Cars are still, and will remain, an essential part of the transport mix…

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Stockpiled cars ready for customers.

CARS ARE NOT A LUXURY BUT WILL BE EVEN MORE OF A WAY OF LIFE IN FUTURE.

By Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

Cars, councils and the country make strange bedfellows, but they now depend on one another to fight Coronavirus-19.

After decades of being squeezed out, criticised and taxed as a milk-cow it now seems that councils and the country cannot survive without cars.

All the investment pushed into public transport at the expense of improving roads and parking seems to be wasted as the country is told to stay off public transport and let it be taken by essential users.

Even then, they will have to ensure they socially distance and that means the trains and buses capacity is reduced to about a quarter of what it was before the pandemic hit. It's also uncertain if the public transport will run 24/7 when needed by shift-working essential users.

There simply aren't enough buses or train carriages to cope with extended services which by the same maths would require three times as many to cope with the capacity demand.

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As a result, commuters and travellers are being encouraged to walk or cycle to work or for shopping, or for leisure, which is fine if you don't have too far to go or need to carry heavy bags.

For those in rural Wales, the West Country, English countryside, Scottish Highlands or Ireland the local shops can be many miles away and without a bus service after generations of under-investment there is no alternative to independent travel by cars.

Cars are not a luxury but a way of life. The way of life for many months or years to come.

In heavily populated areas there is a concentration of work and jobs, sometimes not with accompanying high earnings and car ownership or car sharing is a cheap way to get around, particularly if you run a well used older car.

Car dealerships have flourished in populated areas and the second hand market is very strong, with six used cars being exchanged for every new car sold in many parts.



Ready for you – car dealerships now open.

With so many vehicles concentrated in a comparatively small area there is bound to be congestion and councils have been encouraged, allegedly for air pollution reasons, to discourage their use and look at congestion charging.

The reality is that air pollution has been shown to be less than some expected as the number of low emission cars grow with older models replaced and the congestion charge is

increasingly seen as another income source for councils struggling with rising costs and demands.

The charges have been varied to encourage spreading the busy period but many people I know have spoken of near all-day jams in some cities and towns.



Back to work – back to traffic congestion.

At the moment all the reasons for having charges have disappeared with the traffic as working from home has become the new norm for millions of people across the country.

Car parks have been left empty and there is space created on roads for wider pavements but there has so far not been a rush to walk or cycle. It's going to be less used as colder autumn and wetter winter months arrive.

What is left of a road is seeing cars, buses and commercial vehicles squeezed into it, leading to further congestion and, of course, greater air pollution than intended. The rule of

unintended consequences is a predictable result.

Britain’s urban areas have nearly all evolved over centuries from medieval times and in some cases the speed of traffic using them has not increased but their ad hoc historic development means that parking is a problem. The answer has been and I believe will increasingly be to provide out of town parking with convenient bus or rail ride systems, whether by tram or train, into the centres.

It will mean those who have to go into urban areas to work will need to allow additional travel time but the costs of remote parking should be low enough to encourage their use.



More cars, more car parking needed.

If, as some suggest, the current Coronavirus-19 situation continues for more than a couple of months and maybe into next year, then the need for more out of town parking will become much more urgent if business, shops and the leisure industry is to recover.

Now is the time for the extra spaces to be created before there is a return to more traffic on the roads. For now the car is king even if politicians don’t want to acknowledge that.



Brits expected to surge to EVs post-lockdown as a result of lower air pollution.