

In late 2022 a very kind Spokes member donated money to Spokes to use as a grant to help a Spokes member family to get a cargobike. We advertised the offer through our roughly-monthly member email circular, and Claire's family was the first to apply. Here is her report.

Apologies for the belated report!

During the pandemic we seriously considered leaving Edinburgh to live in a wee village, but the main thing that put us off was how much we'd have to drive. We always managed in the city with our toddler on foot, bus or by popping him in the seat on the back of a bike. But with another baby on the way, the pressure stepped up to get a car in order to move two kids and all their stuff around. At the same time, we moved to the south of the city leaving behind most of our family and friends in the north, so we knew we'd be schlepping across town more. Getting a car seemed inevitable.

But then we clocked that a friend had bought an Urban Arrow e-cargo bike and I hankered after one! The cost was pretty intimidating, but a combination of the Spokes grant and the Energy Saving Trust 0% interest loan for a family cargo bike made it manageable.

I spoke to David at Laid Back Bikes who gave us invaluable advice all delivered with unbelievable patience. He took my giddy four year old on a test ride himself when I still felt a bit wobbly! David also kindly lent me adaptors for a car seat for my 5 month old, meaning I could take the baby and two bigger kids on the main bench. With David's advice I also bought the rain tent cover so the kids stay dry, a very heavy duty bike lock and a big rain cover to keep the bike dry overnight. David was a big help with all of the rather finicky paperwork for the Energy Saving Trust loan.

The bike is a huge help in getting us out and about. We always get positive comments from people when we turn up to places and I hope that seeing an average, non-sporty parent using this kind of bike helps to convince more people to choose active travel. Between the rain tent and an old sheepskin on the bench, the kids are happy to go out in it in all weathers. While I wish there were more and better segregated cycle lanes in Edinburgh, I generally find that the bike is so enormous that most drivers give us room!

Thank you so much to Spokes for helping us to keep cycling and avoid another car on the city's roads.