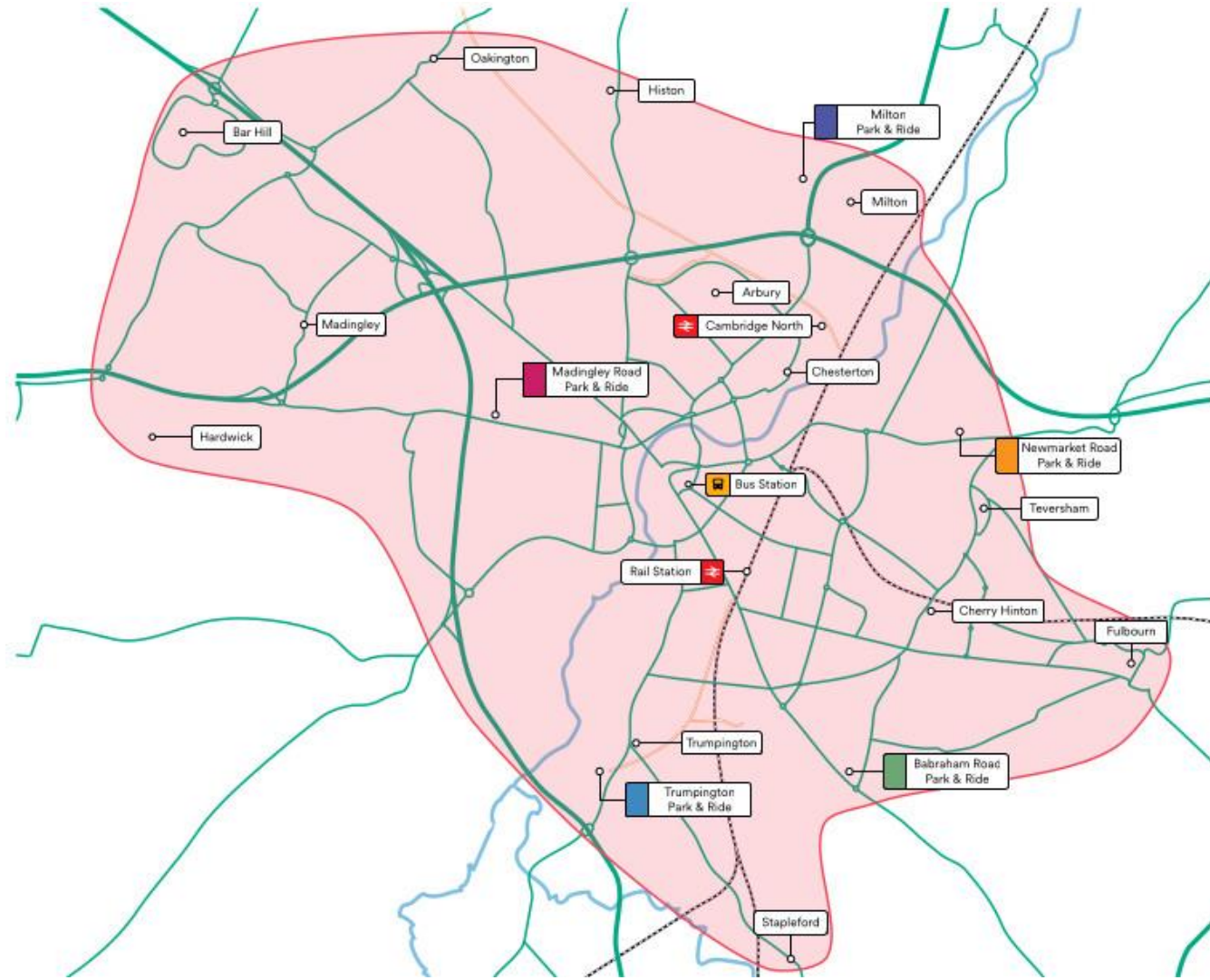
- Reliability?
  - Sometimes, yes – but who hasn't ever been stuck in car traffic?
- Lost sense of control?
  - This sense is mostly an illusion!
- Expensive?
  - Recent survey gave affordability as top reason for using buses
  - Compared to true cost of running a car, they're a bargain
- Status?
  - Be proud of leaving the car at home! Set an example
- Slow?
  - That all depends how you use the time...

## Buses:

## Focus on the Positives

- Time on a bus can be **productive** (unlike driving)
  - Catch up with emails on your phone?
  - Or social media? News App?
  - Read a book? Or just enjoy the view / thinking time...
- They do serve your village!
  - Albeit along Cambridge Road only
  - The walk is good exercise – get those steps in
  - Every 20 minutes is better than some
- Live tracking gives you advance warning of delays
- Hardwick is inside the cheapest Dayrider zone
  - All-day travel on any number of buses within the Zone

# Stagecoach's Dayrider Zone



Buses:  
Top Tip no.1  
Google Maps

Best12 min1h 13m1h 28m22 min

Coleridge Community College, Radegund

Home (CB22 5BQ)

7:04 PM (Friday) – 8:04 PM

1 hr

7:17 PM (Friday) – 8:31 PM

1 hr 14 min

7:19 PM from Birdwood Road

18 min

Details

7:42 PM (Friday) – 8:38 PM

56 min

7:41 PM (Friday) – 8:38 PM

57 min

St Andrew's Street (Stop S2)

Cambridge

Birdwood Road

Chaston Road

Great Shelford

Little Shelford

Stapleford

Wandlebu

RED CROSS

GRANTCHESTER MEADOWS

CHERRY HINTON

BARNWELL

1 hr 14 min

57 min

56 min

1 hr

Layers

Map data ©2025 Google

United Kingdom

Terms

Privacy

1 km

# Buses:

## More Top Tips

- **Plan ahead!**
- Accept that it will be confusing and difficult at first
  - It does get easier with practice
  - Maybe explore one route option at a time
- Know your Ticketing options
  - Flat Fare singles are not necessarily cheapest
  - Stagecoach 'Flexi 5' and 'Flexi 10' great discounts
    - Valid for a whole year
    - Only on their App
  - 'Multibus' flat fare of £8 per day – for the whole county
    - Covers most different operators
    - Beware the few exceptions

# Cycling:

## What's stopping you?

- Physical limitations?
- Never learnt?
- Anxiety?
- Time constraints?
- Status / self-image?



# Cycling:

## Addressing those Barriers (1)

- **Physical requirement overestimated**
  - Don't let lack of general fitness be a barrier
  - Cycling can be low effort!
  - Electric bikes really help
- **Never too late to learnt!**
  - Try it! Maybe find a buddy locally to help?
  - “Outspoken! Training” offer Adult training
    - Either brand new, or ‘rusty riders’
    - £75 for a 2-hour one-to-one session
    - Free for University of Cambridge staff
    - <https://outspokentraining.co.uk/adult-cycle-skills-training/>

# Cycling:

## Addressing those Barriers (2)

- **Anxiety is misplaced**
  - Common fear of traffic, potential danger
  - Statistically, driving is more dangerous to your health
  - Helmet-cam is great, and Police do act
- **Time constraints overestimated**
  - Plan ahead!
  - Cycling time very predictable – unlike driving
  - If rushing – extra exercise!!
- **Status / self-image resolvable**
  - Lycra is not compulsory!
  - Be proud of your Hi-Viz!
  - *You are an Eco-Hero*

# Cycling:

## Focus on the Positives

- **Cheap!**
  - Though worth investing in a decent bike
  - Running costs minimal
- **Reliable!**
  - Journey time utterly predictable
  - Forget the stress about timetables
- **Freedom!**
  - “Wot Roadworks?”
  - The ‘go anywhere’ licence that car-lovers crave!
- **Sociable!**
  - Waving at friends around the village
  - Enjoy pleasant interactions with fellow path users

Cycling:

Top Tip no.1



- **Get a Stirrup Pump!**
- Good tyre pressure makes a huge difference to ease of going
- Simply can't get enough pressure in with a handheld

# Cycling:

## More Tips

- **Get Panniers**
- **Establish a routine**
  - What goes where
  - Makes getting ready eventually second-nature
- **Be assertive in traffic**
- **Clothing considerations**
  - Ideally wear your normal clothes
  - Long flowing skirt? Wear shorts under and swap later.
- **Adapt to poor weather**
  - Have a bus back-up plan if poss
  - Enjoy the pleasure of getting into warm dry clothes once home!
  - Resist the “two-tonne raincoat” temptation

# Putting it into Action

It's not Hope that breeds Action  
– it's Action that breeds Hope!

# Lifestyle Changes are needed

- Change is hard, but constant
- Necessary to adapt to future climate
- Societal changes are also inevitable
- Those wanting “Business as Usual” are unrealistic
  - EVs seem to epitomise this
  - Resource-intensive and unjustifiable
- Challenge yourself – and also be kind to yourself
  - Personal growth through learning new skills
  - Congratulate yourself when you achieve

# What can you change?

- REDUCE the need to drive
- Shop locally – little and often by bike or walking?
- “Big Shop” less often?
  - Fill the car boot
  - Makes it ‘really worth it’
- Combine multiple chores in one car outing?
- Try the buses?!
- Pump up your bike tyres and rediscover the joy of cycling?

# Summary:

## What we've covered

- Transport contributes a third of our emissions
  - And EVs don't help much!
- Why we drive cars is not just practicality
- You have the power to change your habits and choices
- Other modes of transport are available - and practical
- Miranda's Top Tips hopefully help get you started
- Take-away an Action or two – take Action to breed Hope!

# Any Questions?

Contact: [miranda.fyfe@cambridge.greenparty.org.uk](mailto:miranda.fyfe@cambridge.greenparty.org.uk)

Follow me on Facebook: **Miranda Fyfe – Green Party**