

South Central Sustrans Active School Travel Programme Spring Term 2020 Newsletter

I'd love to hear from you...

I'm Claire Lundy, Sustrans' schools officer for the South Central area. Please get in touch if you have any great school stories or would like to find out more about our schools work.

Tel: 028 9043 4569

Mob: 0777 503 7198

Email: claire.lundy@sustrans.org.uk

Twitter: [@SustransNI](https://twitter.com/SustransNI)

Facebook: [Sustrans NI](https://www.facebook.com/SustransNI)

Message from Sustrans...

The Active School Travel Programme is an exciting initiative for schools who wish to see more of their pupils choosing an **active and healthy** journey to school. The aim of the programme is to increase the number of pupils walking, cycling and scooting to school.

Sustrans is being funded by the **Public Health Agency** and the **Department for Infrastructure** to continue delivering the Active School Travel Programme across Northern Ireland until 2021.

Sustrans has been delivering this successful programme for the past three years. In 2018-19 within participating schools, the number of pupils travelling actively increased from 35% to 53%.

We are currently working with over 400 schools across Northern Ireland. Please visit our [website](https://www.sustrans.org.uk) where you can learn more about the programme and download newsletters from other areas.

#StayHomeStayActive



The Spring Term was shorter than we all imagined but there were still loads of brilliant Active School Travel activities and events that happened this term that we want to celebrate in this newsletter. We hope this finds you well in these difficult times. Let's all do our part by staying home and staying active. And for those of you teachers, NHS staff and other keyworkers who are heading out each day, thank you for the important work that you are doing. We have some excellent resources to support parents and carers with home schooling and ideas for staying active — please read on!

~ Take care from everyone at Sustrans!



Pupils at Spa Primary School completed Level 1 and 2 Cycle Training in March

A Spring Term to Remember

The Spring term got off to a busy start and came to an abrupt end, but we still managed to pack in lots of active travel projects and saw a few exciting developments for schools in South Central. Whilst schools are closed to most pupils and the Sustrans team is working from home, I wanted to take this opportunity to take stock of the great work that happened across the area and share some of the ways we are encouraging pupils to stay active and enthusiastic about healthy school travel for the new school year. Wherever you are or however your daily life has changed as a result of the pandemic, I hope this newsletter will bring a positive light and showcase the enthusiasm and resilience of the fantastic schools we work with and who we look forward to working with again.

Sustrans is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. It's time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today. www.sustrans.org.uk

© Sustrans 2016. Registered Charity No. 326550 (England and Wales) SCO39263 (Scotland)


sustrans
JOIN THE MOVEMENT

More Space to Play

Since it began in 2018, Feet First Families day has become an annual event with schools all across Northern Ireland making it a firm fixture in their calendars. This year it took place on Friday 13th March and though we did not know it at the time, it would end up being the last day of term for many. Two neighbouring schools in Belfast; Nettlefield PS and Elmgrove PS decided to close their car parks to staff and parents and give the space back to the pupils. As well as encouraging families to travel actively to and from school, pupils also had a great time using the extra space to run, cycle and play in during the school day. A huge thank you to all our schools for planning such special Feet First Families days for pupils whilst working tirelessly to prepare for school closures behind the scenes. This is why we call you Champions!



Elmgrove pupils found a much better use for the car park

Active Travel Volunteers

This term we met a fantastic group of people all keen to support our Active School Travel programme by volunteering in schools. Led by our volunteer coordinator Rachael we have been developing links between new and established volunteers and Schools Officers in the Greater Belfast and Bangor areas. As the programme grows in popularity, volunteer support is so appreciated by the schools we work with. Pupils love visitors, especially when they're there to help them get active or go outdoors! Even something as simple as doing a bike safety check can be enough to boost a child's confidence to cycle. With volunteer support we can deliver more activities like Cycle Skills and Ditch the Stabilisers in school, and offer pupils even more opportunities like led walks and rides outside school grounds. Volunteers receive full training and support from Sustrans and although volunteer activity is [currently on hold](#), we would still love to hear from you if you're interested in getting involved in the new school year.

Volunteer bike safety checks



PSNI Support for School Walk



Ballymacrickett Primary School in Glenavy joined our Active School Travel Programme in September 2019 and have been working hard to transform their school run travel habits. In November they hosted a successful Park and Stride day where families cut their car journeys short and instead enjoyed a stroll in the fresh air when they dropped off at the local GAA instead of the school gate.

Inspired by the school community's response to this event, the school decided to go one better for Feet First Families and hold a Walking Bus from the village itself. Despite being just over a mile from the village most families are deterred from walking to school due to the lack of footpath on a relatively short section of the road. The wider community have been campaigning for a linking footpath for a number of years as it would safely connect the village to the primary school, nursery and the community facilities at the football club. On the day of the event Ballymacrickett was supported by the Rural Neighbourhood Policing team who managed traffic on the route to enable pupils to experience the walk to school safely. For most families this was their first time making the journey to school on foot and they were joined by the Residents Association and two local councillors who walked with them.

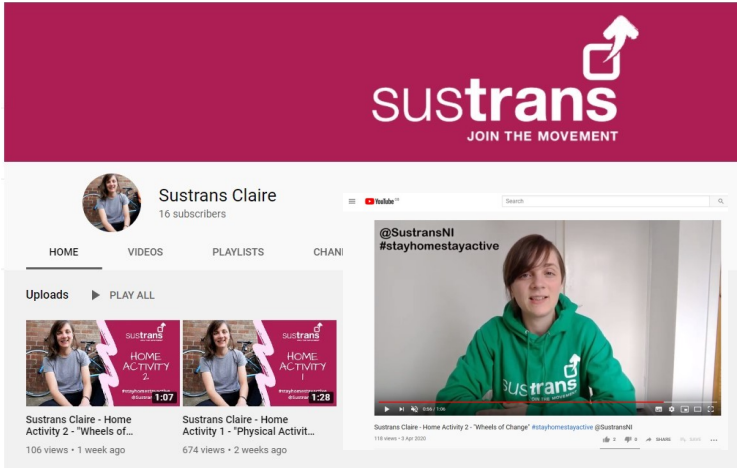


"I couldn't be happier that on the last day that Ballymacrickett were properly together, we got to walk to school as a community." - Mrs K. (School Champion)

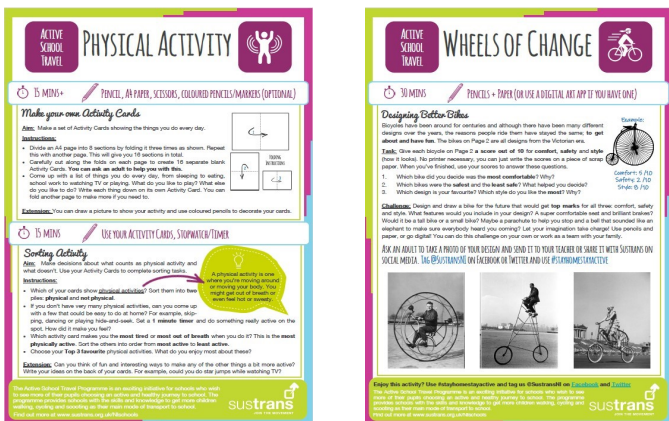
It was a privilege for me to be involved in this brilliant event and the staff did a fantastic job of promoting it far and wide. With such a great start to their time on the Active School Travel Programme I can't wait to see what Ballymacrickett get up to when they return in 2020/21.

#StayHomeStayActive







At a Schools Team meeting in late March we would normally be talking about Big Pedal, daylight savings and the fact that Ditch the Stabilisers season was about to kick off. But as it happened, March 2020 would throw a bit of a pedal spanner in the works. With many of our schools reducing visitor contact and closures imminent, we had to get our heads together to think about what we could do to still deliver active travel learning opportunities for teachers and pupils while they were staying home. And so, not ones to shy away from a challenge, we went digital!



Using YouTube channels created especially for this project we are aiming to bring variety to the remote learning provision that the schools on the Active School Travel Programme are delivering for their pupils. Since 30th March we have each produced a weekly resource for an activity that families can do easily at home, keeping them active while they keep themselves safe. We also record and post a short video, so that pupils know we are thinking about them and looking forward to seeing them again when school reopens. Pupils are used to seeing their officer visit them in school, so we knew they would appreciate a familiar face during their time at home.

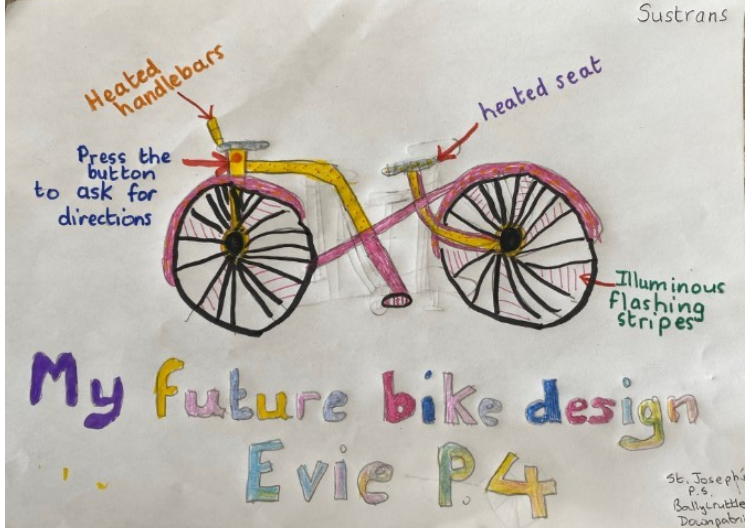
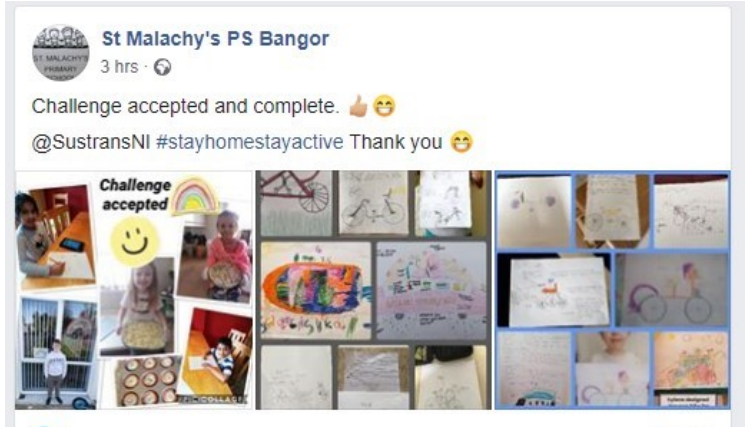


We're excited to explore this new remote style of delivery, and delighted to be able to keep pupils enthusiastic about Active Travel in our absence. You can find my videos and resources at [Sustrans Claire](#) on YouTube, and don't forget to check out the content from the other officers on their own channels too.

-  Sustrans Richard
-  Ronan at Sustrans
-  Sustrans Dave
-  Schools NI
-  Beverley Sustrans
-  Sustrans Johnny

Challenge Accepted!

We have been asking teachers and families to share their #StayHomeStayActive work with us on social media. Check out some of the fantastic work that pupils have done as part of our new, remote engagement!





Pupils at Elmgrove Primary enjoying Feet First Families day

Feet First Families

On Friday 13 March, pupils from schools across Northern Ireland made their school a 'car-free zone', and encouraged families to use their feet first to walk, scoot or cycle to school.

With school car parks closed for the day, pupils reclaimed the space in all kinds of creative and fun ways, including parties in the parking lot. Some schools held 'bling your bike' events, coffee stands or simply turned their car parks into an extended play-ground. There were also led walks and walking buses to encourage children to travel actively to school.

Dr Hannah Dearie, from the Public Health Agency said: "We are delighted to support children and their families to actively travel to school to increase their physical activity and improve their overall health and wellbeing. Feet First Families is a fun day to highlight the benefits of actively travelling to school by showing children, parents and the wider community how easy it can be to walk, cycle or scoot to school."



Follow the Leaders

Congratulations to the following schools across Northern Ireland who have achieved **School Mark Awards** in January, February and March!

Bronze Awards

- ◆ Artigarvan PS
- ◆ Bushvalley PS
- ◆ Chapel Road PS
- ◆ Faughanvale PS
- ◆ Phoenix Integrated PS
- ◆ Sion Mills PS



Gold Award

- ◆ **Doagh PS**— see pictured below.

Active Travel Champion Mr Dowds and pupils from the Eco Committee pictured with the Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey, Ald John Smyth and John Blair MLA.



We *still* want you...

We don't know exactly what the 2020-21 school year will look like, but at this stage we are still intending to take on new schools in the Active School Travel Programme. If you would like your school to be a part of this inspiring initiative, please contact us or visit our [website](#) where you can download an application pack today.



If your school is already part of AST, please help us spread the news and encourage teachers at new schools to get on board with this exciting opportunity.

Currently, the deadline for applications has been waived. Please get in touch with any questions— schoolsNI@sustrans.org.uk or 02890434569.

Sustrans is grateful for the continued support of our schools work in Northern Ireland from the following:

