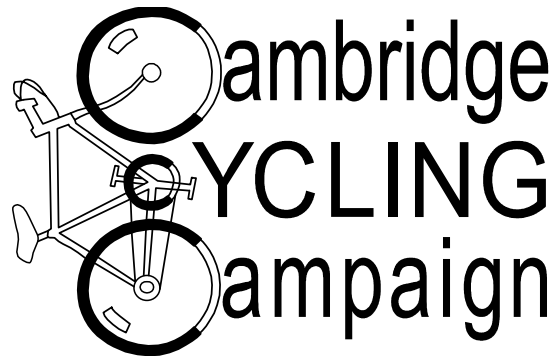


January 9, 2004

Our ref: NB04001
Your ref:

Brian Smith

Director of Environment and Transport
Cambridgeshire County Council
Castle Court, Shire Hall
Castle Hill
Cambridge CB3 0AP



Cambridge Cycling Campaign

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Dear Mr Smith,

Cycle Track Maintenance on A603 bridge over M11

For several weeks now, the cycle track alongside the A603 Barton Road has been closed where it crosses over the M11. This is presumably because of subsidence, which has caused cracks to appear in the cycle path together with alarmingly high steps on each side of the actual bridge structure.

Cyclists crossing the bridge are diverted onto the road, protected by a crash barrier. This alternative route is very narrow and does not allow oncoming cyclists to pass one another. It is also too narrow to be used by cyclists with child and other trailers.

If this were a short-term situation while repairs were carried out this would be an acceptable, if not ideal, situation. Unfortunately we understand that this is not the case, and that the cycle path will continue to be closed until well into 2004.

Could you please give us a definite date then the cycle track will be repaired and reopened?

If this is not within, say, three months then we ask that temporary repairs be carried out to smooth out the steps in the cycle track as well as the various bumps and holes, allowing the signs in the middle of the track to be removed and the track reopened until permanent repairs can be done.

We really do think it is quite unacceptable for such an important cycle route to be left in this unsatisfactory state for so long, and urge you to complete repairs as soon as possible.

Cycle Track Maintenance on A603 in general

We would like to take this opportunity to express our concern that this cycle track along its entire stretch from Barton to Cambridge has been increasingly allowed to fall into a state of disrepair.

- Large cracks are forming at a number of locations along the path parallel to the direction of a cyclist's travel; these cracks will soon be wider than a bicycle tyre (which can be less than 23mm).
- Tree roots are penetrating the path foundation leading to numerous raised bumps.

Although the path has been repaired in several places, the repairs often leave the surface with raised steps parallel to the direction of travel that can topple a cyclist if crossed at a shallow angle.

Verge Cutting

We also believe that the level of verge cutting is inadequate. In 2003 verge cutting was infrequent, with weeds being allowed to grow to maturity through the year (steadily reducing the usable width of the path) before finally being cut back in autumn.

To make things worse, the resulting clippings were then left on the path, leaving a hazardous and potentially slippery surface. Rotting grass remains on the path by the Barton Rifle Range even now.

We ask you to review the verge cutting planned for this route during 2004 to ensure that it remains free of vegetation at all times. We also ask that the cycle path be properly swept after cutting has been carried out.

In Summary

- Please advise us when the A603 cycle track at the M11 bridge will be permanently repaired.
- If this is to be after March 2004 please carry out temporary repairs to allow the cycle track to be reopened in the meantime.
- We are concerned about the general disrepair of the Cambridge – Barton cycle track in general. Please repair the bumps and cracks on the cycle track in a way which leaves the surface smooth and even.
- Please increase the frequency of verge cutting and ensure that clippings are not left on the cycle track.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Nigel Deakin