

CycleReading

WORKING FOR A CYCLE FRIENDLY READING

www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

June 2021 No 150

'School Streets' helps promote children cycling



The narrow road outside Calcot Junior School which gets extremely congested at drop off and pick up times.

Anyone who has a child in school will have suffered the misery of traffic outside the school gates.

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In fact, the school run accounts for an extra 25% of motorised traffic at specific times of day, usually between 8-9am and 3-4pm.

The environment outside school gates becomes congested with cars, making it quite hazardous for all concerned, especially pedestrians and cyclists.

Added to this, the area becomes more dangerous with idling cars blocking the way, illegal parking (especially across people's driveways), cars turning to return the way they came in, near misses and accidents to children darting between cars to get to school.

The School Street Initiative's website states in 2018, 14% of fatal accidents involving children occurred during the morning school run (7-9am), and 23% returning from school between 3-5pm.

School Streets was set up to tackle this problem, which also included local air pollution as well as the road rage and similar threats. Its aim is to create safer, healthier and more pleasant environments for families going to and returning from schools.

This involves restricting cars at certain times of the day on particular roads leading up to the school gates.

School Streets continued...

As well as addressing road dangers for families getting to and from school, principally by encouraging more walking or cycling, School Streets also focus on tackling air pollution and better mental and physical health.

They empower local communities in close proximity to a school with traffic problems to apply for temporary restriction to motorised traffic on particular roads. Times vary, but this is usually between 8.20am to 9.05am, and 2.35pm to 3.30pm, and only applies within term time.

Residents in the area are able to apply for exemption passes and access permits during those times, which also includes school staff. This also means people will be able to get to work more easily without having to juggle around parents in cars stopping unexpectedly to let their children out, parking with no consideration for others, and in some cases abandoning their cars in inappropriate places.

The idea is to encourage families who live locally to walk or cycle to school, particularly those who live within a mile of the school. Calcot Schools have

a lot of families who live very close to the school gates, and many are put off because of the dangers to pedestrians and having nowhere suitable to park.

The governors at Calcot Schools were insistent in having special parking hubs for parents who have to come by car. These areas would be associated with Walking Buses to guide children to school safely in supervised groups.

Part of the incentive for the school to accept School Streets closure outside their gates was to help promote more cycling. The initiative is very keen to make cycling more accessible to children and provided a cycle shelter and scooter park to the school, as well as BikeAbility lessons for Years 5 and 6.

The process involved a consultation of parents and the local community, acting as an awareness strategy as well as getting feedback about the proposed scheme. This venture will succeed if everybody within the vicinity is allowed to become involved, residents feel respected, and families are better educated about the health benefits of walking and cycling to school instead of driving.

The scheme is also keen to promote more off-road walking routes, all-weather cycle tracks and improved off-road cycle routes within the area. This also includes addressing parking issues, particularly within narrow and unsuitable roads, without inconveniencing those who live there.

The launch for School Streets for the Calcot Schools will happen in Linear Park on Saturday 10 July, 10am to 3pm. In attendance will be Dr Bike educating about bike maintenance, BikeAbility training examples, bike loan scheme information, Thames Valley Police talking about close pass and the need for cycle helmets, and a community cycle club for Year 6 children upwards to teach about safety, general repairs, bike upcycling and generating more confidence in cycling to school.

West Berks Council is also talking about more Walking Buses to school, park and stride areas for people travelling into the area, and the West Berks Free Wheelers are arranging free family cycling events during the summer.

Alice Elliott Newsletter Editor

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Jean Cronn, Kent

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Campaign News



Reading Borough Council (RBC)

Summer Report 2021

Traffic is now getting close to pre-Covid levels, but with different travel patterns. There appear to be more cycle commuters and family groups out cycling still, which is good, despite the bad weather in May.

Active Travel Pop-up Cycle Schemes Tranche 1

The tranche 1 schemes all seem to be complete, with many being well used by cyclists.

We understand that some funding should be available for improvements to these schemes, so if you are aware of problems that can be fixed, please let RCC and RBC know.

General comments back about the schemes, and what cyclists like would be useful too?

Tranche 2 Schemes

The Tranche 2 schemes were discussed at the Cycle Forum (who met online) on 25 March and on the CAST (Cleaner Air and Safer Transport) (online) meeting on 18 March.

RCC comments on the proposals were forwarded to Reading Borough Council by the deadline for comments in April 2021.

See below for more information on these proposals.

We are awaiting to hear the results of the consultations and which schemes are to be funded.

Also, we hope there should be some more details on the schemes and further chance to comment at Cycle Forum and/or CAST meetings.

If we receive updated proposals in a form that we can circulate we will do so, and will appreciate any comments back.

John Lee RBC Campaigner for RCC



West Berkshire Council (WBC)

Summer Report 2021

Newbury Station

Train operator Great Western Railway has opened a new bicycle hub at Newbury station for 230 bikes, with capacity for another 100 by the end of the year.

The £1.2m facilities, funded with the support of the Department for Transport and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, will increase bicycle parking at the station by more than 300%, significantly improving access once travel restrictions are eased.

The new cycle hub on Platform 1 will provide 180 new spaces in two-tier racks, with additional cycle stands adjacent to the pavement providing a further 50 spaces.

The cycle hub is fitted with CCTV for added security, environmentally-friendly motion-sensor LED lighting and a bike repair stand.

A second cycle hub is proposed for Platform 2, providing an extra 176 spaces, and is due to be available to station users towards the end of the year - providing a total of more than 300 extra bike spaces.

Pangbourne

Pangbourne & Whitchurch
Sustainability Group conducted a
survey of cycling in and around the
village during February, March and
April. More than 200 cyclists
responded to the questionnaire which
provided a great deal of information.
The full results and analysis of the
data will be ready for our next
newsletter.

The next West Berks Cycle Forum is on Wednesday 23rd June. If members have any matters they would like raised at the Forum please contact me at: wbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Rob Hill WBC Campaigner for RCC



Wokingham Borough Council (WoBC)

Summer Report 2021

As Summer approaches and social restrictions continue to be lifted it seems like there is some light at the end of the tunnel that was a long and devastating Winter.

It is nice to see more people out and about but compared to last year there do not seem to be as many cyclists and walkers as this time last year, which may well have something to do with the return to the status quo of car traffic on the roads.

I'm pleased to say that in the last 12 months that I have been in contact with WoBC, the executive officer for transport Cllr Pauline Jorgensen and her officers have been very accommodating and approachable in setting up meetings and talking through plans and ideas for cycling in the borough.

To their credit they have discussed adopting LTN 1/20 guidelines (although I'm not sure this has been finalised) for future travel schemes and have been good at listening to the concerns of cyclists around the borough. In addition, they have recognised the climate emergency and are taking tentative steps to monitor and reduce air pollution and indicated they are understandably keen to reduce traffic congestion.

All the above are great and exactly what I and many others want to hear from a council that is listening to its residents' concerns on pollution, climate change, congestion, road safety etc...

Unfortunately, when it comes to actions, there is still very little to back up the words. Wokingham is currently about to build the largest piece of road infrastructure that it has built for many years - the South distributor road (SDR).

This will take people from East Wokingham, through Montague Park

Campaign News continued...

and the South of the borough to the Molly Millars Lane area near the town centre where it will end in an enlarged roundabout (The Western Gateway roundabout) in place of the current Molly Millars roundabout. This road is being built to service the approx 1500 homes that are to be built in South Wokingham but will also act as an important transport route for the South of the borough.

This sort of road is a once in a generation, probably in a lifetime, project, and an opportunity to create a really good transport link for cars, bikes and walkers by designing it properly from the beginning. This is future proof of the increase in walking and cycling the Council are so keen to say they are trying to achieve.

Unfortunately, what is said about improving active travel and getting people out of their cars is not matched by the actions when it comes to doing anything more than making empty statements which sound good.

The original plans had a 3m shared use path on each side of the road and in addition included several changes to the current Molly Millars/Finchampstead Road roundabout which would have made it much larger (and

therefore more dangerous) and slower to cross for pedestrians and cyclists.

The changes to the roundabout had very little provision for cyclists and pedstrians and would have almost certainly acted as an impediment over what is there already, which combined with the inevitable increase in traffic for a large new road, will undoubtedly put a lot of people off cycling in particular.

The shared use path alongside the SDR is also far from ideal, considering there is clearly space to build a 2m cycle path and a 2m walking path on each side of the road, which would have been much better than the fudge which is the 3m shared use path on either side.

Unfortunately, at a planning meeting (on 18 May) WoBC, despite objections from many residents and several political groups, decided to go ahead with the plans as they are. Their rationale was that these plans had been drawn up several years ago and changing them would not be easy and therefore could not be done.

Sadly, I think this sums up a lot of political will towards anything challenging the *status quo*. There are many great words and big promises

and opportunistic photo shoots in the right places but when it comes to the crunch and decisive action is required that all disappears. The voting through of the current SDR and Western Gateway design is a HUGE opportunity that has been missed and one that WoBC should feel ashamed about, especially with everything they've said about reducing pollution, tackling climate change etc.

The road design will not encourage people to walk or cycle and the design of the newer larger Western Gateway roundabout will undoubtedly put many off. However, despite this, WoBC will continue to tell everyone how keen they are to reduce traffic congestion and get people walking and cycling and tackle the climate emergency...

Saying all that and to try to finish on a positive, it did feel in meeting there was a groundswell of opinion and possibly the start of a change in the way WoBC looks at active travel provision, and hopefully in a later summer I will be able to write about the excellent dedicated cycle and footways in Wokingham I enjoy using. Sadly, it won't be anytime soon.

Alex Cran WoBC Campaigner for RCC





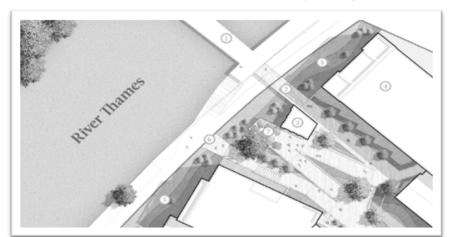
Campaign News continued...

Christchurch Bridge -Southern Extension Design Rejected

The cycle and pedestrian bridge over the Thames near Reading Station, or Christchurch Bridge to give it its official title, was opened in 2015. Berkeley's proposed redevelopment shows the southern connection to Christchurch Bridge being made via two 180° switchbacks, one of which forms the entrance to a proposed café.

During the prior public consultation stage, the RCC submitted comments to Berkeley advising that this was not The 13 Councillors on the Planning Committee unanimously refused the planning application.

Provision for sustainable travel needs to be at the heart of new developments. We are cautiously optimistic that the Council is waking up to this; developers need to catch up.



On its southern side the bridge ramps down at right angles to the span, with access to Vastern Road then provided by a narrow and labyrinthine path.

However, at its inception RBC's longer-term strategy for the bridge was always to improve its southern connection to Vastern Road when the SSE site between the river and Vastern Road was eventually redeveloped.

The SSE site redevelopment is now being planned by Berkeley to create 209 homes in a series of high-rise buildings and this proposal was considered by Reading Borough Council's Planning Committee in March this year.

a suitable design, and it seems the Planning Committee agreed. In fact, we could not put it better than what was written in the planning officer's report to the Planning Committee:

"The development of this site is a one-off opportunity to secure a truly high-quality link through the site that must be seized.

It is important to state that the quality of this link is not simply one of a number of competing priorities that must be weighed on this site, but, as Local Plan paragraph 5.4.6 makes clear, the main priority for the site, and must be considered accordingly."

New Segregated Cycle Facilities

At the end of 2020 Reading Borough Council was awarded £1.2 million through the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund (ATF) to support the implementation of walking and cycling schemes in the borough. The funding is tied to the provision of quality infrastructure, which is expected to involve the reallocation of road space and physical segregation from motor traffic.

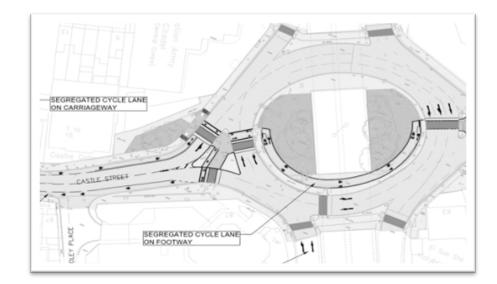
The Council has now undertaken consultation on concept plans for four schemes at the following locations:

- 1. Bath Road/Castle Hill up to the IDR
- Southampton Street from the Oracle roundabout onto Crown Street (A4)
- Shinfield Road from Redlands Road to Elm Road
- 4. London Road

Whilst we hope that all these schemes are implemented in the fullness of time, it is likely that only one can be built with the funding secured. The Reading Cycle Campaign has submitted comments on the concept plans and indicated that we favour prioritising the schemes that help connect to the town centre (Castle Hill and Southampton Street), albeit we believe that concepts for dealing with roundabouts on the IDR will need a careful rethink.

Once RBC has decided which scheme is to go ahead detailed design will commence. Issues will undoubtedly include cycle lane widths, the form of segregation from traffic, dealing with side streets as well as the difficulty of mixing cyclists with busy roundabouts. We trust we will be engaged with this process so that we can fully support the eventual scheme.

Keith Elliott RCC Secretary



Chairman's Letter

Dear RCC members,

Your committee have asked me to take over as the Chair of RCC and I am most happy to do so. I would like to introduce myself to all of you members and sketch out some of the things that I would like to help to happen.

I thought that if I used the name of the organisation, it would divide this introduction, like Roman Gaul, into three parts.

First, Reading. My wife and I came to live here in 1979 and we have been fortunate enough to have owned the same house all that time. We raised our family here and now are lucky to have our grandchildren living close by.

I have enjoyed living here and often have had to defend the town's reputation especially to friends who live in leafier suburbs. As I will describe later, I have been active in several voluntary roles over the years in the town and in Berkshire and Oxfordshire as well. Next, Cycle. One of my earliest memories is riding up and down our street on a little trike and then getting a hand-me-down two-wheeler Coventry Eagle when I was about 5 or 6. I got my first new bike when I went to secondary school and cycled to school on it every day for seven years - a Raleigh Lenton with a Sturmey-Archer 4 speed hub and dynamo combined, which sadly got stolen while I was out charity collecting.

I took a gap year to earn some money before University and treated myself to a Viking Severn Valley with Campagnolo derailleur. This started my love-hate relationship with derailleur gears which continues to this day.

My shopping bike now has an 8-speed hub gear and a Gates carbon-fibre belt, so I don't get oily trouser turnups. I have been a life member of the campaign from the very early days and often noted with interest in the newsletter, the ride lists from the local CTC group.

Once I retired I found time to go on one of their so-called leisurely rides and was hooked. For the last few years I have been an enthusiastic member even ascended to the dizzy heights of winning the Ride Leader of the Year award a few years back.

The Covid Lockdowns have kept me off my bike except for local rides and an increasingly arthritic body means my ability to do the longer distances is much less, but I have not fallen as yet for the charms of an e-bike, but it might just have to happen.

Finally, Campaign. I have over my life, always had some volunteer and campaigning role in various organisations.

I grew up in the Scout movement and when I first came down south from Cheshire, I took on a support role in Scouting and for several years I held the Public Relations brief for Berkshire County Scout Council. When my children decided they preferred riding horses to walking, I got involved in the Pony Club and other equestrian bodies



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Or contact Sel Dixon, the club secretary: secretary@cyclingukreading.org.uk Phone or text: 07867 442046

www.facebook.com/cyclingukreading

Chairman's Letter continued...

and chaired the Oxfordshire County Committee of the British Horse Society.

I have also been actively involved with the local credit union and for a while I campaigned on local political issues and even very briefly thought of standing as a councillor for our local ward. Fortunately, my wife talked me out of that one.

I see the Reading Cycle Campaign as a very important part of the bigger challenge of making our town and surroundings safer, more pleasant and accessible to all. If we take seriously the threat of climate change, our response to the challenges of everyday life should make us question how we go about everything we do.

Bicycles and cycling could be a huge part of the move away from fossil fuel use, but our towns have developed in response to the constant increase in the use of road vehicles. The cyclist and pedestrian have been and to a greater extent still are, painted out of the picture. It is our job to put them back centre frame in this picture.

I would like to hear your views on what we should be doing, and I would encourage you to make your voice heard not just to the committee but much more widely. Please feel free to contact me or any other committee member with suggestions for the campaign and especially to alert us to the problems you come across in your daily cycling.

Joe Edwards RCC Chairman chair@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Q-Park Offer Secure Bicycle Storage

Q-Park have launched a new solution to help local businesses offer safe and secure bike parking services to their employees.

Businesses can now take space in a Q-Park parking facility to use as their very own bike storage area in their car park, where Q-Park will create a secure branded reserved area. The company will be issued with door access cards so the employees can enter and exit the car park via secure pedestrian doors.

They can also install individual lockers similar to those in the Oracle. For further details contact monaza.salam@q-park.co.uk



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Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 18th August 2021

We will be having our AGM on **Wednesday 18th August** at 7:30pm at RISC on London Street.

At the AGM we will elect (or volunteer) our committee for the next year and have the opportunity to discuss our aims, priorities and strategy as we seek to build back better.

The AGM papers including the agenda and annual officer reports will be published on the website two weeks before the event.



Green Bike Food Company

Do you remember seeing food delivery cyclists zipping around city centres 10 years ago? I certainly don't.

In recent years we have seen a huge swing from independent eateries delivering takeaways on motorised vehicles to now, where app delivery platforms have amassed armies of cyclists completing orders in a more sustainable fashion. However, has this dramatic shift actually benefited the environment?

Delivery cyclists have a carbon footprint of about 21g of CO² per kilometre, which is less than a tenth of the emissions when driving.

Bikes also don't have tailpipes releasing toxic particles into the atmosphere and don't drip oil, fuel and hydraulic fluids onto the road surface - meaning less poisonous runoff into local waterways.

The environmental benefits of using bikes over motorised vehicles for food delivery transportation are clear; however, are the large app delivery companies doing enough to ensure

delivery cyclists are being used as much as possible in their service?

Industry giants Deliveroo recently changed prioritisation of delivery vehicles from push bikes to mopeds and cars.

Delivery cyclists have protested that riders using a more 'efficient' vehicle are given access to book shifts in advance, which is troubling as shifts can come at a rarity.

Even as a rider with perfect scores for attendance, cancellations and participation in peak hours were placed behind motorised vehicle users.

This unapologetic stance encourages existing delivery cyclists to make the switch if they want to return to their usual access to work and not miss out on their potential earnings.

In Reading we at the Green Bike Food Company are trying to do things a little differently. We are an ambitious startup looking to disrupt the food delivery and catering market.

Our focus is on making fresh, lifestyle food all delivered on unique electric powered bikes that form part of the Green Fleet. Our flagship vehicle, the Electronic Assisted Vehicle (EAV), can take up to 80 orders at once, delivered by our Green Biker employees to groups of customers along a multi-stop journey.

This means we do not require nearly as many riders on the road, leaving more space for Reading locals, with less impact on the environment.

The remaining questions are: are these corporate food delivery companies doing enough to promote sustainability throughout their operation? Is there a gap in the market for countrywide startups to innovate and disrupt how we perceive food delivery?

Follow our story as we plant our roots in Reading and begin to grow something special for the future. Keep an eye out for our EAV cargo bikes - and make sure to download our app!

Jack Boitier, Green Bike Food Co.



CycleReading Advertising

For 1/6 page display advert (87.5mm x 80mm) RCC members £6 • Non-members £12 Bikes 'n' Bits (text only) free to RCC members Contact the Editor (details below)



Contact Us

Tel: 0845 330 2543 www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk www.facebook.com/ReadingCycleCampaign twitter.com/ReadingCycle

Chairman Joe Edwards

chair@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Secretary Keith Elliott

secretary@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Treasurer Brian Morley

treasurer@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Membership Secretary Martin Weller

membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Publicity Coordinator Leendert van Hoogenhuijze

publicity @ reading cycle campaign.org.uk

Events Coordinator Karen Robertson

events@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Reading Campaigner John Lee

rbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Wokingham Campaigner Alex Cran

wokingham@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

West Berks Campaigner Rob Hil

wbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Newsletter Editor and

Designer

Alice Elliott

newsletter@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Website Manager Alice Elliott

webmaster@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Newsletter Distribution | Ian Humphrey - 0118 967 3693

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The newsletter will now be delivered electronically to members. If you prefer to receive a paper copy, please email membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Council Contacts

Please let the relevant campaign officer know of anything you've reported.

Reading Borough Council

Highway queries: 0118 937 3797; parking: 0118 937 3767;

potholes: 0800 626540

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

RCC's Monthly Meetings

7.30pm on the third Wednesday of each month

Wed 16 Jun 2021 - open mtg Wed 21 Jul 2021 - cttee mtg Wed 18 Aug 2021 - AGM

See RCC's Facebook Page or our website for more details. We hope to see you there.

Advertising Rates:

1/6 page (87.5mm x 80mm):

RCC members £6 - Non-members £12

1/3 page (180mm x 80mm):

RCC members £10 - Non members £20

1/2 page (180mm x 120mm):

RCC members £14 - Non members £28

Full page (180mm x 247mm):

RCC members £25 - Non members £50

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Contact the Editor by emailing
newsletter@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk



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