

Woodley to Reading Cycle Route - Mark 2



Artist's impression - Woodlands Avenue looking west

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Campaign Diary

Earlier this year we reported on Wokingham Borough Council's plans for a Woodley to Reading cycle route using funding from the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund.

The route was planned to connect the centre of Woodley to the outskirts of Reading via Woodlands Avenue, Church Road, Palmerstone Road and Culver Lane to reach Palmer Park and the borough boundary.

The scheme at that time proposed that part of Woodlands Avenue would become one-way for motor vehicles, which generated significant opposition and led to Wokingham Council ditching the plans. We feared that the funding for the scheme would lapse and an

opportunity for some quality cycle infrastructure be lost.

However, we are pleased to report that continuity of funding was secured, and Wokingham Council has revised the plans to provide a segregated two-way cycle on Woodlands Avenue without the need for any sections to be made one-way for cars. This has been achieved by narrowing the carriageway to 5m and the proposed cycle lane to 2.3m.

Consultation on the revised scheme closed in August. Compromises have been made to balance competing interests and aspirations and we hope that the scheme can now progress to implementation.

Keith Elliott, RCC Secretary

Campaign News



Reading Borough Council (RBC)

Autumn Report 2022

A Cycle Forum meeting was held on 2 August, which allowed the Council to give updates on their progress and for group representatives to ask questions and make requests.

Shinfield Road Active Travel Scheme Tranche 2

The detailed design work is progressing for the Shinfield Road scheme proposals, but we are unaware of whether changes have been made in line with our comments. We again requested consultation on the latest detailed proposals and were told that this should happen. We do not want to again be put in the

position of having to publicly criticise the detailed proposals.

Cycle Hub

The Council are progressing with the proposed Cycle Hub, a secure cycle parking facility in the town centre. The location in West Street near the Broad Street Mall area is likely to open in a few months, with funding of £125k from the government's Capability Fund.

Bath Road and Castle Hill Active Travel Scheme Tranche 3

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 runs from Berkeley Avenue in the west and over the IDR (Inner Distribution Road) roundabout. The preliminary plans have just been out for public consultation but were

the same as those we previously commented on when route choices were considered. Parking on Castle Hill and the IDR roundabout are the main problem areas that we commented on. We requested consultation on any changes and on the detailed plans.

Traffic Management Schemes List

The Council has a long ongoing list of schemes requested by the Campaign and others. The intention being to implement schemes when funding is available. Unfortunately, progress is slow, very slow, a point that we again made. RBC suggested that it may be useful if we gave them a shorter list of our main priorities. Town centre issues are probably the most critical and there are numerous large developments there that should be able to fund schemes!

John Lee
RBC Campaigner for RCC

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Campaign News continued...



West Berkshire Council (WBC)

Autumn Report 2022

Pangbourne Approach to Whitchurch Bridge



Cyclists who ride across Whitchurch Bridge from Pangbourne to Whitchurch will know that there is a blind bend which can make it hazardous for cyclists and the very narrow pavement makes it particularly hazardous for pedestrians.

A significant milestone was achieved recently towards improving the safety on the narrow, curved approach road to the toll bridge on the Pangbourne side of the river. Two Whitchurch Councillors, Jim Donahue and Frances Parkes, crossed the river and put forward a motion at a meeting of Pangbourne Parish Council.

The approach road is owned by the Bridge Company, while West Berkshire Council is the Highways Authority. Efforts over the last ten or more years to have the hazardous conditions improved have not resulted in any action.

The Whitchurch motion was approved by Pangbourne Parish Council. A small Cross-River Working Group is now to be set up, with representatives from Pangbourne, Whitchurch and WBC.

Jim Donahue explains that the formal approach to Pangbourne Parish Council follows discussions he initiated with a West Berks councillor and with the Pangbourne & Whitchurch Sustainability group (PAWS). A West Berks engineer has now re-appraised the 2016 report by Peter Brett Associates.

The aim is to secure support for hiring consultants to develop one of the options studied, which are to widen the road on one side or the other, or to introduce a chicane and local widening. The alternative concept of a raised footway through the trees has not been ruled out.

Collecting evidence of hazardous conditions is important and any incidents should be reported in detail to Councillor Frances Parkes at cllrparkes.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com or 07867 009 614. Data will be kept securely and in line with GDPR.

Rob Hill
WBC Campaigner for RCC



Wokingham Borough Council (WoBC)

Autumn Report 2022

Wokingham Kidical Mass

The inaugural Wokingham Kidical Mass took place on Saturday 13 August at the peak of the August heatwave with temperatures hitting around 35 degrees. Around 25 riders plus 6 safety marshals still braved the conditions for a ride around the town taking a roughly 2.5km circular route from Elms Field through the town centre and including a stretch down Denmark Street past the town hall.

We were very lucky to be supported by the Wokingham Today paper, who sent a photographer and gave us some great coverage in the paper, so thanks to them for their support. We were also incredibly grateful to the Earley Panda for making the trip down from Earley and cycling the route on one of the hottest days of the year.

The ride finished at Elms Field, where ramps and a small bicycle obstacle course had been set up and were enjoyed by some brave



children. Ice lollies and plenty of water were also provided to mitigate some of the effects of the heat.

Overall, it was a very successful first event and thanks to everyone who came along to ride or help-out. Going forward a Kidical Mass Reading and Wokingham group has now been formed with the aim of putting on monthly rides alternately between Reading and Wokingham, but with collaboration in resources which should enable the rides to grow. The group has been established by Kat Heath from Reading, who brought the Kidical mass idea down with her when she moved down from Inverness, so well done to Kat. We look forward to many fun Kidical mass rides in the future which will hopefully inspire the next generation and convince those making transport decisions to realise we need to support cycling in our towns and cities.

Tanhouse Bridge Petition

Cyclists and pedestrians, and anyone not driving in Wokingham, have always had issues with a safe direct route from north to south through the town centre. The only direct roads are over the level crossing at Barkham Road or over the roundabout at the bottom of Denmark Street and then past the



Campaign News continued...

Tesco Superstore and under the railway bridge. Both these routes are far from ideal, as they are also the only motor routes through the town and are therefore very busy with traffic, and both contain several junctions with increasing vulnerability for cyclists.

The core issue is that Wokingham has a rail line that divides the north and south, limiting the chances to cross. However it has been identified that there is solution to this problem and this is an improvement of the Tanhouse Bridge.

The Tanhouse Bridge is a 'pedestrian bridge' which crosses the railway from south of the new Carnival Leisure centre site in the north and takes those happy to use it to the top corner

of the Ormonde Road allotment. At present the crossing is two steep scaffold bridges that are virtually impossible to cross with a bike unless you are strong and fit and certainly inaccessible for those with limited mobility or anyone pushing a pram.

WATCH Wokingham and other town groups are pushing for a consensus, and some joined-up thinking between the Council and Network Rail to design a bridge that could be used by everyone and would provide a safe easy pedestrian route right through the town centre. A petition has been set up and can be found at <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/tanhousebridge>. We will continue to liaise with the Council and Network Rail with the aim of improving access

to the town and centre for those who don't want to or can't drive.

Other Wokingham News

The Woodley cycle scheme consultation has now closed. The scheme unfortunately seems to have become a bit of a political football - see separate article for details.

The LCWIP consultation is almost complete and hopefully a draft LCWIP will be available soon for public viewing. This is a significant step forward and credit to the current councillors especially councillor Paul Fishwick and his council officers for pushing this forward.

Alex Cran
WoBC Campaigner for RCC

Annual General Meeting August 2022

In August we held our AGM at RISC on London Street. It was the first time we have been able to do this in person since 2019, and so it was a good opportunity to get some constructive interaction, both around the table and informally over refreshments.

Last year's AGM hosted a lively on-line 'Question Time' for Councillors representing the four parties that make up Reading Borough Council. This year we continued the theme by discussing how the local Councils can make good decisions and how the

Reading Cycle Campaign can help them to do that.

We were pleased to have five local Councillors present at the AGM, three from Reading and two (including the Mayor) from Wokingham, who listened to specific issues raised and offered suggestions for ways the Campaign can interact with the Councils.

Suggestions from Councillors included:

- Using the Community Infrastructure Levy to fund easy-win improvements
- Engaging with Reading Borough Council's Traffic Management Sub-Committee

- Contacting ward Councillors to press for action on issues impacting their ward

Our thanks go to the Councillors who took the time to attend the AGM and contributed to the discussion.

These were: Jacopo Lanzoni, Rob, White and James Moore of Reading Borough Council, and the Worshipful the Mayor of Wokingham Borough Cllr Caroline Smith and fellow Wokingham Councillor Mike Smith.

Keith Elliott
RCC Secretary



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Chairman's Letter

Dear RCC members,

In years gone by a cough and a cold would not have stopped me going to a meeting but in these odd Covid-era days I felt it was, at the very least, inconsiderate of me to potentially pass on my germs to others and given the age profile of RCC members it could well have been dangerous to some. I was therefore pleased to hear that the AGM had gone well and that those people who did attend, especially the new Mayor of WoBC, had come up with lots of ideas and suggestions as to how our campaign can become more effective. So thank you to all of you who attended and especially to the committee members who ran the meeting.

The quiet days of the summer holidays have given me plenty of time to think about cycling in a wider sense. I don't need to make the case for encouraging cycling as a response to the many problems that humanity faces in this 21st century. That has been well done by plenty of others before me. However one area that has not been given the attention that I think it deserves is how cycling projects are dreamed up and planned in the first place.

I live near the hospital and have cycled around the area for over 40 years. It is not at all obvious to me that the highest priorities are cycle lanes on Shinfield Road and Sidmouth Street and a traffic calming chicane on Redlands Road. I understand that the Council has to bid for government

monies and that schemes have to go through certain administrative and consultative stages before they can be implemented, but how did these ideas come about in the first place? What was the major itch that a million pound scheme on the Shinfield Road was designed to scratch? We know that Sidmouth Street was funded from Covid monies - yes, it was part of the effort to keep people safely apart so that the virus could not spread so easily - but what was the process that ever got the scheme on the Council's list in the first place?

Money for cycling infrastructure improvements is always going to be limited so there should be a way of ensuring that the schemes that do get approved represent real value for money. I am hoping that the research about the town centre cycle hub that has been carried out by Dr Emma Street at the University will list what data is currently available. If one of the benefits of a secure cycle parking hub is to encourage more people to cycle into Reading, it seems obvious to me, that some data about the numbers of people cycling before and after would allow an honest evaluation of the scheme's success. Unfortunately I can see no plan whatsoever to do this.

I appreciate that this is not a straightforward thing to do. Once you start to look, you have to navigate a minefield of acronyms, LCWIP, LTN1/20 etc., and there is a methodology called by the DfT, Propensity to Cycle. Surely in

this day and age there must be a better way to prioritise possible schemes and work out which ones give the best return. I will be asking the committee to bend their minds to this problem as we work through the ideas that were generated at the AGM.

I would like to remind you all about my Chairman's Challenge. I am looking for photos of The Good, The Bad and The Ugly in cycle provision in the area. We have prizes to offer and I will announce the winners at the Reading Cycle Festival on 25 September. I hope to see as many of you as possible there and if you feel like volunteering to help on the stand, please contact us.

Finally I want to congratulate young Harry Peksa from Wokingham, who with his father has completed the Land's End to John O'Groats cycle challenge at the age of 8. The bare statistics only tell a fraction of the story. He cycled 1,245 miles and climbed 24,000 metres over 36 days. He has raised £11,455 for the Tiggy-winkle's Wildlife Hospital, which is a charity for hedgehogs near Aylesbury. However the sheer magnitude of his achievement is difficult to comprehend. Harry is in the same class at school as my granddaughter and I am not sure how many others in this class could have tackled such a challenge. Again, well done Harry. You can read all about his journey on Facebook at Harry vs. Land's End to John O'Groats.

Joe Edwards
RCC Chairman

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Kidical Mass Autumn Report

On the importance of Networks and Nettles

I had been looking forward to the third Kidical Mass Reading cycle ride. I'd seen how my five year old had loved them, I really liked the community involved, and I'm a big fan of campaigning for better cycling infrastructure.

So, despite the heatwave, I was very disappointed to wake up ill on the morning of the ride. This report is therefore brought to you in partnership with the Kidical Mass Reading Intern, Michael (the aforementioned five year old).

Where did you ride?

Michael: We started at Green Park. We chatted and rode our bikes around as everyone arrived. We cycled to Waterloo Meadows. There was one road that we went next to that was very busy but apart from that it was very quiet ones. There were quite a lot of paths not next to a road.

What's different about a Kidical Mass Ride?

Michael: It felt safe riding on the road because of the marshals. They were making sure the cars didn't hurt any



of the cyclists. It's busy with a lot of riders, so I felt more safe. It's nice to ride with other children because they go at the same speed as me.

What happened afterwards at Waterloo Meadows?

Michael: We had a snack-ish lunch and I rode my bike down the tallest hill on the bike track with my friend. Then we had some water gun fun. Some of the adults joined in spraying with their water bottles, but the children got them more wet than they got us.

At Waterloo Meadows Cllr Rachel Eden (Reading's Mayor) and Cllr Jacopo Lanzoni joined the riders, and spoke at length with our lead campaigner, Kat Heath. The ride was written up by [RDG.TODAY](https://www.rdg.today), and attended by a representative from Sustrans.

done through Love Clean Reading) and it was resolved in time for the ride.

2. If you know of any businesses that will let us put up a poster, please contact us on Twitter @kidicalmassread or through our website [kidicalmassreading.co.uk/](https://www.kidicalmassreading.co.uk/)

3. Come and join us! All are welcome. Our next ride will be a joint one with Kidical Mass Wokingham on Sunday 25 September - we will finish together at Reading Cycle Festival on Christchurch Meadows. See our website above for full details.

Further dates for your diary are Saturday 8 October, Saturday 12 November and Saturday 10 December. I hope we see you there!

Hillary Smart

Here are three things you can do to help our cause:

1. Please report any infrastructure issues you see on your outings to the Council. When scouting the route, we found that one of the paths was overgrown with stinging nettles - particularly bad for child height riders in shorts. We raised this (which can be



Reading Cycle Festival



Bigger and better Reading Cycle Festival happening on Sunday 25 September 2022

The third open-air Reading Cycle Festival will be held at the end of September and promises to be even bigger and more fun than last year.

Not only will it feature spectacular stunts to watch, but there will also be plenty of hands-on activities to inspire people to enjoy their bikes even more.

The festival will be held on the 25 September between 11am and 4pm at Christchurch Meadows, a huge green space next to the River Thames.

The event will for the first time be part of the Reading Climate Festival, which will feature a whole lot of activities encouraging positive action around climate change.

And for the second year running the festival will enjoy the support of the Reading Borough Council, which is working to promote sustainable transport.

Various clubs will be ending their rides for the day at the festival and promoting the idea that cycling is an inclusive activity that can be enjoyed by a wide range of ages and abilities.

Local branches of Kidical Mass, a more family-oriented offshoot of the global Critical Mass cycle movements, will also be ending their rides at the festival.

"We're excited that an increasing number of organisations in Reading and Wokingham are coming together to celebrate cycling as something which is both fun and a key to easing the climate crisis," says Greg Woodford, director of Avanti Cycling, one of the main sponsors of the event.

The cycling community is coming together on the day in a variety of ways, from putting on cycling activities to managing the site by providing secure bike parking.

While many organisations have already booked their pitches, some spaces are still available.

For more information please email readingcyclefestival@gmail.com

Website:

<https://readingcyclefestival.co.uk/>

Twitter @rgcyclefest

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Andy von Glehn



Bikeability Instructors Wanted

Get paid to share your passion - become a cycle instructor

Local cycle training provider Avanti Cycling have been getting people on bikes since 2014.

We cover everything from learn to ride to lorry driver cycle awareness, and now have a successful community programme in Reading including the annual Reading Cycle Festival.

We are expanding in Reading and across Berkshire and South Oxfordshire and are in need of more cycle instructors.

Bikeability instructors work flexibly to suit other commitments and teach the next generation of cyclists vital riding skills.

Our instructor courses take place every few months in Reading/East Berkshire and South Oxfordshire.

It is a 5 day course, the cost of which can be covered by a bursary obtained through the local council.

As teaching/people skills are useful for the role, we welcome people from all walks of life, including novice or 'non-expert' cyclists.

Training and mentoring will be given to improve your cycle skills.

Work is available all year round and you can get involved in other work including Bike Fix, business engagement, young people's rides, and our events.

Office based work and volunteer opportunities are also available.

To find out more and to arrange a discussion with our trainers, email summreen@avanticycling.co.uk, or get more information by visiting our website www.avanticycling.co.uk.

Why not come and find us the Reading Cycle Festival on Sunday 25 September 11am to 4pm, Christchurch Meadows. Visit their website on www.readingcyclefestival.co.uk.

Summreen Sheikh



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Winchester Cycle Count

*“Cyclists are not a tiny minority whose needs can be easily ignored.”
Winchester Cycle Count.*

What is Cycle Winchester?

Cycle Winchester was established in 2017 and campaigns to make our city better for those who cycle (or would like to). We undertake activities including organising Mass Rides and showcasing the wide variety of people who cycle in Winchester.

Like most campaign groups, we spend a lot of time making the case for better provision. We became concerned about a lack of useful (or public) data related to cycle use in the city. Hampshire County Council (the Highways Authority) and Winchester City Council have transport and climate change strategies that aim to increase levels of cycling but there is inadequate baseline data against which to measure success.

What is the Winchester Cycle Count?

A Winchester Cycle Parking Survey already exists and so CW decided to set up a Cyclist Count to examine who is on the roads, and the routes they use, by monitoring biannually (winter and summer) at specific locations.

We identified 10 sampling points around the city where a single count was carried out between 8am and 10am on a midweek morning. At each point information such as direction of entry into / exit from a junction or node was recorded.

What did we find out?

Although the counts were taken on different days they can be taken as a snapshot of a single winter morning. The total movements per hour pre 9am were 231. The total movements per hour post 9am were 124.

More than 350 cycle journeys recorded over a couple of hours on a winter morning is a significant level of activity. Early results from our summer count show (unsurprisingly) higher numbers. *Cyclists are not a tiny minority whose needs can be easily ignored.*

It was noticeable how many of these cyclists resorted to pushing bikes or using pavements to maintain safety.



Most people are cycling in spite of everything.

The route patterns at junctions were more varied than anticipated. *Cycle infrastructure should cater for cross-city travel not just access along primary routes.*

Much higher levels of cycling are seen where routes are more welcoming and traffic levels are lower. *Our authorities should be encouraged to imagine how large the numbers*

would be if cycling were to be made safer and easier.

For more information about Cycle Winchester, please visit: www.cyclewinchester.org.uk

A detailed report on the Winchester Cycle count can be found here: <https://cyclewinchester.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/CW-CountReport-JanFeb2022.pdf>

Emma Street

Let's Celebrate Cycling



We tend to dwell on the negative aspects of cycling in Reading rather than celebrating what we have.

I'm not saying there isn't a need for a fully accessible cycling infrastructure, such as safe segregated cycle paths, secure cycle parking and clearer cycling signage, but Reading Borough Council is engaged with the local cycling groups, has successfully applied for funding, and several projects are underway.

Unfortunately, with so many stakeholders involved, even making the smallest change often requires extensive consultations and costly input from consulting companies, making the whole process frustratingly slow.

So, what do we have to celebrate and what can we do to add to this list?

Here's some reasons to be cheerful:

- Chris Boardman MBE has been confirmed as England's National Active Travel Commissioner on a permanent basis. Active Travel provides funding sources, evidence, research, information/guidance and case studies relating to local cycling and walking infrastructure plans for local authorities.
- Changes to the Highway Code urge drivers to pay close attention to vulnerable road users by giving extra distance and prioritising their safety when they're sharing the road. Pedestrians sit at the top of the hierarchy, followed by cyclists, horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles.
- Increasingly setting 20mph as the default urban speed limit. Sustrans reports that studies suggest 20mph streets encourage more people to walk and cycle. We certainly saw an increase in cycling during the lockdowns as the roads felt so much safer.
- Growth of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs). LTNs minimise through-traffic from using residential neighbourhoods to avoid main roads, while still retaining local access for residents and visitors.
- Greater availability and choice of e-bikes making cycling accessible to more people, more of the time. Not only do e-bikes cut commute times and traffic congestion, but they can also be used by a wider group of people and (as an e-bike owner) I can assure you they're certainly fun!



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Let's Celebrate Cycling continued...

- Cargo bike delivery services are starting to be used by large companies such as Amazon and independent micro-businesses offering a last mile delivery service.

And specifically for Reading:

- School Streets give children the chance to walk, cycle or scoot to school safely in the street of the school without danger from traffic. There are currently trials at Thameside Primary School, Wilson Primary School and schools along Crescent Road. Visit here: reading.gov.uk/vehicles-roads-and-transport/travel-to-school/school-streets/
- KidicalMass landed here in Reading earlier this year and are already making a huge impact! Kidical masses are family-friendly mass bike rides, designed to increase families' confidence in cycling together, and to highlight the need for better cycling infrastructure so that kids can cycle to their schools, parks, doctors, etc. Visit kidicalmassreading.co.uk to join the monthly rides.
- Reading Bike Kitchen is a volunteer run community bike project where you can fix your bike, with or without help. You



can donate old bikes to be refurbished and sold on. The Bike Kitchen also offers free cycle maintenance courses. See readingbicyclekitchen.org/ for more information.

- Avanti Cycling, the cycle training specialist, helps more people onto bikes by teaching children how to cycle in traffic, giving adults confidence to ride and helping organisations implement sustainable transport policies. A number of free courses are sponsored by Reading Borough Council and CyclingUK: avanticycling.co.uk/.

Finally, for those of us that like to get out of Reading:

- CyclingUK Reading is a thriving, friendly club which is part of the national CyclingUK organisation. It provides a wide range of social cycle rides and encourages people of all levels to enjoy being out on a bike. Non-members are always welcome. View the planned rides here: readingctc.co.uk/rides/.

CyclingUK has launched a series of long distance bikepacking routes, namely the [North Downs Way](#) (2018), the [Great North Trail](#) (2019), the [King Alfred's Way](#) (2020), the [West Kernow Way](#) (2021), the [Cantii Way](#) (2022) and most recently, the [Rebellion Way](#). The King Alfred's Way passes through Reading so look out for weary bike packers and give them a smile!

There's no time to be complacent, but it does feel like changes are starting to happen nationally and locally.

If you'd like to help us maintain momentum here in Reading, why not volunteer to support the Committee plus amplify our work through sharing our social media posts.

You can meet us at this year's Reading Cycle Festival, Sunday 25 September, 11am - 4pm, Christchurch Meadows. Come along and celebrate all thing cycling!

Susan Children
Publicity Coordinator



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Next newsletter copy deadline: 1 November 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

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

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Oxfordshire County Council

Roads and Transport: 0845 310 1111

RCC's Monthly Meetings

7.30pm on the third Wednesday of each month

Wed 19 Oct 2022 - open mtg

Wed 16 Nov 2022 - cttee mtg

Wed 21 Dec 2022 - open mtg

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