



CycleReading

WORKING FOR A CYCLE FRIENDLY READING

www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

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Reading, Wokingham and West Berks to get an LCWIP



Contents

- 1 Reading, Wokingham and West Berks to get an LCWIP
- 3 Campaign News
- 5 Letter from SPOKES
- 6 Chairman's Letter
- 8 Cycling with a Club
- 10 Interview with Debs Absolom
- 12 Contact Us
Campaign Diary

In 2017 the UK Government published its first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy which sets out the Government's ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey. The Strategy sets a target of doubling cycle journeys by 2025.

As part of the Strategy the Department for Transport (DfT) is encouraging local authorities to develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). Reading Borough Council (RBC) has successfully bid for technical assistance in preparing a joint LCWIP with Wokingham and West Berks

Councils; this technical assistance will be provided by an external consultant.

Reading Cycling Campaign has plenty of experience of cycling infrastructure designs drawn up by consultants and we hope that whoever provides the technical assistance 'gets' cycling, avoiding the temptation to interpret a Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan as a grandiose exercise in putting cyclists on footpaths in order to create a 'cycle route'.

The DfT Guidance for Local Authorities on creating LCWIPs states: "effective engagement with stakeholders is

RBC, WoBC and WBC to get an LCWIP

critical to ensuring that high quality LCWIPs are produced." RBC already has a Cycle Forum for cycle stakeholder groups, so is well placed to ensure that Reading cyclists have a meaningful input to the development of the LCWIP.

RBC has stated that "the core deliverables of the LCWIP will consist of the development of a network plan identifying preferred routes linking communities with local destinations and a prioritised programme of improvements for future investment."

At this point it should be made clear that the LCWIP will be just a plan, it won't have any funding attached to carry out the improvements. However, the DfT has made it clear that Local Authorities who have a plan

will be "better placed to make the case for future investment" - and RBC does have a track record of successfully bidding for central government funding.

Sourcing the funding for cycle infrastructure improvements is key, but just as important is ensuring that money is spent effectively on infrastructure that really encourages cycling. In Reading we already have a mapped and signposted network of cycle routes, though these are of variable quality with regard to providing safe, direct and convenient routes for cyclists.

The next (and somewhat overdue) step is to progressively make changes to the road infrastructure to achieve a

cycle network that will encourage a modal shift, similar to what we have seen happen in London, with all the benefits to congestion and air quality that would bring.

And the opportunities are there if the Council is willing to embrace them. In 2018 Cow Lane will be opened to two-way traffic, opening up the possibility of taking a large amount of traffic off Oxford Road.

Imagine what Oxford Road could be if there was a determined effort to make it pleasant to walk and cycle along? Perhaps that could be a catalyst to making West Reading a vibrant and pleasant area to live, work and shop.

Keith Elliott
RCC Secretary



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Campaign News



Reading Borough Council (RBC)

Winter Report

The Cycle Forum and the Traffic Management Sub-Committee (TMS) were both attended by RCC representatives. The Cycle Forum consists of RBC Councillors, cycling representatives and Reading Council officers. An agenda is normally agreed a few days before the meeting, but there is also an Any Other Business slot if time allows. Items include reports on progress from RBC or related matters of interest, and items raised by RCC and other attendees. The TMS is a more formal Council committee where RCC and others may speak in advance of agenda items if we request to.

Cycle Forum 25 October

- NCN422 update - Stage 1 through Southcote from the West Berks boundary to Berkeley Avenue is nearly completed. Stage 2 along Berkeley Avenue and through The Oracle is due to start in November. Stage 3 is still being designed and RCC have not yet been able to make comments on the detailed designs.

- Thames Path - the proposals from RBC for the formal consultations are to follow after full consideration by them of all objections to the public consultation.
- Operation Close Pass - the operations by West Midlands and Hampshire police forces were discussed, where motorists were targeted by police for passing too close when passing cyclists. These attracted local and national press and TV coverage. RBC and RCC will try to encourage Thames Valley police to carry out a similar operation.
- Educating Cyclists - the bad impact on all cyclists of poor and illegal cycling was considered. The need for more cyclist education including the Highway Code was noted as requiring future actions.
- Watlington Street to Napier Road - a continuation of the Watlington Road cycle route through to Forbury Road and beyond was tabled by RCC for RBC to consider.
- Lower Henley Road - RBC was willing to consider the proposed improvements to the Lower Henley Road cycle lanes; RCC sent their suggestions.
- Vastern Road Roundabout - this location is the worst for cyclists in

Reading. Now RBC was aware of the ongoing problem they will be considering improvements, probably in conjunction with the proposed adjacent development. The collision statistics have since been sent to RCC for comment and suggestions, which have now been done.

- Town Centre signing - the lack of progress on legal signing corrections was noted by RCC, particularly as it is unclear where cyclists may ride in many locations.

TMS 2 November

- Petitions for pedestrian crossings - there were petitions for two crossings in Caversham, a welcome move in the pressure against motor vehicle domination.
- Cow Lane bridge - the roadworks are now in progress and should be completed by July. The Oxford Road study will then be reconsidered when the bridge is open.
- LCWIP - a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan will be developed in future, something that RCC will be contributing to (see the front page).
- Approval of the report from the Cycle Forum.

John Lee

RBC Campaigner for RCC

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Campaign News



Wokingham Borough Council (WoBC)

Winter Report

WoBC has a consultation on transport within the Borough. It's open until 31 December, so please fill it in (www.wokingham.gov.uk/news-and-consultation/consultation-and-having-your-say/current-consultations).

The survey concentrates on the inconvenience that congestion causes to people who drive, but there's the opportunity to support more sustainable methods of transport too.

WoBC took over responsibility for enforcing parking regulations in the Borough at the start of October. This is an opportunity to reduce dangerous and inconvenient parking, so please contact WoBC if you regularly encounter cars blocking cycle ways or entrances. There's no obvious form on the website so I suggest phoning them.

An RCC member has raised problems with the new 'greenway' from Finchampstead to the Arborfield Green



housing development. Part of the greenway near Bohunt School is 'Coxwell Gravel' (compacted gravel) which some people think looks nicer than tarmac.

My experience of this on routes such as the Downs Link is that it becomes muddy after a few years, so it's OK for leisure routes, but not for one expecting all-year-round use such as the greenway.

I hope this is only a temporary surface while the development is being built, but I will ask for it to be avoided in

future routes; tarmac coated with gravel looks just as good.

The second issue is that there's a kissing gate and horse-stile at Commonfield Lane. To get through this you need to get off your bike and it is impassable with a child trailer or a trike.

I asked WoBC to address this, but they are concerned about vehicles of travellers and trail riders getting through, which are claimed to be an issue in the area.

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Campaign News

Unfortunately, this means the greenway is unusable by people with cycle trailers. I wonder whether the design obstructs access for those in wheelchairs and therefore may not be compliant with disability discrimination legislation, but I will leave that to other organisations.

WoBC has published an outline study for a third road bridge over the Thames in Reading (<http://news.wokingham.gov.uk/news/new-thames-crossing-strategic-outline-business-case/>).

Cycle facilities in the proposed design are minimal rather than ambitious, with what appears to be shared-use cycle/foot ways rather than dedicated facilities. The study predicts reductions in traffic in central Reading and in Sonning-on-Thames, with only small increases in traffic in rural South Oxfordshire.

However, there were unfavourable initial reactions from district Councillors in South Oxfordshire and John Howell (MP for Henley), and the total cost of the third bridge would be

around £100 million with no obvious sources of that money, so this scheme is unlikely to happen for many years.

If it does, we need to make sure that the bridge caters better for people who cycle, and that the reduction in traffic on Sonning Bridge, Caversham Bridge and Reading Bridge leads to better provision on them for people who cycle.

Peter Howe
WoBC campaigner for RCC

Letter from SPOKES

Dear Editor

As co-founder of West Berkshire SPOKES with my wife Martha, I still receive your excellent newsletter RCC. But it pains me to see the position of 'West Berks Campaigner' remain vacant.

I am the Highways Officer of SPOKES and engage regularly with the Council at a quarterly Cycle Forum, which is chaired by Cllr Steve Ardagh-Walter, who does take a serious interest and is the Council's Cycling Champion.

We are pleased that so far almost all of NCN 422 from Newbury to the east of Thatcham is going to be on the road (subject to public consultation) and much of the credit for that goes to our excellent SPOKES member and Highways Officer for the Council Josh Kerry, who has designed it. Much of it passes through Steve Ardagh-Walter's ward, so that may also be relevant!

SPOKES members spent hundreds of hours in early 2016 undertaking a Cycling Audit of almost the whole district, which has provided the Council with many years' worth of tasks of varying priority and cost.

RCC members helped in the 'far east' of the District (Reading travel-to-work area). The 'quick wins' agreed by the Cycle Forum and budgeted for the next 2-3 years are better route signage



formed, on a contract basis (with all receipts going to SPOKES itself). This provides a fund for training members to run cycling proficiency courses for adults and carry out Dr Bike inspections, which are run by our Chair Caroline Lane, who is also a part time Council officer in Transport Policy and runs classes in schools in her work time.

We are considering other campaigns, such as one targeting medium sized employers, who are notoriously bad at providing cycle racks and showers: most likely their leases give them no incentive, so it may be their landlords we must reach.

Cycle routes into and through the biggest employment area in our District - north of the Racecourse station and south of the River Kennet - are about to massively improve thanks to a new 2-way B-road linking A339 and Hambridge Road, removing the biggest

to/from - and improved cycle parking at - main trip generating locations.

SPOKES members have carried out the Council's thrice yearly cycle counts ever since SPOKES was

excuse for not cycling to and from work there.

Currently heavy traffic has to use 'quiet' residential streets one-way, which makes it awful to bike from most of the housing to most of the jobs within 3 miles.

We meet to discuss cycling issues every month on the first Wednesday evening in a different pub, enabling some of us to experience cycling conditions on routes we might otherwise not use. Martha and I are retired and purely 'utility' cyclists, living close to Newbury town centre. But most of our members are serious all-round leisure/utility cyclists with commuter and school runs, so we run a regular programme of leisure rides for all kinds of rider.

I will leave it at that for now. I'm reluctant to volunteer to be your West Berks regular contributor, because I am very Newbury focused and we really need someone from the east of the district to comment and campaign on conditions between Theale, Pangbourne, Burghfield, Purley and Reading Borough for your magazine. But I didn't want your readers to get the impression that no campaigning is taking place to improve cycling facilities in West Berkshire.

Tony Vickers
highways@westberkshirespokes.org
www.westberkshirespokes.org

Chairman's Letter

Dear RCC members,

Right. I am going to start jumping red lights when riding my bike*. I have patiently sat at traffic lights waiting for them to turn green for many years. It wasn't always so, as a younger man I certainly used to jump them, but not at the moment though.

I now enjoy stopping. I enjoy watching the world around me for a few moments, noticing things I have missed before. I sometimes see people I know and so easily move to one side and stop even longer for a chat. I can catch my breath if I have struggled up a hill.

I also enjoy confounding the stereotype.

'All cyclists jump traffic lights' is one of the big problems people who don't ride bikes have with people who do.

Often when I stop at lights, I wonder how the drivers feel now I am in their way. If I had skipped the red I'd be gone, they could press on once the light changed without having to wait

until after the junction to pass me. Now they will have a few more seconds delay as I pootle across the road.

I know I get more respect, most of the time, which is as bizarre itself as the moaning about cyclists as if they were the only people on the highway who ignore the rules.

Figures published in the media the week I am writing this following research carried out by the Royal Automobile Club indicate that more than a million drivers get a penalty for breaking speed limits in their cars, vans or trucks every year. If, as you might concede, most drivers get away with it most of the time, the true level of lawlessness by drivers is truly staggering. The survey only collected information about a small range of offences too, not about unproven careless driving or mobile phone use, defective vehicles, not even the results of people prosecuted for drink driving or mobile phone use.

It is clear that drivers are just as much offenders as cyclists. Despite the claims by some that number plates will stop cyclists breaking the law, it seems that having number plates makes no difference.

Of course there are many more people driving than cycling. I was driving a minibus the other day, and I came back into Reading along the London Road at 5pm. I was sat in a queue from one end of the road to the other for 40 minutes. As the three lanes of nose to tail traffic crept along I had ample time to make some observations:

Many drivers use their phones in traffic like this.

Some cars still emit smoke.

Few cars (or few drivers) cut the engines when stationary.

Hardly anyone cycles. I counted eight people on bikes. (Remember the £1.2 million spent here a couple of years ago from the Local Sustainable Travel



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Once again my sincere thanks for your kind assistance and courtesy in dealing with this claim and bringing it to a successful conclusion.

Jean Cronin, Kent



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Chairman's Letter



Adrian Lawson

fund? It hasn't made the slightest difference!)

After the publication of the report into driving offences, reports in the media focused on the issue of drivers getting fined for jumping lights, and speeding being seen as treating drivers as a cash cow, not that this level of offending might be itself reprehensible. Or even dangerous.

What gets me though is the grief I get from people because other cyclists don't stop at red. I am somehow liable for the actions of others. It also affects some of our politicians. One of them for ages banged on about how Reading welcomes responsible cyclists, to appease the anti-cyclists. (Yes, bizarrely there are people who dislike people who ride bikes, because they ride bikes, and it is usually based on their lawlessness.)

Sometimes I am engaged in some conversation with someone and it comes around to cycling, and very soon red lights are mentioned. I always

defend this by pointing out that the lack of proper infrastructure leads to cyclists who treat the network with contempt. It is how anyone who cycles will feel. 'Cycle route end' and 'cyclists dismount' signs, cyclists told to ride on the pavement and then prosecuted for riding on the pavement.

Cycle lanes that don't go where you want put you in dangerous positions; cycle networks poorly thought out, and then unmaintained; the town is littered with utterly rubbish examples of 'infrastructure' for cyclists. People who try and use this stuff will soon be sick of being treated as the bottom of the hierarchy, and they will even if only subconsciously revolt. And that is what I feel like doing. Kicking back against a system that is so totally skewed against anyone who wants to ride a bike.

As anyone reading this will know that loads of journeys carried out by bike is entirely possible, it happens in other towns all the time, but in Reading the number of people and the number of journeys is tiny. Don't listen to what the Council tells you. Find the time to stop for 10 minutes beside any road (at the Vastern Road crossing to the station is somewhere you will have to do this if you are to wait for the traffic lights to change in your favour) and look at how many people cycle and how many people drive. The design of the town is eminently suitable for driving, despite what many drivers say when they moan about how difficult it is to drive in. If it was difficult why are so many people still doing it? Why is there a queue from the IDR to get into the car park to go shopping in the Oracle?

More to the point though is why do so few people ride a bike? Well, given the obvious discontinuity and inept design of the infrastructure, and the lack of funds and political will to put this right, we have to now, and always will have to, use the road or break the law and stay on the pavement. Any increase in cycling on the pavement is going to get some people apoplectic with rage.

So the answer if we are to make any change at all is to change the way we use the roads. The West Midlands police have started a close pass project; it is actually quite old now, but it targets drivers, in a bid to teach them how to share the roads with cyclists. It is the driver squeezing past a cyclist that is off-putting at best, dangerous at worst. If all drivers knew how to overtake the roads would be way more pleasant. There wouldn't need to be any change to what we already have (except we could abandon all the stupid shared use pavements and narrow cycle lanes) and lots more people would start to ride their bikes. Despite the logic of this Thames Valley Police still insist on educating cyclists in the handful of 'events' they have run under the close pass tag. I have yet to even get a response to my enquiries asking when they'll be doing it in Reading, and if the RCC could help. One day I'm sure they will get back to me, and we can begin to teach drivers how to share the roads. Until then I'm going to jump some red lights*.

*I'm not really.

Adrian Lawson
RCC Chairman

If you're eagle eyed enough to notice the application form to join the RCC is no longer printed in this newsletter, this is because the process has now been transferred online on our website. New members should visit <https://www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk/join-us> and follow the instructions.

This also means our membership system is now online, using a system called 'Paysubsonline', and members who pay annually will now receive an email when they need to renew their subscription. This is why it's so important to keep us informed of any new email addresses and other contact details, so our database is kept fully up to date.

Our Mission

- To campaign for better facilities for cyclists in Reading, in particular a network of safe cycleways linking residential, industrial and commercial areas, and giving access to the town centre.
- To work with Sustrans, Cycling UK (both locally and nationally) and others interested in promoting cycling and the well-being of cyclists.
- To identify the needs of cyclists in Reading, for example the location of safe and secure parking, and to campaign for their provision.
- To work with and advise local authorities and, where necessary, criticise and highlight their shortcomings.



Cycling with a Club



Never Say Never!

Most of us who use our bikes to go from A to B regard the weekend club cyclists as 'lycra clad loonies' and a different

species! The perception is of a large pack of super fit (mainly men) kitted out on expensive bikes, but couldn't be more different from my experience of going on rides with Reading CTC.

My first encounter with them was when I was out exploring near Goring on an old shopping bike. Awaiting the usual rush of other club cyclists past me, I was surprised when a couple of people

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Or contact: Sean Hayden, Secretary Reading CTC by emailing secretary@readingctc.co.uk or by phone or text on 07801 410707

Cycling with a Club



started chatting as I pootled along. I'd not even considered joining a cycling club, but was looking for inspiration to ride longer distances and explore new areas without the hassle of carrying a map or expense of a Garmin-type device.

They invited me to join them for a coffee as the group was about to stop - and the selling point was some home-made flapjack that was being shared around!

On returning home I looked up Reading CTC on the website and saw the variety of rides and speeds they had talked about. They had explained that new riders can come along for free (for up to 3 rides), but I also found out that being a member of Reading Cycle Campaign gave me affiliated membership of Cycling UK, so decided to try a few rides and then take it from there.

The ethos of the club is not about speed or beating targets, but the enjoyment of going for a ride - and the distances quickly build when you are enjoying amazing scenery, riding on generally quiet country roads and chatting as much (or as little) as you like during the ride.

The groups runs rides at various speeds and distances and genuinely welcomes all newcomers, with around 50% women cyclists, and lots of women ride leaders.

That was over 5 years ago and since then I've gone on to build my distances from around 15-20 miles up to over 100 in a day. Not everyone's idea of fun, but I can honestly say that the support and encouragement I've received from fellow cyclists at Reading CTC has kept me going when I might otherwise have got a train (or taxi!) home and certainly hibernated for the winter.

Part of the national Cycling UK organisation, Reading CTC is a thriving, friendly club which is run by members to encourage people of all levels to enjoy leisure cycling. They provide a wide range of social cycle rides and encourage people of all levels to enjoy being out on a bike.

So if you want some encouragement to cycle further, explore new areas and have the comfort that help will be on hand if you do have a puncture or other 'mechanical', then come along on a ride. The group always goes at the pace of the slowest rider and won't leave anyone behind.

Take a look at our website and come along to a social ride with a friendly bunch of local cyclists and see if going out with a club changes your perception!

Karen Robertson
RCC Events Coordinator

Cycling UK Affiliated Membership

Members of RCC can apply for Cycling UK affiliated membership:

- 3rd party insurance cover of £5,000,000 worldwide except USA and Canada
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- Weekly Cycling UK email newsletter

Please note that these benefits apply only as long as you remain a fully paid-up member of RCC.

The cost of the Cycling UK affiliated membership is £18 for a full year.

More details from Membership Secretary on 0118 986 0230

The quarterly Reading CTC rides leaflet and the quarterly listings in this newsletter have been discontinued. This was because these listings were usually incomplete, as they had to be submitted three months in advance. Therefore to get the latest updated ride listings, please visit the rides webpage: www.readingctc.co.uk/rides

Interview with Cllr Debs Absolom

The Newsletter Editor interviewed Cllr Debs Absolom to find out more about her and what she thinks about cycling issues.

You have recently become the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-committee and the Cycle Forum. Did you seek these positions out due to a particular interest in transport issues?

I took on the role as I am very interested in it. I love cycling and walking, and I was a motorcyclist in my younger days. I drive a car and a white van for my gardening and landscaping business with my husband.

Cycling is a huge thing for me. I have an allotment in Scours Lane which I cycle to and I do the loop with the river and the canal to get into town. We hope to get permission to make that a complete loop. We discussed this at last cycle forum meeting and I'm hoping John Lee will help us with the barriers near the Fobney, which are there to prevent mopeds and scrambling bikes from getting through, but I don't know if that is actually achieving anything because they just come in the other end.

Adrian sent a list of all the different access places, so we cycled around and took loads of photographs to see what would be the best solution. I think this is blocking not just cyclists, but also negotiating the bollards makes it inaccessible for buggies and disability scooters and, as Adrian pointed out, other forms of disability transport.

Yes, I'm interested in this whole subject.

What would you like to see achieved through the Cycle Forum under your Chairmanship?

I can already see the work the RCC is achieving. I recently met Karen at Reading Pride.

Regarding NCN422, I'm very aware of John Lee's input to help our officers to produce the right sort of barriers with, for example, the Honey End Lane roundabout onto the Bath Road. The barriers are high enough to slow people down, but set back at enough distance to turn a vehicle in off the main drag. These details are extremely helpful.

We've been talking about bringing ReadyBikes further west because there are too many to the east, and somebody suggested more at Green Park. We're looking further into park and rides to make people leave their cars outside of town.

Reading suffers from bad traffic congestion (as we all know) and yet cycling makes up a small percentage of all journeys, far less than in many European cities. (The Dutch cycle for 26% of their journeys, in Reading it was recorded as 2.4% in the 2016 Annual Cordon Count). What do you see as the main blockers to greater cycle uptake?

These are some stumbling blocks we will have to deal with. Reading is a very attractive place for people to come in and work, and with a lot more houses and multiple occupation, more cars are coming in to park. The East Reading Mass Rapid Transit is about trying to get park and rides on the outskirts and making people use them, and if we provide bikes for people to cycle into the town centre rather than using their cars, it would help improve the situation.

Other issues were discussed at the last forum meeting, such as Vastern Road, where we need safer protection for cyclists and pedestrians for that roundabout.

I think the work on the NCN422 to make pathways wider, moving obstructions to make people use the shared space - I know there are some cyclists that don't want to share space with pedestrians, but when you've got a packed town we've got to use what we have.

This is something I can see where a red route could keep the traffic moving. We have some terrible issues with double parking, so the red route is to try and deal with the problem of people parking in the wrong place. Hopefully contributions from the Cycle Forum and the Traffic Management Sub-Committee can help with this, since this project is a big learning curve. I hope to engage the Cycle Forum's different members to help regarding Oxford Road. I don't actually cycle along the Oxford Road - maybe I should start doing that to see what it's like as an alternative to usually going along Tilehurst Road.

But it is about the red route, which goes along the number 17 bus route, to try to keep the flow of traffic and deal with the double parking and the misuse of the bays and the pavement. We can only implement small areas at a time, so we will start in the heart of the Oxford Road and then expand out, but each section needs feedback to the forum.

There are double parking problems - as reported by the bus company - where

cars pull up and park right in the middle of the road, especially in the Wokingham Road area. It's where you go past those shops and you've got parking bays and cars double parking next to the bank, preventing all the traffic from moving along that route. We're hoping a red route with double red lines, like they have in London, will stop illegal parking, as on a double yellow they could get away with it for a short space of time.

So you do cycle around Reading (as you said earlier). What kind of bike have you got?

A Ridgeback. I got it from AWCycles and got a good reduced price on it.

What routes do you take? You said Tilehurst Road and the canal and Scour Lane. But you don't go along the Oxford Road.

That is something I need to do.

Yes, you need to experience this at least once. So if you don't cycle down the Oxford Road, what's putting you off?

It is an extremely busy road. I prefer personally to not cycle on the pathways, however, I do use shared paths, and I do use the canal. I'm not as brave as John Lee to go down the Vastern Road, which is where we hope we will be looking at as an area that is dangerous for cyclists.

I do cycle alternative routes from my house, rather than having to go down the Oxford Road. Part of me does this because it's my ward and I want to keep an eye on what's going on. I can cycle through Waverley Road, I cycle along through the Dee Road estate, and I do use different routes like that.

RBC is set to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. How do you think this can best achieve a quality cycle network over and above what has been achieved by the annual implementation plan that forms part of the current RBC Cycling Strategy?

We talked about this at the last forum meeting. The infrastructure plan is about linking communities for local progress as improvement for future investment. As you know, we're going through a period of austerity, so the best way to get enough money is to come up with a plan to achieve this, and then to approach businesses to contribute towards particular items which could move the project forward.

Interview with Cllr Debs Absolom



Cllr Debs Absolom

But the way to do this is via the Cycle Forum. I was a bit disappointed to read in one of your articles you were finding it difficult to find pedestrian groups to tell us how to use the shared space, which I don't think we could avoid in certain areas.

How do you think we could find pedestrian groups? How could we incite people to join and become interested in providing that input as a pedestrian?

It's difficult to say. I only know that outside of Reading there are groups, such as a walking group that's started up in Tilehurst. I just need to try and engage with these people and find out how they feel about doing this together.

We could extend this to find out the situation outside some of our schools where the roads are very congested. The schools' travel plans should try and encourage children to cycle or walk to school rather than always turn up by car.

I write for a local newsletter in Dee Park; we ought to encourage some more articles and engage with other local magazines, to get more people engaged and give us their ideas.

Are you aware of the Space for Cycling campaign being promoted by Cycling UK (formerly the CTC)? [Debs is given a copy of the Guide for Decision Makers.]

These are things I need to become more aware of. This is interesting, because we've got some busy spaces here. I know that some of the cycle groups don't mind

shared spaces and some of them don't like shared spaces, so it's a question of finding...

Well, it depends who they share the space with. Leisure cyclists are usually quite slow and don't cause a problem, whereas commuter cyclists can't share with pedestrians because they go a lot faster. They've got to get from A to B in a certain amount of time for them to catch a train or get to work.

That's interesting using that design [points to the picture in Cambridge in the Guide]. That design is going in by London Street, where the zebra crossing goes over London Street that goes over the other half that goes into the Oracle. We're putting in that design where you've got the separate cyclist route that links up to the river, and then the cycle route through the Oracle, so they're putting the pedestrians and cycling separately side by side.

How much will be implemented - will it be that small area, or will it be trialled over a bigger area?

Obviously we've just had the plans come through for it, but it will be on both sides. I think along the NCN422 route there is also another crossing on the next section that's going on the other side of Berkeley Avenue, where there will be more crossings like that, so it would be interesting to see what happens.

The Space for Cycling Campaign encourages Local Authorities to commit to spending a meaningful amount of the Transport budget on cycling. Is this something you think RBC could sign up to?

That is a question really for Councillor Page about budgeting on items like that. As far as our budget is concerned, we've been pushed under so much austerity I wouldn't be able to say which money is available.

Have you got any influence over Councillor Page?

I'm a member of his committee. He listens to my opinion.

Would he actually implement anything you suggest?

It's not down to just one person, it's a whole committee, so everybody gets an input. David and I both attend his Lead Council briefings on a fortnightly basis, so we certainly give our input.

So it's purely up to financial constraints?

Financial constraints are very, very tight, but then there are various ways of applying for extra finances. If you come up with ideas, then you can apply to implement those ideas. I think it gets very confusing with finances, because you don't have just one big bucket you can dip into. You might think: right, I'm going to spend this here, but then there are constraints and you can win pockets of money that can only be spent on certain projects.

But for cycling there certainly is a commitment to improving cycling as far as we are concerned.

What would be your advice for engaging with Councillors who are not sympathetic to cycling?

Some councillors we cycle with - I'm trying to think who wouldn't be sympathetic - I can't think of anyone else who isn't sympathetic to cycling...

Do you know any who regularly cycle?

Yes, one of our best friends Councillor Pierce cycles with us, and Councillor Gittings - his son cycles professionally in America - it might be the councillors who have children might cycle a lot.

Can people come along to the Cycle Forum and watch - it isn't a closed meeting? If they wanted to come and listen in, they could?

I don't know, I don't think it is. I can confirm that to you - I don't see why not, because the more input we get, the more ideas we get.

And the more points of view you get as well.

My position as Chair is that is what I'm there to oversee. That's why I think it's better that Councillor Page is separated from that role because I can conduct the meeting with different groups giving their input, following the agenda and everybody gets their say.

And it's supposed to meet quarterly?

Yes.

And when's the next one?

The last one was October, so round about January or February.

Ed: You can read the latest Cycle Forum minutes on the RCC website by going to <https://www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk/cycle-forum>

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Wokingham Borough Council

0118 974 6302 or www.wokingham.gov.uk

West Berkshire Council

01635 519080 or www.westberks.org.uk

Windsor and Maidenhead

www.rbwm.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council

Roads and Transport: 0845 310 1111

Monthly Meetings

7.30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month:

Wed 17 Jan 2018 - cttee mtg

Wed 21 Feb 2018 - open mtg

Wed 21 Mar 2018 - cttee mtg

Held in Room 1 of RISC, up the stairs
beyond the bar. See RCC Facebook Page
for updates. We hope to see you there.

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