

## **Wheelsuckers Podcast: Cycling for All with Isabelle Clement**

Isabelle Clement 0:00

Hi, I'm Isabelle Clement, and you're listening to the Wheelsuckers podcast.

Alex Davis 0:45

Hi, I'm your captain Alex; and I was raised on a tandem and I'm an ex cycling industry goof and I'm with my Stoker ...

Jenni Gwiazdowski 0:53

Jenni, stokin' here, I am the director of the London bike kitchen. I am the author of How to build a bike and also Chair of the women of colour cycling collective.

Alex Davis 1:07

Today we talk to Isabelle Clement about non standard cycles; why saying 'bicycle' is banned and listen to the Wheels for Wellbeing anthem with us.

Jenni Gwiazdowski 1:17

Hello, hello, we have a guest with us in our studio in the ether. Would you like to introduce yourself?

Isabelle Clement 1:26

Sure. So, I'm Isabelle, I am the director of Wheels for Wellbeing. But what else about me? I am in my mid-50s. I'm French born and I'm a disabled cyclist. I've been disabled all my life, and, well, other than my cycle, my handcycle, I also use a car some of the time, a wheelchair where the environment is nice and smooth, and a crutch to walk a few steps as well. But my favourite mobility aid is my handcycle.

Jenni Gwiazdowski 2:03

I love your hand cycle as well. We'll have to share pictures.

Alex Davis 2:06

I was gonna say for those who might not know what handcycle is. Could you describe it?

Isabelle Clement 2:13

Yes, absolutely. So, my hand cycle is basically a three wheeled, uum, so, it's a trike, I guess, but it's not pedalled with my feet. I hand crank, I use hand cranks, so I pedal with my hands. In actual fact, I sit in my wheelchair, and I add to the front of it something called a "clip-on hand cycle". It looks a bit like a unicycle, I guess, but it attaches to my wheelchair and it lifts me off the little front wheels of my wheelchair and I've become a trike user.

Jenni Gwiazdowski 2:50

So, it's a, it's like an add on. It's not a completely separate trike.

Isabelle Clement 2:55

No, because what do you do when you get to the other end? If you need your wheelchair?

Jenni Gwiazdowski 2:59

Yeah.

Isabelle Clement 3:00

And you've left it at home. So, if you're doing a circuit, I guess and, and you come back home, you might not need to unclip in the meantime, but I prefer it, as I don't have a one-piece handcycle - they're big beasts and I've got nowhere to put one. So, yes, I've got a two piece, wheelchair plus clip on, and it's got e-assist, it's got battery on the front, and therefore the world's my oyster. I can do hills, long distances, and I love it.

Alex Davis 3:32

That's amazing.

Jenni Gwiazdowski 3:34

I'm just remembering the time when we went to go, um, play around with some of the bikes. Sorry, I shouldn't say bike! That's one of the things I wanted to talk about! Just caught myself!

Isabelle Clement 3:44

Very good!

So, let's, let's talk about that then. So, a lot of people we use the word bicycle when actually we should be saying cycle.

Yes

Jenni Gwiazdowski 3:56

And why, why is this change necessary? Why do we need to update our vocabulary?

Isabelle Clement 4:01

Super important. In fact, I let bike go, it's not so bad. Bicycle is the one that I really object to people using as a byword for cycle. So the problem with bicycle is that it's, it is a very handy type of cycle, but it is definitely not the only type of cycle that can be used for getting about. And if we say, you know, we're planning for bicycles, we're, you know, if we use bicycle as a byword for cycling, we are basically using what I would quite happily call ableist language, ie, we're making it sound like the only way to cycle is to bicycle. So, if we say, cycling, cycles, we are being inclusive and we're not confirming this sort of myth in people's heads that if you can't cycle a bicycle you can't cycle, because that there's nothing further from the truth. So yes, there are all sorts of cycles, there are, as I just mentioned, handcycles, there are tricycles there are tandems, there are different types of all of those ...

Jenni Gwiazdowski 5:17

recumbent tricycles ... side-by-side

Isabelle Clement 5:21

Recumbent hand cycles, side by side tandems, wheelchair tandems, you name it they exist and ... I mean I'm, I said I'm in my mid 50s and I've been disabled pretty much all my life and I never thought cycling was for me. We thought, my parents tried me on a bicycle when I was 10 that didn't work; balance wasn't going to happen, my feet weren't gonna stay on the pedal, and they only thought of cycling as being done on a bicycle for a kid and, and for anybody, and therefore they never tried anything else, which is a real shame really. I mean it's, it's okay, I mean, I discovered handcycling in my mid 30s but thank goodness I did!

Jenni Gwiazdowski 6:04

How did you, how did you discover it in your 30s?

Isabelle Clement 6:07

I was actually in the process of looking for a mobility scooter, because I wanted to keep up with my child who'd got his own little first bicycle, we'd got him his first two wheels, and he'd taken to it no problems, so I wanted to be able to take him and his bike to the park. But if I had, as we used to go to the park with me in the wheelchair, him on my lap and or toddling about alongside me and that was absolutely fine, but once he was free on these two wheels he would have disappeared up the hill down the other side and I would have been stuck at the bottom of the hill in my wheelchair. A little kid will ride quite happily across grass up hills down hills etc. You cannot do that in in a standard wheelchair. So, I thought (I didn't think of a clip on handcycle) I thought, okay well either I give up taking my kid to the park or I stop him having his bike in the park, neither of which was what I wanted to do, or I need to equip myself with another kind of aid to my mobility and I started looking around for the right kind of mobility scooter. Which, in my mid 30s, I really wasn't keen on doing; I didn't particularly think I was gonna love the look of it but, hey, needs must... and luckily it's actually quite complex to find the right one, or any, any kind of mobility aid. You've got to do a lot of research, really think it through, and mobility scooters are big heavy things: how was I going to get it in the back of a car? All that - did I need to change my car, did I need a three wheeled mobility scooter or a four wheeled one, whatever. So in amongst all of that time spent researching, and umming and ahing about it, I came across a picture of a clip on handcycle. I can't remember where, but luckily, I did and then I got a rep to come and show me and the rest is history really. I discovered that, actually I wasn't thinking of it as cycling at all, actually, at the time, but I discovered I could have better access to local parks and to green spaces and etc, by changing my wheelchair into a handcycle, by just adding this thing on the front. I was lucky I could afford it because these things are not cheap. But I invested in my first one - it wasn't e-assist at the time, it was still a grand and a half, and, yeah. So, I started off discovering handcycling without knowing really, I just was able to you know access the hills and I could go across slightly rougher terrain like grass or whatever, and keep up with my kid! Then I got much more involved in Wheels for Wellbeing a bit later on. And I then started to realise that even though I had some kind of cycle and I wasn't really at all using it as others use a bike, as in I wasn't using it ...

Jenni Gwiazdowski 9:14

like a transfer?

Isabelle Clement 9:15

Yeah, exactly. It was just a leisure, sort of, mobility aid, in traffic free spaces. And I would always drive it to the edge of places I used to feel OK using it, as I say, parks

or, you know, very, very traffic light or traffic free environments. Then I yeah, as I say, I became involved much more with Wheels for Wellbeing.

Alex Davis 9:42

Yeah, and for those listening who might not know, could you explain Wheels for Wellbeing?

Isabelle Clement 9:47

Yes, really! Basics! Absolutely! Thank you for that! So, Wheels for Wellbeing is the organisation I run and I head and it is a charity, and it is a cycling charity, run and led by Disabled people who cycle. It's a bit of a left field sort of organisation. As most people think disabled people can't cycle, they really would not imagine that they have such a thing as a Disability cycling organisation. But there it is, that's Wheels for Wellbeing. And it is an organisation which does two main things. One, well, it's based in South London, and in South London, it provides actual opportunities for Disabled people to realise they can cycle. So, we have three places in South London, where we hold a lot of those non-standard cycles I described earlier, the tandems, the trikes, the hand bikes, etc., so that Disabled people can overcome that first barrier to cycling, which they experienced otherwise, which is that they don't even know it exists, and they wouldn't just go and spend a grand and a half, three grand, five grand, to buy something that they may not be able to get on with, or they don't know that they will be able to get on with, and they may have nowhere to store it. So, people can come several times a week to our various venues to try cycling, away from traffic, so we've removed that barrier as well, at venues which are fully accessible. So, Wheels for Wellbeing does that as its first mission, its first activity. And we've been doing that since 2007. And then, when I started running the organisation in 2011, (I've come from a Disability background, from the Disability sector, and I take a very rights-based approach to the work I do, always ...)

Alex Davis 11:54

rights ... spaced? right space?

Isabelle Clement 11:57

... so you know, meaning that I look at ...

Alex Davis 12:02

Oh, Rights Based, sorry.

Isabelle Clement 12:06

Through the microphone down the over the ether. Yes.

Jenni Gwiazdowski 12:11

This is like you know, social justice work. This is social justice.

Isabelle Clement 12:14

Exactly. So, we I don't look at what we do as Wheels, at Wheels for Wellbeing as being a "nice activity" for "nice Disabled people", I look at it as, basically removing the barriers or bringing back the right of Disabled people to be physically active, to experience cycling and the thrill of it and all the benefits of it. It's not just a leisure or - I mean, it is a leisure activity for plenty, but I don't look at it as it's enough to just provide it, out of sight out of mind. So, we started actually being an organisation which is fighting for rights, the rights of Disabled people to access cycling, and, and practice it in, as often as and, you know, in whatever way they wish to do so. So, we realised that people had no idea, one, that Disabled people did cycle and, two that, that they were things that needed to be done to the cycling environment in order that Disabled people be included, have the opportunity and the right to cycle. And it's not about the person's body. It's not about their impairment, it's not about any of that, it's about has, has the cycling environment been provided in such a way that disabled people have equal access to it. So, Wheels for Wellbeing is an advocacy organisation, and we see ourselves as the voice of Disabled people who cycle.

Jenni Gwiazdowski 13:48

Love it.

Alex Davis 13:48

It blew my mind when I first learned about it, about Wheels for Wellbeing, because I had no idea. And the cycling industry just doesn't really focus on that and showcase it enough. And I caught, I catch myself saying bicycles all the time.

Isabelle Clement 14:07

Sure.

Alex Davis 14:07

Yeah. And it's, it's one of those things where you're like, I need to do better. And, well, you know, if you're listening and you haven't heard of Wheels for Wellbeing, go check 'em out. Yeah. You know, like you said Isabelle, people just think you have to ride, you know, you say a bike in everybody's mind just pitches, a two wheeled bike

Isabelle Clement 14:26

That's it, that's it.

Alex Davis 14:27

I think is so many people I know, able-bodied friends will even say "I can't cycle and cycling is not for me and I can't ride a bike". And I just think, yeah, there's so many other amazing ways to cycle.

Jenni Gwiazdowski 14:40

Yeah, but also we don't create the environment to facilitate that, like you said, like our infrastructure is not made for even people to ride bikes, like it's, people have to fend for themselves, so you can't like, if, if I'm having trouble riding a bike somewhere then you can imagine how like someone with a mobility or like a trike or something like that, I'm like "you're not gonna fit through spaces" or ...

Isabelle Clement 15:09

That's it, that's it

Jenni Gwiazdowski 15:10

and that was, that's another question is, um, so what kinds of changes need to be made to infrastructure to make it more inclusive, make sure everyone can ride?

Isabelle Clement 15:23

Yes, so in a way it's very simple, but obviously, it requires rethinking how we plan for cycling, but the main thing is back to "we need to stop thinking about the bicycle", so instead of teaching engineers that they have to cater for the geometry of the bicycle with two-wheels and a slightly wobbly person on top of it (which is what they've been taught for decades to plan for) we need to equip them to understand and to plan for the widest, the longest cycle with the widest turning circle etc. And then if they do that, then all of us can cycle in comfort and, and, hopefully in safety, with a bit of protection etc. But the main thing is to start thinking about cycles in the widest possible sense and that doesn't just help Disabled people who cycle "non-standard

cycles”, as we call them, but it also helps sort out the issues which parents experience when they wanting to cycle with little children, whether they've got them in a trailer behind them or in a cargo trike or a cargo bike or the little child is cycling alongside them for a bit more safety... that's wider than just one bicyclist, and also then on from that, also solves the problem of the white vans on our streets, you know, if more gear, more stuff can be moved around by cycle, because again, trailers, cargo bikes are totally available, and they can move amazing amounts of stuff. But if the infrastructure is not wide enough for those wider cycles, longer cycles, heavier cycles to cycle in, in safety then we stay with our "well I have to use a car, as a disabled person" or "have to use a car, as a parent" or "have to use a car or a van, as a trader". So, by rethinking... by thinking “Beyond the Bicycle”- by thinking about what now government in its own guidance calls the "cycle design vehicle", the cycles with the widest and longest measurements - then we're geared up for all sorts of people to cycle, and also we're giving a much more forgiving environment for people. You know, if they are on two wheels and they are a bit wobbly, whether they're novice cyclists or, they get distracted by something and they have a bit of a wobble... if we've planned for wider cycles, there's a bit more room for everybody to become a confident cyclist and not to be intimidated in the space. So, Width is definitely a huge part of it. You know, we want more protected cycle lanes, but again, if there's a curb, or some wands or some armadillos (or whatever) on the ground, to define the space for cyclists, it needs to be, you know, be giving us a wide enough amount of space along the lane.

Alex Davis 18:53

And that's some work that Wheels for Wellbeing does? Do you give like advice to infrastructure planners to city planners?

We do, and we have collated all our knowledge into a guide called [The Guide to Inclusive Cycling](#). And that's available for free on our website. But better than that, we've also got ourselves involved with government, with, when they were reviewing the cycle design guidance (which is very sexily called LTN 120). That's what it's called! But people in the know know where to go to find it. It's on the government's website. It's was launched last July, and we were at the table when it was being reviewed. So, we're pretty pleased with the result as we were able to influence that. So, not only for that government guidance to be very much talking about the cycle design vehicle and telling, telling people to plan for those dimensions, but also to talk about limiting camber, for example, or cross-fall, whatever engineers call it, which is the way, you know,

Jenni Gwiazdowski 20:00

The side of the road?

Isabelle Clement 20:02

It's the way that engineers deal with drainage, often, so a road is very rarely completely flat, it slightly curves towards the footway, either side of the road/the carriageway, so that there's no not big pools of water... of course nobody wants big pools of water on the the carriageway, but if you use that too much, if you make your road too rounded in the middle, you know, up to the middle.... most bicyclists don't actually realise that it's an issue. Drivers, obviously of cars, don't realise it's an issue, but tricyclists, anybody who cycles on three wheels?...

Alex Davis 21:04

Yeah, me and my dad fell off. We're on a we're on a tandem tricycle, in Wales. We went to Tandem Mania a lot. But we, yeah, we were cycling on this road and the road was so cambered, so we we just kept falling off and we couldn't work out why.

Yeah, the only safe place in that case is in the middle of the road, which of course with a lot of traffic is a bit of an issue.

Yeah, especially in rural, rural Wales, you can imagine, drivers do not want to see a tandem tricycle in the middle of the road, which is the only way we could. yeah, yeah.

Jenni Gwiazdowski 21:24

Can I ask a question about, so a lot of the outrage in London about the LTNs by taxi drivers is they're using the Disabled people excuse like, "what if you have a Disabled person that you have to deliver them straight to their doorstep?" What do you make of this?

Isabelle Clement 21:46

So it's very, well that particular thing you're just mentioning, taxi drivers doing that, is extremely irritating. Excuse me, but they are rarely the Disabled person's friend, in general as a profession - there are some totally lovely taxi drivers. But I have not yet met a single Disabled person who doesn't say "taxi drivers don't ever want to take us", you know, are you joking that they are our best friends suddenly? So, they can just, yeah, stop that.

But there is an issue. There are a lot of Disabled people who are extremely reliant on either their own cars or other people's cars to get them places and door to door transport is crucial for a high number of Disabled people. For me, I've realised that actually cycling is best because I can cycle from my door to the door of my

destination much more easily than I, for example, can use my wheelchair, and I get the exercise and it's far more fun. But a lot of Disabled people are not equipped who, you know, Disabled people who find mobility along pavements difficult or, you know, who cannot just walk down, easily, down to the bus stop or over to the tube station....

Jenni Gwiazdowski 23:08

or if there's a car parked on the pavement

Isabelle Clement 23:10

Yeah, all sorts of things. Basically pavements, I mean there's, there will always be a small number of, of people who are either Disabled people or people who are unwell, who have an illness which is very complex and very extensive, who will need to be picked up right outside their front door and dropped off right outside the door of their destination because they will not have the energy to do any more than that, and unless they can be picked up and dropped off right outside they will not be able to do that journey. So, that's a small number but a real number of people, but for the, for a lot of us, if we were equipped with the right to mobility equipment like, you know, proper active wheelchairs, proper outdoors lightweight, very manoeuvrable wheelchairs, and there were really good quality pavements, unencumbered or non-cluttered, not cracked and not sort of narrowed down by, yeah, cars parked on them, or whatever, or driveways which make them like a roller coaster rather than a smooth surface... if all of that happened, was in existence, then people, the majority of Disabled people, even with mobility impairments, would find it okay to be able to walk or wheel, particularly wheel, out a little bit further, and actually it's good for us in terms of, you know, we are being denied the opportunity to be physically active and therefore we're dying slowly on our bums. I mean, I'm sorry, but that's what's happening.

Jenni Gwiazdowski 24:48

The so-called mobility aids or "immobility scooters"

Isabelle Clement 24:53

Mobility scooters, I call them, "immobility scooters", yes, because you are sitting there and you're pushing a button. And, as again, for a tiny number of people that is absolutely the right thing and the best way to be able to be at least a bit outdoors etc but a lot of people would be able to cycle, but will never have the opportunity, so long as the prices are so high - they are extremely high! - and also it's so scary to cycle on the roads.

So it's a real sort of catch 22: without local low traffic neighbourhoods. I mean I've got a bit of a split personality on LTNs: I'm increasingly loving them, but at the beginning my Disabled driver's heart was bleeding at the sight of all my shortcuts.... (I know London so well, people were saying "Oh, have you done the Knowledge?", you know, because I knew all the shortcuts) ... and I have now realised I've had to kind of reassess what I was doing, I was as a, you know, as a privileged driver, basically, I was taking my pollution, you know, the exhaust of my car, all the way through people's residential streets, where people live, and I was expecting to be able to cut through everywhere to avoid the traffic. What else do you do as a driver? You like to avoid traffic, you don't like to sit there and take loads of time to move nowhere. So you know, literally where I live in Lambeth, literally I'm on the edge of one LTN, that's the Streatham Hill LTN, and then all the way down to my work, which is the other side of Brixton, I've got the Tulse Hill LTN, the Brixton LTN, and at first I was thinking "Oh my God", you know, "This is, this is terrible", you know, all my shortcuts!!... But what it's meant (because I'm equipped with my handcycle) it's actually meant that I've actually been able to cycle way more and therefore. Particularly since COVID and lockdown and, you know, we've I've not been going actually to work very much to the office, we've been working from home, but therefore I've actually done so little exercise! If I hadn't been able to cycle I would have really started developing some new health conditions, like a lot of people have. But what actually the low traffic neighbourhoods have done for me, one, when I do want to go back to the office, it's quicker and it's safer to cycle to work. But also, far more than that, it's enabled me to link up all the way up to cycleways which had been there, which had been put in by TfL, Transport for London, or local boroughs but I had none round me. I didn't have a superhighway, cycle superhighway, near me, I didn't have a quiet way near me. All I had was, you know, very busy residential streets. And now, well since this time last year basically, I've started being able to go not only to my hospital appointments either at Kings Hospital in Denmark Hill or St Thomas' hospital up by the river (but that's very occasional that I have one of those) but otherwise, I'm really enjoying going up through/into central London, or out towards East London, you know, Greenwich, I've been to...

Jenni Gwiazdowski 28:17

All on your bike to those places ... oh, gosh, sorry [laughter]

Isabelle Clement 28:18

That's OK [laughter] All on my handcycle. Absolutely! And that's been amazing, instead of just, sort of finding a few backroads just down to the other side of Brixton and back again, I never used to wander off and dare explore new places because I was really worried about traffic and not knowing the right routes. And now with so many low traffic neighbourhoods everywhere (which I know are problematic for many other Disabled people) but for me, they've been fantastic.

So, Taxi drivers are not the people to advocate for us, we are quite happy, quite able to advocate for ourselves, thank you very much. But, Disabled people are just like any other big group were very, very diverse actually. But the majority of Disabled people, like everybody else, don't realise they could cycle. And it's expensive, and it takes a while to re-organise your life and your equipment and the storage of your equipment, etc, to make it a reality for day to day transport. So, I will not say that LTNs are magical things for all Disabled people, they definitely are not. They're not, probably, quite as dramatically horrendous as they are sometimes portrayed. But they will have created some issues for a number of individuals and those issues need to be discussed and mitigated, because the last thing we want to do is to have better environments for active travel which actually traps a small minority of people in their homes and makes them unable to travel anymore. So I think it's very much about local authorities, local neighbourhood groups etc having conversations, not saying it's all bad or it's all good, but, you know, really identifying local residents with for whom it is an issue, preferably before putting the LTNs in, and saying OK, well how are we going to mitigate this? It could be as simple as, you know, finally putting a cut-curb to a junction where there isn't one, which is what stops the person accessing.... I've got a local chemist which appeared about, about a year ago or whatever, two years ago, which is literally 200 yards from me, 200 metres from my house. And if I use the pavement on one side, I can't go, I can't wheel there in my wheelchair. If I use the pavement on the other side, it's absolutely fine. But, you know, how ridiculous is that? If it was a super busy road, and I didn't have a way of crossing it (which is not the case) but if it was, and I was stuck to using one side of the pavement, literally I could not go to my local chemist on in my wheelchair. So, you know it can be as simple as that. It's just because there are about six or seven driveways along the way and they're really steep. Yeah, I don't know why. So you know, something could, you know, those pavements could be flat... made flat for pedestrians, and the cars could go up the steep bit because they've got an engine, that's what they for...! Why make pedestrians go up and down and up and down and up and down again? Most pedestrians don't realise they're doing that. If you're in a wheelchair, it's a nightmare, it can be really a barrier. So, it can be as simple as saying, "aha, we will make this bit of your local neighbourhood accessible to you". And then that might mean that actually you're able to do a little bit, you know, if that person is happy and is equipped, has got a good wheelchair to be able to do that 200 yards, whatever, down to the local shop, but they might actually be really pleased that suddenly for the first time, they don't have to take a car or wait for somebody to pick them up to go 200 yards down the road. Because the you know, it may well be that the barrier wasn't that there's too much traffic, but simply that there is not a cut-curb, a dropped-curb at the end of the footway, which means they can go. So if you can't go to your local shop, just because there is no cut-curb at the end of the block, and suddenly people say "oh, we're going to lower the traffic on the street AND we're going to repair all these ridiculous accessibility fails, which we've now realised exist, you know, there could well be a lot of older people, Disabled people who are very pro LTNs, but it's got to go hand in hand. You can't just do the easy stuff and put a couple of planters. You've got to talk to your local residents,

bring them with you and learn from them what their experience of mobility is in their local area.

Alex Davis 33:08

Yep, made me think, I'm not sure if you saw that tweet, going around about Soho and yeah, say you know, there were in teenager's wheelchair.

Isabelle Clement 33:17

Yep. Tiny wheelchair.

Alex Davis 33:18

Yeah, yeah, still couldn't navigate, you know, the pavements in the streets.

Isabelle Clement 33:24

No, no. So you know, it's fine to put tables and chairs in the middle of the road if you've got free pavements to move along. But if you put tables and chairs on the pavement as well as in the middle of the road and there has been no, I mean I cannot even start to comprehend that, that the local authority would let that happen, but anyway it did. It has now met with Transport for All and they have a commitment now for them to properly, you know, make proper use of their licencing authority and duties and regain control over the pavements but, I mean, this is not the Wild West for goodness' sake, it's central London.

Alex Davis 34:02

You think, right, yeah, you'd think, central London, you know, a place, you know, tourism and you just want people there, you want people being able to move around, and yeah,

Jenni Gwiazdowski 34:13

They should close the roads. I still don't understand why they keep the roads open. Force people to move their tables onto the pavement and then you, just, why are we letting cars in to central London?

Alex Davis 34:26

Yeah, just, it ...

Isabelle Clement 34:27

You do need, you know, you need to be able to have refuse collections and you need emergency services. And a few Disabled people will need to be driven through and to be to be dropped off or to or to park, but that's still a very small amount of traffic in a big capital city. So yeah, we need to get a grip. And then many more people who currently do not yet cycle, who, many of whom will be Disabled people but there are plenty of others, will start, you know, it will be then worth equipping themselves. For me, for example, now that I know I can access, places much further away than just my work (two and a half miles away) it's absolutely worth my while, you know, thinking about investing in an even better bike - or cycle (d'you see?!? - I'm using "bike"!), and, and, you know, I need to sort out storage rather than have it in the house and ask somebody else to move it out of the house... at the moment it's a bit of a nightmare, but anyway... Because now I can see that it is something I can use daily.

My poor old car, which is very old anyway... I've had to replace the battery because it was dying on its wheels, because it wasn't getting the use... I mean, 10-15 years ago, I would have been the first one to be behind all the other people who are saying LTNs are terrible because I would have said "if I can't drive I can't go", and it's taken me that long and being involved in an organisation as focused on cycling and Disability as Wheels for Wellbeing is, to realise how much I could really cycle, as a mode of transport. The pouring rain still puts me off, but, other than that, I've worked out over the winter how to equip myself, how to manage to get lights on my handcycle (it's not the easiest) but I've worked out how to do cycling in the dark, now I'm not quite so shy about cycling in the dark. I've worked out how to cycle in the cold (which again, trust me if you're not moving your legs, you get really cold!) but I've worked out how to equip myself - what to wear to be able to cycle through the winter - it's only the worst of the rain now that really puts me off, drizzle I'll deal with, so it's only that, you know, on those days where the rain is absolutely torrential that I might go back to saying "I'm going in my car", because I don't like sitting in a bucket of wet, thank you very much. Yeah, but other than that I am so pleased that I can be physically active so much more of the time and I'm not polluting, you know, my own atmosphere, let alone other people's neighbourhoods. And Disabled people, just like everybody else, have got a green conscious conscience as well as, you know, everything else, but it takes quite a while to get yourself equipped. I mean, think of parents and cargo bikes; it should be so easy, but no, it's not! Lot of couples, even those who cycled everywhere and didn't have a car; they have their first kid and they invest in a car because they don't know the kit exists (the cargo cycles); they don't have the space to store them; they don't have the money to invest in them; they don't realise that the upkeep (once you've invested), actually it's very cheap to run, but, you know, it's a lot of money to find to start with!

Alex Davis 37:59

It's storage as well, isn't it?

Isabelle Clement 38:02

Storage, absolutely, yeah, monsters, yeah! But you know, if they've managed to store a car, well, we need to move some of that car storage off our residential streets and turn it into cycle storage. That's doable. But we need a lot of us having fewer cars. So, we're not there yet, but things are changing and things are getting better. And I think attitudes are moving, so for us, convincing Disabled people that they can cycle and not sounding preachy and not sounding like we're saying "You've got to cycle it", absolutely not, but we're saying "Look as a way of staying fit, of getting more exercise, of moving door to door", it's actually....

Jenni Gwiazdowski 38:43

Giving yourself freedom as well

Isabelle Clement 38:45

Giving yourself freedom, the fun, the endorphins, all of that, it can be done, and yeah, so that, that's what Wheels for Wellbeing is all about.

Alex Davis: 40:28

Alex Davis: 40:30

I was going to say, leading into, not sounding preachy, but singing!!

Isabelle Clement: 40:33

Ooh, Yes!

Alex Davies: 40:34

Do you like that, do you like that segway??

Isabelle Clement: 40:37

Oh, Lovely!

Alex Davies: 40:40

We're not, I think we might play a clip, but we love, we love the Wheels for Wellbeing Anthem... if you can tell our listeners more about it ...

Isabelle Clement: 40:49 Yes, so, that was such fun! So, my other passion, when I'm not cycling, I love singing and I sing in a couple of choirs and..

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 40:57

What part do you sing?

Isabelle Clement: 41:00

Alto

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 41:01

You're alto? Yeah, alto power!

Isabelle Clement: 41:02

Alto, well, alto some of the time, and, well, tenor even more often

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 41:08

So, yeah, I'm in the same boat as you, I'm second alto. I'm really low.

Isabelle Clement: 41:12

Yeah, there you are! So, with my singing friends, we've called it the "[Beyond the Bicycle](#)" anthem, and we have done a remake of Queen's "Bicycle Races" song, and if you can play a little clip that would be so lovely. Basically, we've just rewritten the words, it was great fun, and my choir friends were game on for recording it; we then put a little video together which was filmed at the Herne Hill Velodrome with all of our fabulous cycles.

Alex Davies: 41:47

Shall we, we'll play little clip for it now

*Beyond the Bicycle Anthem [With thanks to Queen & Freddie Mercury]*

*Words: Wheels for Wellbeing*

*Arrangement: Melanie Harrold*

*Bicycle, tricycle, handcycle*

*I want to ride my bicycle, tricycle, handcycle*

*I want to ride my recumbent I want to ride my trike*

*I want to ride my side-by-side I want to ride it where I like*

*You say "steps", I say "ramp",*

*you say "stop", I say "go"*

*You say "dismount",*

*Hey man, racing's just not my scene*

*And cycling is easier than walking!*

*You say "walk", I say "ride"*

*Rumble strip? No thanks!!*

*Eyes bright above those bars, my bike wants to reach the stars*

*All I wanna do is...*

*Bicycle, tricycle, handcycle*

*I want to ride my bicycle, tricycle hand cycle*

*I want to ride my recumbent, I want to ride my trike*

*I want to ride my cargo bike, I want to ride my -*

*Bicycles are not the only cycle*

*So rethink who can cycle, oh yeah!*

*Mums dads and tots, they'll be riding today*

*Wheelchair users, everyone, oh yeah!*

*On your marks, get set, go!*

*Bicycle, tricycle, handcycle*

*Bicycle, tricycle, handcycle*

*Bicycle, tricycle, handcycle*

*I want to get my cycling rights!*

*(Loads of bicycle bells)*

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 43:57

Cool! I love, I love the anthem, I mean, I love choir, I love choral singing, I, was it a group effort to write the lyrics?

Isabelle Clement: 44:08

I ended up writing them. Once I looked at them, I thought, actually, this is quite easy! So "bicycle, bicycle, bicycle," it wasn't difficult to just change that, because tricycle is the same number of syllables! And handcycle as well! Oh, it was fabulously easy, so no, it was such fun. So, I rewrote the word, and our amazingly talented choir director arranged the parts, and the whole choir was very happy to, to join in, and record it. We went to recording studios in Greenwich. It was such fun!

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 44:48

So good!

Alex Davies: 44:50

How can people support Wheels for Wellbeing?

Isabelle Clement: 44:53

So, if people are inspired to help Wheels for Wellbeing, to support us, there are plenty of ways you can do that!

If you live in south London and you would like to volunteer at any of our cycling sessions, helping us with getting our inclusive cycling sessions ready, there's a lot of moving of big heavy bikes at the Herne Hill Velodrome or at Croydon, at the Croydon Sports Arena, or at Ladywell Day Centre (well, at Ladywell Day Centre we haven't restarted the sessions there yet but we should hopefully restart in the summer, in July, very soon). Herne Hill Velodrome and Croydon we have restarted, post-COVID, so that's all cool! Volunteering is something that people can do for us.

If you don't have time, or the time that you have isn't at the time that our sessions are running (all our session times are on our website) you could do other bits of support: you could potentially, if you're the kind of person who loves your sportives, or your mad challenges, cycling challenges or otherwise, you could, if you were so minded, fundraise for us, potentially, get your friends to support you to do something mad. You could, if you work for an employer who's got, so your charity committee, for example, and they occasionally support local charities, then please by all means nominate us, tell them about the amazing work that we do. Basically we are always needing more funding, sadly. People have often given us money for buying the cycles, because they realise they're expensive, and we are very grateful for that. But we only have so much storage for the cycles. So though we do occasionally have to replace them, we pretty much have what we need. But what we do need on a regular basis is funding to pay our wonderful instructors, so they can be with us supporting Disabled people to cycle, week in week out. And it's a job, it's, it's a very experienced role, and we need, we want to be able to provide a good service and safe cycling sessions. It also costs a lot of money to maintain our cycles, so our mechanic, fantastic person, needs paying on a regular basis because otherwise he's going to have to find a job somewhere else! So any bits of fundraising you can do, that'd be amazing!

And then otherwise, if you're an inspired to, say you're part of a cycle club or a campaigning group, local cycling campaign organisation or group, yeah, have a read of our Guide to Inclusive Cycling, and maybe take on some of messages and look at what how you're talking about cycling. Are you talking about "bicycling" all the time, or...

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 47:57

Like the Americans

Alex Davies: 48:00

Bi-Cy-Cling!!

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 48:02

So weird!!

Isabelle Clement: 48:03

Oh, I know! And, you know, if you put out posters and images of cycling, can you include a trike on the bottom or the side of the poster, not always just a tiny child on the trike, because most people understand that children use trikes, but adults also, you know, all the cool recumbents or the handcycles, etc, so that when people see

representations of cycling they don't immediately exclude themselves because they don't see, they only see bicycles, and so that's another thing in the visual representation. So, there is plenty you could be helping with and it doesn't have to be giving us money: it could be about giving us a time, or just rethinking your own campaigning and the messaging that you're, you're putting out there.

And also, if you're campaigning hard for LTNs, for example, for good cycling infrastructure, by all means make contact with local Disabled people. Don't be disheartened or, or worried about talking to Disabled people about cycling infrastructure. In the end, good cycling infrastructure is good mobility infrastructure, and Disabled people will often benefit just as much; but they may never have thought of the fact that, you know, if we had protected cycle lanes, for example, on main, big busy roads, if they do use a mobility scooter or they use a wheelchair, that they may be able to benefit from using the cycle lane - which we call a mobility lane - rather than struggle along the pavements, which are so rubbish. And also Visually Impaired people are often a little a bit worried about cyclists, but actually the more protected infrastructure there is (good infrastructure, on the carriageway), the fewer cyclists will be tempted to whizz along the pavement.

So actually, I think, I'm really keen that we all managed to work together, to build a consensus for good cycling and other mobility infrastructure on the carriageway, as well as pushing for improvements to pavements and footways for pedestrians, whether older people or Visually Impaired people, or people who use wheelchairs and the parents pushing the buggies etc. on the pavements. And so, yep, that's it. I think we can all work together, but we have to hear each, other listen to each other, learn from each other, and yet just get off Twitter and all our high horses, and just meet our neighbours

Alex Davies: 50:34

Get off Twitter! Everybody listen: get off Twitter!

Isabelle Clement: 50:38

Absolutely! For everybody's sake! actually, I've found my ... I actually quite love Twitter,

Alex Davies: 50:44

I was going to say!

Isabelle Clement: 50:45

Yeah, so Twitter's all right, actually, I take that back, but I hate Next Door. NextDoor is my newest pet-hate. It's so vile, sorry, so many people being so...

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 50:54

NextDoor? what is that, I don't know, yeah, your local?

Alex Davies: 50:55

It's an app, isn't it, to try to connect with your neighbours,

Isabelle Clement: 51:00

With your neighbours, potentially

Alex Davies: 51:01

It's like a Cursed Facebook, where you just get connected with, yeah, ... It's not great.

Isabelle Clement: 51:09

It's very hard to have a, you know, sane conversation on there ... but, you know, the more sane people go on there, I guess, the better, but, yeah. Sorry, "sane" is a very bad word to use, just "non-confrontational". Yeah, it's a bit scary on there. But all social media, they evolve, and as they evolve they might get better. Low traffic Neighbourhoods have not done very much for unifying neighbourhoods, actually, mainly because they were a bit too sudden. I don't think there's anything wrong with them per se, but too many of them sprung up all around the place, because the government asked local authorities to do so, but they were a little bit of a shock to the system.

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 51:53

Yeah, just change is scary

Isabelle Clement: 51:54

Change, and a lot of it at the same time... very scary. So, people like to be heard, and they don't like to be faced with fait accompli, and a complete change of scene. So, yeah, we'll hopefully survive it, and we won't lose all of them to people taking councils to court and winning, hopefully, because that would be a disaster, that would be throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Cool! So lovely to talk to you both!

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 52:22

Where can we find you? You're on Twitter ...?

Isabelle Clement: 52:24

I'm on Twitter. My organisation is @Wheels4Well (that's Wheels for Wellbeing on Twitter and on Facebook and on Instagram). And me personally it's @IsabelleClement (I-S-A-B-E-L-L-E Clement, no 's')

Alex Davies: 52:48

I saw a tweet the other day, that was like "Does everyone just spell their surname?" Like, you say your first name, but you just, I will always immediately spell my surname.

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 52:57

Yes, I mean, Gwiazdowski, yes.

Alex Davies: 53:04

Yes, 'cause I'm a "Davies-no-e"

Isabelle Clement: 53:06

Well, it's funny, I mean, *Clement* is a French surname, and it's so common in France, but here it's Clements, and people just will always put an 's',

Alex Davies: 53:17

Yeah, you learn the things that people just always do

Isabelle Clement: 53:21

and Isabelle, people will just always put an "o" or no double "l" or put an 'a' at the end, so that's why I always spell it.

Alex Davies: 53:30

Thank you so much!

Jenni Gwiazdowski: 53:31

Thank you Isabelle!

Isabelle Clement: 53:53

Thanks for having me! Always a pleasure!