

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau/ Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
Committee
Cyflwr y Ffyrdd yng Nghymru / State of Roads in Wales
Ymateb gan Anthony Hontoir / Evidence from Anthony Hontoir

I understand that you have invited views from the general public on the state of roads in Wales. I had occasion recently to write to Traffic Wales complaining about the state of the M4's road surface, and Fabian Way in Swansea, both of which have undoubtedly suffered badly during the recent cold weather, but were showing signs of significant deterioration beforehand. I received a reply, assuring me that repair work would be put in hand, pointing out that Swansea City Council was responsible for roads in Swansea.

But my comments need to go a lot wider than these specific examples. I cycle about fifteen miles a day, sometimes more, generally in my home town of Porthcawl, where many roads are simply dreadful and *dangerous*. There is a great deal of talk about spending needed for schools and hospitals, but if this country intends to be taken seriously with its environmental credentials, it needs to build proper cycle routes where people feel safe to cycle not only within towns but also between towns. Porthcawl has made a half-hearted attempt to create a coastal path cycle route, which is either shared with pedestrians (not very satisfactory) or dodges around various streets in a poorly-signed and haphazard fashion, presumably so that the local authority, Bridgend County Borough Council, can say that it has fulfilled its obligations.

What a contrast with the wonderful cycle route between Llanelli and Burry Port, which I had the pleasure of sampling last August.

This comes down to town and country planning, and other European countries seem to have managed to achieve a favourable environment in which people of all ages can cycle safely. How often do we read about cyclists being knocked off their bicycles by cars and lorries in British towns and cities (London has a dreadful record).

Well, let Wales lead the way in the United Kingdom. Don't just talk about it, but implement measures to encourage people to get out of their cars, or off buses, and cycle to work or school, or simply to fulfil daily errands. There is an enormous health benefit waiting to be unleashed, both mental and physical. I am certain that if we collectively had a different approach to the subject, there would be a great difference made to the demands placed on an already overstretched NHS.

I am not a member of a cycling club or pressure group, I am writing this merely as an ordinary member of the public who drives a car, walks and chooses, as often as possible, to ride a bicycle, and would prefer to do so without having to avoid shameful potholes in the road and better still, to ride my bicycle on properly dedicated routes.