

Summer 2022 No 154

Reading Lacks Properly Signed Cycle Routes



What's Inside

- 3 Annual General Meeting
- 4 Campaign News
- 8 Chairman's Letter
- 10 Kidical Mass Report
- 11 Bikes 'n' Bits
- 12 Contact Us Campaign Diary

Town Hall Square - no cycle signage

Many of the cycle routes in Reading, in particular the town centre, are unsigned or incorrectly signed.

The subject has been raised on numerous occasions to Reading Borough Council at Cycle Forum Meetings over many years, but little or no action has been taken to rectify the problems.

This despite site meetings with Council staff and schedules of defects with photographs and details of correct signing being provided.

Why is the Council so reluctant to put things right? The sums of money

required are quite small, and in some cases cost savings could be made.

Secret Cycle Routes

A number of cycle routes are not signed for use by cyclists despite being marked on the latest 2018 RBC Cycling in Reading map; some of these are listed below:

 Town Hall Square - no cycle signs from The Forbury/Market Place or from Friar Street. The legally required round blue cycle sign or shared-use is needed or alternatively the new 'Pedestrian and Cycle Zone' Diagram 618.3C

Lack of Cycle Route Signs continued...



Broad Street East - the no-entry signs seem to contradict the unsigned cycle gap. Again, a Diag 618.3C sign is needed.

sign, similar to the 'flying motor cycle' sign with text. Cycle direction signs could help too.

 Queens Walk - the route beside the Broad Street Mall from Oxford Road is unmarked; signage required as above.



Market Place - the wrong sign is used on the west side prohibiting cyclists from using the route. Again, change signage to the Diag 618.3C

- Station Hill the station forecourt is still (apparently) a legal shared path, but where are the signs? Signage required as above.
- Queen Victoria Street this cycle route is still marked as a pedestrian zone; the new Diag 618.3C is needed at both ends.
- Market Place the wrong sign is used on the west side prohibiting cyclists from using the route. Again, change signage to the Diag 618.3C.
- Broad Street east the no-entry signs seem to contradict the unsigned cycle gap. Again, a Diag 618.3C signage is needed.

Missing 'Except Cyclists' Signs

In addition to the 'secret' routes above there are many routes that have cycle gaps but are signed as no through roads.



Stanshawe Road

Great Knolly's Street and Stanshawe Road are two examples of this.

Lack of Cycle Route Signs continued...



for Mandatory Cycle Lanes

In many cases the wrong mandatory cycle lane sign is used, such as the

advance warning sign of the cycle

This is for warning purposes (such

purposes of the cycle lane.

as when a vehicle lane is removed) but is not legal for enforcement

Incorrect Signs

lane.

Basingstoke Road - wrong sign used in many places

Elgar Road - end of route!

Then of course we have the End of Route sign which here marks the start of the Elgar Road route!

When will the Council get these signs corrected or right in the first place? If signs for motor vehicles were wrong, they'd be changed within days; why not for cyclists?

John Lee RBC Campaigner for RCC

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Wednesday 17 August 2022 7.30pm at RISC

Reading 2030

What do we want and how do we work towards increasing inclusivity and accessibility for all bike riders in the future?

Missing Parks Routes Signs



Balmore Walk - no signage for NCN route or drop-kerb

Many parks have cycle routes through them, or cycling allowed, but few seem to be properly signed.

Missing Cycle Direction Signs

Reading town centre is a maze for cyclists, with few routes and negligible direction signing. Key routes and locations should be signed.

Campaign News



Reading Borough Council (RBC)

Summer Report 2022

Again, little of consequence has happened over the last three months.

Cycle Forum and CAST meetings should have taken place in late March or April 2022, but only the CAST meeting was held, with Air Quality being the only agenda item.

A late change or correction to the meeting date gave only a couple of days' notice, so the attendance was probably low, and we have not received any minutes or report of the meeting.

The Cycle Forum was deferred because of the local elections, but no

new date has been received at the time of writing.

Bath Road and Castle Hill Active Travel Scheme

The good news appears to be that Reading Borough Council has now received notification of over £1m in government funding towards the Castle Hill and Bath Road cycle scheme.

This route should run from Berkeley Avenue in the west to over the IDR (Inner Distribution Road) roundabout. This direct route from the west into the town centre could be an extremely useful and well used route.

New Reading Cycle Hub

- Proposed cycle hub at the former Primark unit in central Reading
- Enclosed cycle facility would combine cycle parking and maintenance facilities
- Supported by Primark and run in partnership with Ethical Reading and The Reading Bicycle Kitchen

The proposed town centre hub is designed to provide more secure and enclosed town centre cycle parking facilities for up to approximately 120 bicycles, with both experienced and novice cyclists in mind. There is also the potential for other activities to be run from the hub, including a bicycle loan and/or bicycle donation scheme.

Following extensive research into properties in the town centre, RBC has chosen to locate the hub within a unit at 32-41 West Street, the site of the former Primark store, which is still owned by the company. It will initially run for one year with funding from the Department for Transport (DfT), beyond which the continuation of the scheme will be subject to evaluation and the ability to secure a sustainable venue and further funding.

Reading cycle hub will be staffed and planned to be open 7 days a week, from 7am to 7pm and will open later this year.

READING

Come and join us for a ride!

- Friendly, sociable group rides to great cafes/pubs.
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Or contact Sel Dixon, the club secretary: secretary@cyclingukreading.org.uk Phone or text: 07867 442046

www.facebook.com/cyclingukreading

Shinfield Road Active Travel Scheme

We have heard there is to be a public consultation on detailed plans for the Shinfield Road cycle route in the next few weeks.

RCC made comments during the initial consultation about safety and useability on parts of the Shinfield Road scheme proposals but are unaware of whether changes have been made in line with our comments, despite our requests.

Unfortunately, we are yet again likely to be put in the position of having to publicly criticise the detailed proposals.

John Lee

RBC Campaigner for RCC



West Berkshire Council (WBC)

Summer Report 2022

eCargo Bikes for Local Businesses

New eCargo bikes are being offered to local businesses in West Berkshire to try out as part of a new environment scheme. This has been made possible from a successful bid that was submitted to the Department for Transport for funding via the Energy Savings Trust.

Under the trial WBC have two eCargo bikes available with large capacity 700 litre cool boxes to hire, with a further third bike available at a later date. These vehicles can be branded with vinyl if the business wishes to, so long as this is removed on return.

Ideas for their use could include:

- Static/mobile promotion indoors or outdoors, at summer fayres or events etc.
- Sale of goods or foods, where allowed, in streets or parks - at least one will be available with a cool box.
- Local deliveries, in place of small vans, demonstrating a commitment to zero-carbon transport as they

Campaign News continued...

have a range of about 30 miles on one charge.

• Carriage of tools and equipment by tradespeople.

If you have a business in West Berkshire and would like to hire one out, please contact Alec Gore on: <u>Alec.Gore1@westberks.gov.uk</u> or the Environment Team on: Environment@westberks.gov.uk.

Active Travel Fund, tranche 3 allocation

WBC has been awarded £280,000 for pedestrian and cycle improvements on the B4000 between Stockcross and the A4 in Speen.

Rob Hill

WBC Campaigner for RCC



Wokingham Borough Council (WoBC)

Summer Report 2022

What's in a name?

After May's council elections, control of WoBC reverted from Conservative control to no overall control with the subsequent formation of a Liberal Democrat led coalition.

At the first meeting of the new council on May 19th it was announced that Cllr Paul Fishwick will become the new Executive member for 'Active Travel, Highways and Transport'. He will replace the outgoing 'Highways and Transport' executive member Cllr Pauline Jorgensen.

I'd like to thank the outgoing executive member, Cllr Jorgensen. To her credit she gave up time to attend cycle meetings and was accessible via email and visible at local events. However, despite some limited Active Travel steps forward (as well as some back) there were clearly major issues with the transport strategy of the previous Council.

Their vision and impressive plan to improve walking and cycling and reduce congestion and air pollution was not matched by any concrete policy and the figures for what they hoped to achieve by the actions they put in place.

There was no visible progress on a delayed Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the poor design of the recently opened sections of the Northern Distributor has already drawn a lot of criticism from local people for having few and poorly designed crossings, seen as a particular risk to the large number of school children who attempt to make this journey by bike and foot.

There were the huge, missed opportunities to make as yet unbuilt infrastructure (South Distributor Road and Southern Gateway Roundabout to name a few) LTN 1/20 compliant.

In fact, the new roundabout layout has been criticised as being far more dangerous for cyclists than the old design and this was repeatedly raised to the previous administration before being voted through by the previous Council members.

There was the farcical issue with the Woodley cycle scheme that was poorly designed and consulted on, to the point where so many people found fault in it that it was rejected by Woodley Town Council at a late stage of implementation.

Hopefully this can be looked at again and the design and consultations done in a proper way, so something benefiting the whole community can be implemented after proper consultation.

Whether any of the above fiascos can be re-visited and either redesigned in the case of the Woodley Cycle scheme and the SDR and roundabout, or changed in the case of the NDR, is unclear, but is clearly something that should be looked at.

Fingers crossed the change in executive will bring more than a name change and Cllr Fishwick and his Council will be judged, as his predecessor were, on how much they can achieve and not just how many positive statements can be made.

Welcome Paul and good luck; cyclists and walkers in the Borough will be watching with anticipation.

Alex Cran

WoBC Campaigner for RCC

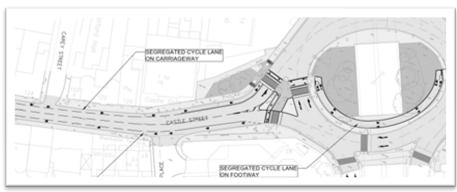
Campaign News continued...

Active Travel Fund -Bath Road Next

The Active Travel Fund (ATF) is the Department of Transport's fund for local authorities to create Active Travel (walking & cycling) infrastructure. RBC has now backed away from its previous idea of raising transport funds by demand management (charging), so the ATF is pretty much the only show in town for funding cycle infrastructure.

The Active Travel Fund is not spread equally among local authorities up and down the country; funds have to be bid for in a beauty contest of proposed infrastructure schemes. The more ambitious Councils, who look to provide meaningful, quality cycle routes, are the ones who get allocated the most cash. For the six Unitary Authorities that make up Berkshire the allocations in the recent third tranche of ATF funding were:

Local Authority	ATF Allocation
Bracknell Forest	£0
Reading	£1.3m
West Berks	£0.3m
Windsor & Maidenhead	£O
Wokingham	£3.0m
Slough	£10.2m



Castle Street and Roundabout

So well done Wokingham and Slough (£10 million!) - let's hope this money makes a real difference in those areas.

In 2021 RBC drew up concepts for four cycle schemes on strategic routes and secured ATF funding for one of these, a segregated cycle route along Shinfield Road. That scheme should start being constructed this summer according to the Council's timetable. In the latest round of ATF funding the £1.3m allocated to Reading was for cycle lanes on Bath Road extending down Castle Street and over the roundabout with the IDR.

The Bath Road scheme was the Reading Cycle Campaign's top pick of the four potential schemes consulted on in 2021, and it's welcome that this has now secured funding. Our focus now will be to make sure that the scheme is as cycle-friendly as it can be. The Council will consult on the scheme; it has a duty to do so. But consulting is not always the same as listening, and we hope to secure an early meeting with the designers to ensure the scheme has full stakeholder (i.e. cyclists) support.

RBC has a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan that spans a 10year period up to 2030 and includes an ambitious cycle network plan. We now have two schemes funded; however, unless the pace of funding and delivery is picked up it's hard to see this network being completed within our lifetimes.

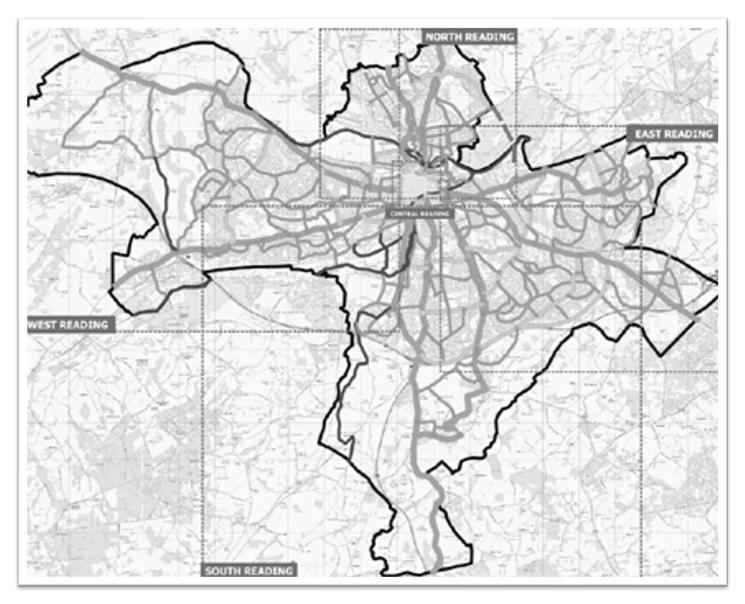
Wokingham - Close Pass Campaign

Motorists on a busy road in Wokingham town were taught a surprise lesson in overtaking cyclists safely in April thanks to a joint initiative between Wokingham Borough Council and Thames Valley Police.





Campaign News continued...



Reading Borough Council's Cycling Network Plan

Those motorists spotted passing too closely were pulled over and advised to leave more room in future or risk being fined and getting penalty points on their licence. Wokingham's 'My Journey' active travel team also offered some education while giving away free cycling-related goodies.

Six motorists were stopped during the 'close pass' session and the police also checked that their driving licences and motor insurance were valid. Three more were stopped for mobile phone offences while driving and one cyclist was stopped for going through a red light! Under new rules in the Highway Code, drivers should leave at least 1.5m when passing cyclists - or 2m if either passing above 30mph or at any speed in a long vehicle. Cyclists are also advised to ride at least 0.75m from the nearside kerb where they can.

Reading Borough Council Elections

In May we saw elections for all 46 council seats in Reading Borough. Labour increased its majority and now holds exactly two thirds of the council seats. The Greens became the second largest party with 7 seats, nudging the Conservatives into third position.

Long serving Councillor Tony Page continues his enduring tenure as the town's transport supremo. Interestingly his role has now changed its name from *Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment Planning and Transport* to *Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport*. With his refocused brief we look forward to continuing to work with Councillor Page to make Reading a cycle-friendly town.

Keith Elliott RCC Secretary

Chairman's Letter

Dear RCC members,

What a strange period we are living through. Nothing seems quite as it should be from the weather - what happened to April showers? - to politics, local, national and international.

There have been high spots locally though. The two Kidical Mass rides that took place in April and May showed how much need there is for better cycle provision in the town and how much enthusiasm and goodwill is waiting to be tapped.

Kat Heath, who is the driving force behind these rides, has shown us what can be done with a good idea and a good deal of persistence. The fact that the second ride had to be rerouted at the last minute when we found that Kennetside, one of the major cycle routes into the town centre, was closed for some kind of maintenance and no provision had been made to safely re-direct cyclists, has shown us the total disregard for cyclists by the authorities and the utility companies. Improving cycling provision is a very difficult problem in any town and the underlying Victorian road system makes things worse. In my more generous moments, I do not doubt the goodwill that lies behind the various projects that are being undertaken and I certainly applaud the fact that substantial sums of money are being thrown at the problem.

What I do doubt is whether proper research and planning goes into these projects before they given the go ahead. The public consultation over the Shinfield Road scheme was certainly a very welcome step forward, but we are still waiting to see what, if any, changes are made to the plans as a result of this consultation.

In my more cynical moments ('Cynical - surely not you!', says my wife), I wonder if it is not much more than an opportunity for a bit of PR. The recent edition of '*Your Reading*' which landed on my doormat a couple of days ago has a two-page spread on '*Getting Active in Reading*'. The second paragraph incensed me no end. It reads 'We've already improved access

to routes on Redlands Road and Christchurch Road....'. I have lived and cycled in this area for over 40 years and painting a few white lines and cycle symbols on the road is no real improvement. Putting in ill-considered traffic calming measures is in my view, and that of many others, potentially lethal. John Lee and I are in the process of preparing a report on the scheme, with a view to getting the whole scheme reviewed and the most dangerous bits taken out. Watch this space.

The other major cycle related item to be bubbling up to the boil is the proposed town centre cycle hub. After many months of deliberations and several meetings with interested parties RBC has announced that a suitable site has been found on West Street in the Primark building. The announcement reads:

Following extensive research into properties in the town centre the Council has chosen to locate the hub within a unit at 32-41 West Street, the site of the former Primark Store, which is still owned by the company. It will initially run for one year with



Chairman's Letter continued...

funding from the Department for Transport (DfT), beyond which the continuation of the scheme will be subject to evaluation and the ability to secure a sustainable venue and further funding.

Reading cycle hub will be staffed and planned to be open 7 days a week, from 7:00am to 7:00pm and will open later this year.

The Cycle Campaign obviously welcomes any significant facilities for cycling in the area, but, as always, the devil will be in the detail. Some of us remain sceptical about how viable this is as a long-term proposition.

I for one welcome the proposal from Dr Emma Street of the University of Reading's Department of Real Estate and Planning to recruit a research assistant to see how well this proposal is working out. Emma is a specialist in town centre regeneration and a keen cyclist herself and I will be very interested to see what she discovers.

Contained in the same email from RBC was this section:

Increasing Active Travel remains a top priority for the Council. The proposal to develop a town centre cycle hub sits alongside a range of other initiatives aimed at supporting a shift in travel behaviour to active modes, including:

• Free adult and family cycle training and cycle maintenance training, currently delivered by Avanti Cycling.



- Supporting schools with active travel planning and active travel challenges, such as The Big Walk and Wheel and Walk to School Week.
- Support for Reading Cycle Festival.
- Research to identify key barriers to encouraging walking and cycling in Reading.
- Creating new walking and cycling maps.

I am intrigued by the fourth point about research into barriers to cycling. I believe that much of the money that has been spent on cycling provision in the town may well have been misdirected due a lack of real understanding of precisely these barriers.

The Cycle Campaign is ideally placed to be a partner in this research. It is all very well protesting that the current provisions are inadequate, most of the Councillors know that already, but what we really need is a better understanding of just what would make it better.

In my view this can only come from talking to lots of people who either cycle now or would like to be able to cycle and find out the detail of what would really help.

As a first step in gathering this information and also at the same time making a bit of a protest, I am announcing my Chairman's Challenge. I want all of you to go out and take some photos of the local cycle infrastructure and enter them into the challenge. We have called it:

'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly'

I will be judging it later this year and there will be nice prizes in each category kindly sponsored by AW Cycles of Caversham.

You can enter via our website on https://readingcyclecampaign.org.uk/ rcc-cycling-infrastructurecompetition/and the competition runs until the end of August. So get out there on your bikes and get snapping.

Joe Edwards RCC Chairman

Need your bike repaired? Don't have time or the tools to do it yourself?

Wheel building and truing a speciality.

Contact Bob Bristow on

0118 958 2056

for cycle repairs at a very reasonable price.

Kidical Mass Report



I met Kat at Carter's Steam Fair in late 2021. She was new to the area and looking to meet other parents who cycled. I was wearing a cycling jacket and balancing my toddler on my hip. Obviously, we were going to end up as friends.

A few months later she announced that she wanted to run Kidical Masses in Reading.

After she had explained what these were - an international movement of family friendly group rides, designed to build children's confidence, create a community and campaign for better cycling infrastructure - we were in. I knew our five-year-old would love it. I hoped others would too.

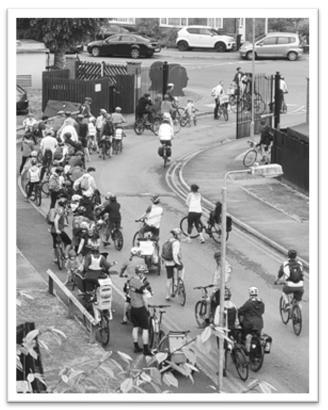
Trying to find a suitable route really rammed home the need for better bike infrastructure in Reading.

We wanted to start and end at a park, so we could gather safely, and socialise and play at the end. However, Reading's cycle paths don't generally connect up well, and we couldn't lead a group including young children through large and busy junctions.

Eventually, after much poring over maps and test riding of routes, we settled on Palmer Park to Forbury Gardens, mostly along the Kennet. On the day, about thirty people joined us. As we rode along, Disney tunes played out from one of the box bikes. We all had a spring in our step for days afterwards.

For the second ride we thought we'd reuse the route. However, the path along the Kennet had been closed to bikes, for months, with no alternative in place. The routes on the other side were also shut. We would have to aim for a different end point.

After a lot more scouting (thanks Simon!), we landed on a route to Christchurch Meadows, crossing the Kennet by the old gas tower site, then passing under the railway before swinging through Kings Meadow to Christchurch Bridge. Mindful of the increased dangers of this route - a busier stretch on Napier Road, the unfenced Thames close to the path and the sharp downhill turns on the bridge over the Kennet - we were reliant on an even bigger team



Kidical Mass Report continued...



of marshals to make the ride safe. Many, many thanks to the members of Reading Cycle Campaign, and others, who assisted us with this.

May's ride was a big success. Despite an atrocious weather forecast we had about seventy enthusiastic cyclists turn up - double the numbers from previously! It was brilliant watching the kids (and adults) enjoying the ride. Almost everyone stayed for homemade cake afterwards (thanks Steffi!), even in the torrential rain.

In May we were part of a wider Kidical Mass action weekend, with over 1,500 riders taking part in the UK alone. The message this sends is loud and clear - we want safe streets for our children.

So, to any Councillors that are reading this, I have three requests:

1) Come and join us! And a big thank you to Cllr Rob White and Cllr James Moore for cycling with us in April and May.

2) Please push for consideration of the impact of roadworks and construction on bikes.

3) If you couldn't safely cycle between your two favourite parks in Reading with a group of children, look to make this easier. (Alternatively, if you can



do it safely, please recommend the route to us!).

And finally, to answer the question on everyone's minds - well, it's certainly bothering my five year old, as I'm asked almost daily - the next ride will be on July 16th, 11:30 starting at Lime Square, Green Park.

Follow us @KiddicalMassRead, find <u>https://kidicalmassreading.co.uk</u> or join Family Cycling Reading on Facebook for further details.

Hillary Smart

Bikes 'n' Bits

Two bicycles for sale

Seller: Brian Morley, tel: 07966476034 or email <u>brianmorleyrdg@gmail.com</u>.

Collect from central Reading.



Gents' Claude Butler bike. 24 Shimano gears. Shimano brakes. Good condition. £100



Ladies' BSA bike. 3 gears. £25

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)



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Next newsletter copy deadline: 1 August 2022 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

Website Manager

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 20 July 2022 - cttee mtg

Wed 17 Aug 2022 - AGM Wed 21 Sept 2022 - cttee mtg

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
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