



In a jam

The past 50 years have seen a revolution in the way we travel. We're able to travel further and faster and do more. Millions of us today have more independence and mobility than ever before. That's partly because most households in the UK now own a car.

But cars are a mixed blessing. The way we travel is having a huge impact on us, our environment and the economy. Air pollution from traffic makes asthma worse for millions of children. Thousands of people are killed or seriously injured on the roads every year. Some of our most important wildlife sites and best countryside are threatened by road-building. Congestion costs the economy billions of pounds every year. And aeroplanes are causing noise and pollution nightmares for tens of thousands of people.

Perhaps the biggest problem of all is transport's contribution to climate change through carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. Climate change is the world's greatest environmental challenge. It will hit developing countries hardest and they will be least able to cope with the impact. But the UK will also be affected.

We've been heading down the wrong road for too long, building more roads in an attempt to crack our transport crisis, but it doesn't work. We need to find a different route. That's why Friends of the Earth wants to see a transport system based around people, not cars and roads.

This booklet shows why transport that would be good for the environment would also make life better for everyone. It offers ideas about what you and your family can do to help. For more information please also visit www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/transport/

Did you know



Road transport pumps out more than a fifth of UK emissions of carbon dioxide, the main gas causing climate change.

Allowing for inflation, it's actually cheaper to run a car today than it was 30 years ago. Over the same period rail fares have risen by more than 80 per cent and bus fares by more than 70 per cent.

When parts of the M25 were widened to eight lanes it filled up again in a year in some cases. Campaigning led by Friends of the Earth in the 1990s saw the Government abandon plans for a 14-lane M25.

Getting on track

Road to nowhere

More roads, wider motorways, more congestion, more accidents and health problems, wasted money

Business as usual

More traffic, expensive buses and trains, more climate change, more stress

Pie in the sky

Bigger airports, more flights, more noise, more climate change



Way to go

Better and more affordable buses and trains, greener cars, safer streets, improved health, real choices

Road to ruin

In the past 30 years traffic on our roads has more than doubled. More of us have cars and we're using them more.

Climate-changing emissions from road transport are forecast to rise for years to come. Because of climate change, extreme and unpredictable weather, flooding, droughts and the spread of tropical diseases are already having a devastating impact around the world. Getting control of transport emissions will be essential if the UK Government is to make yearly reductions in carbon dioxide output.

Many main roads are very congested. But new and wider highways don't solve the problems for long - they actually encourage longer journeys and generate more traffic. New roads cost hundreds of millions of pounds, which could be better spent in other ways – such as on promoting cycling, walking and public transport use through 'smarter travel choices' initiatives which are proven to cut car trips. A national programme is estimated to cost £2 billion - the same as the Highways Agency's 2 most expensive new road schemes.

It's not easy living in a car-dominated society if you don't have a car, particularly if shops and hospitals are not within walking or cycling distance. Bus services are inadequate in many rural areas. Over half of Britain's poorest households don't have access to a car, yet many of these households live in the areas with most traffic, most accidents and worst pollution.

Roads make a mess of our countryside and take their toll on wildlife: for example up to 45,000 badgers are killed on Britain's roads every year.

Cars will be part of transport in the future but we need to use them less than we do now and make sure they're less polluting.



Did you know

Up to 24,000 people die prematurely in the UK every year as a result of air pollution, much of it pumped out by road traffic in our towns and cities.

The number of 4x4s sold in the UK rose by nearly 13 per cent between 2003 and 2004, whereas sales of minis and super-minis fell by 4 per cent.

Campaigning by Friends of the Earth helped persuade the Chancellor to cut car tax on the most fuel-efficient vehicles. A higher tax on gas-guzzlers would discourage their use.

Children from the poorest households in the UK are five times more likely to be killed as pedestrians in a road accident than children from the richest households.



Change lanes: Real choices about how we travel would mean being able to use our cars less because public transport, walking and cycling would be easier, cheaper and more convenient.

Plane crazy

Cheap flights may be tempting, and aeroplanes have enabled us to visit places our grandparents only dreamed of. But aviation also causes big environmental and social problems.

The UK Government wants a huge expansion of aviation and is supporting the building of new runways or terminals at many UK airports to make this happen. Passenger numbers could more than double by 2030. This growth is only possible because airlines don't pay any tax on the fuel they use and pay no VAT on many parts of their operations. This amounts to an effective subsidy from the UK taxpayer of more than £9 billion every year – that's more than £100 per person in the country.

Aviation fuel has become one of the fastest growing sources of climate-changing gases. It could account for more than a tenth of UK emissions by 2020. Growth on the scale the Government wants would make it very difficult to reach our long-term targets to reduce emissions of climate-changing gases.

Tens of thousands of people live under flight paths, in some cases with planes passing overhead every couple of minutes throughout the day. Flights can create sleeping problems for many. Exposure to aircraft noise has been linked to high blood pressure and children's reading difficulties.

Cheap flights are hitting the UK tourism industry, with people now taking more weekends abroad.

Friends of the Earth is challenging the Government's push for more air travel and is supporting local communities opposing airport expansion.



Did you know

By 2030 changes in flight paths and queues of planes waiting to land mean that up to 600,000 people could be very disturbed by aircraft noise.

Six of the top 10 flight destinations from London could potentially be reached by high-speed rail rather than air. And these destinations – Amsterdam, Edinburgh, Frankfurt, Glasgow, Manchester and Paris – account for one in seven of all plane passengers in and out of London.

The Government's Future Foresight report warns that 3.5 million people in Britain could be at risk of flooding by 2080. This is partly as a result of climate change.



Flying into trouble: A massive expansion in air travel would punch a hole in the UK's efforts to tackle climate change – as well as wrecking many people's quality of life.

Image Source

Transports of delight

There is a route out of our transport crisis: we need less traffic on our roads and less growth in aviation.

Real choices

People need real choices so that they don't have to use their cars as much. This doesn't mean giving up cars – they will still be the sensible choice for some journeys. Providing real choices means improving public transport – and making streets safer for cycling and walking.

Travel less

We have to make it easier to leave the car at home. This means making sure people can get to the places they want to go – such as shops and jobs – by public transport, by bike or on foot. New technologies can enable people to work at home instead of commuting.

Greener cars

If cars are going to continue to be part of the way we travel, we have to make sure they do less damage to the environment. Financial incentives to buy more fuel efficient, less polluting cars, like hybrids and electric cars, will help cut emissions of climate-changing gases. But the electricity grid must be rapidly decarbonised too.

Fair tax for aviation

Even if airlines paid the real cost of the environmental damage they cause, this would mean fares staying roughly the same in real terms - rather than getting still cheaper as the Government assumes. Aviation gets off lightly in tax terms. We want Air Passenger Duty to be replaced with a Per Plane Duty that will cover freight flights and encourage airlines to fly fuller planes.

The sorts of policies Friends of the Earth wants could cut traffic by a quarter at peak times. What we're asking for is already being done in France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Did you know



Rail freight produces only a fifth of the carbon dioxide (per tonne carried) that road freight produces.

At sites where speed and safety cameras have been introduced, the proportion of cars breaking the speed limit has fallen by nearly a third and the number of people killed or seriously injured by 40 per cent.

A holidaymaker flying to Florida and back creates as much carbon dioxide as the average British motorist does in a year.



Exit strategy: Getting away from the car means better, safer, cheaper public transport.

What you can do

It's not just up to the Government to sort out our transport crisis. We can all make a difference by thinking about how we travel, and making changes at home, at work, at school or in our neighbourhoods.

Share a car

Think about whether you could share a car on a regular trip – to work, a football match, to church or the shops. Is there someone who lives near you going too? Sharing a car means one less vehicle on the road and alternating which car you use means one of you can relax on the journey.

Leave your car at home for two days a week

Find out whether you can get to work without having to use your car. Contact TransportDirect for public transport information or the national cyclists' organisation CTC for details of cycle routes in your area. Rest your car for a couple of days every week.



Did you know

Joining a car club can save up to £3,470 on the annual cost of running a car.

Choosing a fuel-efficient car rather than a gas-guzzler can halve your annual fuel costs: fuel for a BMW 7 series travelling 12,000 miles a year costs £1,750, fuel for a Vauxhall Corsa travelling the same distance costs under £870.

Electric cars are not liable for car tax or the London congestion charge.

More money-saving ideas in *Save cash and save the planet* (Collins, 2005, £12.99).



Get on your bike

Rather than drive to a gym to get some exercise, why not walk more or get out the bike again? Cycling and walking keep you fit and help reduce the risk of heart disease – and you can be out in the open air.

Shop locally

Use local shops rather than going to a supermarket that you have to drive to. You'll cut down on congestion and also support local businesses.

Holiday travel

The next time you need a break, try going by train. Trains are much less polluting than aeroplanes and you'll be helping local economies. Taking the train to many destinations in Europe can be cheaper than flying.

Set up a walking bus

Many children don't want to be driven to school. Walking buses are a fun way of enabling them to walk to school with parental supervision. Talk to other parents living near you about setting up a walking bus. More information from Sustrans (www.sustrans.org.uk).

Cut down on business trips

Do you really need to travel to meet with colleagues? Could you use phone or video-conferencing? If you do need to travel, go by train rather than by car or plane – it's often quicker and you'll be able to get some work done.



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1 Rethinking the way we get around is one way of making things better. You can also influence the kind of transport services your local authority provides. For more on local transport campaigns, contact Friends of the Earth's Transport team.

2 An electric car running on electricity from renewable sources like wind or solar power emits virtually no climate changing gases.

3 Reducing traffic on our roads won't just help tackle climate change and other environmental problems. Walking and cycling more will make us healthier.

Biofuel warning

Some years ago Friends of the Earth used to think that biofuels were OK. The problem is that decision makers have failed to create strong safeguards about biofuel production. As a result biofuels grown on industrial style farms do little to reduce emissions. At the same time they drive up food and fuel prices, trigger conflict and threaten rainforests.

The only biofuels Friends of the Earth recommends using are those with clear benefits for the environment, such as biofuel made from recycled cooking oil. See www.biodieselfillingstations.co.uk



Did you know

Friends of the Earth supported a community in Longsight in inner-city Manchester to get the local council to put on a new school bus service for pupils at Manchester Academy who were arriving late because of unreliable bus services.

Plans for a new freight superport at Dibden Bay in Hampshire were rejected by the Government following campaigning by Friends of the Earth and other local and national organisations. The port would have destroyed internationally important wildlife sites and worsened air, water and noise pollution.

Just giving people better information about alternatives to driving can lead to big changes. Trials targeting 13,000 homes in six towns and cities with information about public transport and cycle routes led to car use falling by more than 10 per cent.



GoInGreen

Make your next car as green as possible

Cars are going to be a part of transport in the future so we have to make sure they are as green as possible. When you buy a car, put fuel efficiency at the top of your list of things to consider. You could also think about buying a hybrid – these run on both petrol or diesel and electricity and so pump out less pollution.

See www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Travel/Buying-a-car

Action with Friends of the Earth

Join Friends of the Earth and support our national campaign to challenge transport growth, protect wildlife and habitats, and tackle climate change. For online actions and ways you can get involved visit www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/

Find out more and take action on transport at www.foe.co.uk

Sign up to Campaign Express and receive three packs a year by post with easy-to-do actions that will put pressure on the right people at the right time. Phone 020 7490 1555 or visit www.foe.co.uk/campaign_express/

Join a Friends of the Earth group in your area and help persuade your local authorities to introduce local transport plans that put people and the environment first. Call 020 7490 1555.

1 In its first year congestion charging in London cut cars entering central London by 30 per cent – and the number of buses and bikes both rose by 20 per cent.

2 Parents around the UK have organised more than 150 walking buses to get their children to school.

3 Travelling by rail within Europe often gets you from city centre to city centre rather than having to negotiate airports.

Friends of the Earth's transport campaign

Here's how we are working towards a truly sustainable transport system

Friends of the Earth wants to see a transport system that works for people, for communities and for the environment. We want to see less traffic on our roads and the aviation industry paying fair taxes and contributing less to climate change.

Roadbuilding doesn't work

Building roads and widening motorways will not answer our transport problems. They've been tried in the past, and failed. Roads are extremely expensive and the money could be better spent in other ways, such as on improving public transport or providing safe routes to schools.

Real choices

We want governments to invest more in giving people real alternatives to having to use their car so much – better public transport and safer streets for cycling and walking. This is a much better way of spending our money than on building roads.

Greener cars

We want people to buy and use cars that pollute less. This involves getting manufacturers to build fuel-efficient vehicles, giving car buyers more information and tax incentives, and encouraging the use of biofuels.

Fair tax for aviation

Airlines should cover the real cost of the damage they cause to the environment by paying fair taxes. We shouldn't expand airports if it will mean a greater contribution to climate change.

Contact Friends of the Earth for more information about our campaign for a better transport system and how to join us.

Full campaign information, briefings and reports are on our website: www.foe.co.uk

Transport directory

Aviation Environment Federation

Information about the environmental, economic and social impacts of flying.
info@aef.org.uk
www.aef.org.uk
020 7248 2223

Carplus

Information on how to set up or join a car-club.
www.carplus.org.uk
0113 234 9299

CTC

The national cyclists' organisation.
cycling@ctc.org.uk
www.ctc.org.uk
0870 873 0060

Department for Transport

Government department dealing with all transport issues.
www.dft.gov.uk
020 7944 8300

Energy Saving Trust

Provides grants towards buying low carbon cars and has information on where to buy biodiesel.
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
0800 512 012

Environmental Transport Association

Promoting greener motoring, plus full range of services from roadside recovery to home rescue.
www.eta.co.uk
0800 212810

Friends of the Earth Scotland

Campaigns on transport and for environmental justice in Scotland.
www.foe-scotland.org.uk
0131 554 9977

Living Streets

Campaign group working to create safe, vibrant and healthy streets for all.
info@livingstreets.org.uk
www.livingstreets.org.uk
020 7820 1010

RAC Foundation

Organisation promoting environmental, economic, mobility and safety issues relating to use of motor vehicles.
www.racfoundation.org
020 7747 3445

Sustrans

For advice on safe routes to schools.
info@sustrans.org.uk
www.sustrans.org.uk
0845 113 00 65

TRANSform Scotland

Campaign and information organisation working on sustainable transport in Scotland.
info@transformscotland.org.uk
www.transformscotland.org.uk
0131 467 7714

Transport 2000

Campaign and information organisation working on sustainable transport in England and Wales.
www.transport2000.org.uk
020 7613 0743

TransportDirect

Government website providing public transport information to help plan journeys.
www.transportdirect.info

Vehicle Certification Agency

Government agency providing information about cars, fuel efficiency and carbon dioxide emissions.
www.vca.gov.uk
0117 951 5151

Friends of the Earth makes life better for people by inspiring solutions to environmental problems

Friends of the Earth is:

- the UK's most influential national environmental campaigning organisation**
- the most extensive environmental network in the world, with around 1 million supporters across five continents and more than 70 national organisations worldwide**
- a unique network of campaigning local groups, working in more than 200 communities throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland**
- dependent on individuals for over 90 per cent of its income.**



Friends of the Earth

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