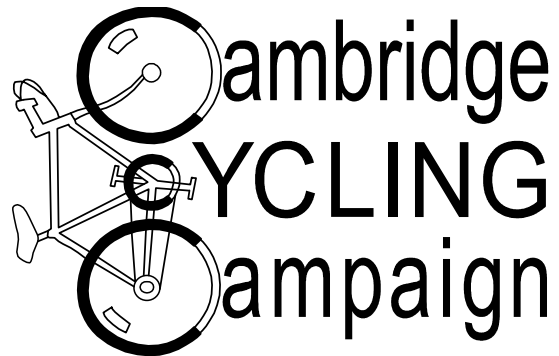


May 25, 2005

Our ref: C 05 013

David Howarth MP  
40 Windsor Road  
Cambridge  
CB4 3JN



**Cambridge Cycling Campaign**

P.O. Box 204, Cambridge CB4 3FN  
01223 690718 (phone & fax)  
contact@camcycle.org.uk  
www.camcycle.org.uk

Dear Mr Howarth,

**Cycling in Cambridge**

Congratulations on your election to Parliament as MP for Cambridge! I am writing on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign to formally introduce ourselves and to seek your views on a number of current cycling-related issues in Cambridge, as well as to update you on some of our activities which have a parliamentary focus to them.

We know you are aware of the existence of the Campaign; we appreciated you giving the time to address our AGM in 2000. We are also aware of your support for cycling in Cambridge over many years.

By way of reminder, Cambridge Cycling Campaign is a local voluntary organisation with over 700 members. We work closely with local government and others to improve conditions for cyclists in Cambridge. As you will be aware, more people (25%) cycle to work in Cambridge than anywhere else in the UK.

We have an extensive website at [www.camcycle.org.uk](http://www.camcycle.org.uk) and we have taken the liberty of adding your office to the recipients of our mailing list for our *Newsletter*, published bi-monthly.

Anne Campbell, our previous MP, spoke up on many occasions for cyclists in Cambridge and beyond. We hope this will continue, now that you are MP in a city with such a strong cycling culture.

**Honorary membership**

In recognition of her status as the MP for Cambridge we offered Mrs Campbell honorary membership of Cambridge Cycling Campaign and were delighted that she was able to accept. We would now like to offer you honorary membership in the same way and would be delighted and honoured ourselves if you felt able to accept. I enclose a membership form for your information; if you would like to join then either fill in the form or just let us know. In

any event we would like to send you copies of our bi-monthly newsletter to keep you informed.

## **1. Cambridge city centre daytime cycling ban – proposed suspension**

One of the most important issues for cyclists in Cambridge is the daytime cycling ban in several City Centre streets. Although this ban was introduced several years before the Campaign was formed, several of our committee members were involved in campaigning against it and remember your clear opposition to it at the time.

As you will be aware, the Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee, and subsequently the Liberal Democrat-run City Council have both recently passed motions in support of a proposed experimental suspension of this ban.

Cambridge Cycling Campaign is strongly in support of the proposed experimental suspension. We believe that pedestrians and cyclists can co-exist in the city centre, as demonstrated by the lack of current major problems on Sundays, when cycling has always been permitted. We believe cyclists should ride with consideration and give way to pedestrians when necessary (as many do), and we will do what we can to help this come about.

Since the motions were passed, we have been liaising with County Council officers as part of a Working Group on the details of the experiment. Key aspects we have been pushing for are the renaming of the area as a “Pedestrian Priority Zone”, and increased enforcement by the police against cyclists travelling illegally (e.g. on pavements or in the wrong direction) in this area in particular. Sadly, it appears that the Department for Transport is likely to be against the use of the term “Pedestrian Priority Zone”, and police do not see traffic enforcement as a priority. We will continue to pressure for these and other aspects related to the proposed experiment.

We enclose for your interest a copy of our letter to City Council Members (prior to their vote on the matter) and a copy of our Position paper on Responsible, Legal Cycling.

We write to ask whether you too are in support of this proposed experimental suspension. If you are, we would welcome any suggestions or ideas you have as to how this experiment can be made a success.

## **2. Local Transport Notes (LTNs)**

Last year, the Department for Transport issued two draft guidance notes on walking and cycling. As part of the consultation on these, we wrote, welcoming them, as they stood to promote many items of best practice to the status of official government policy. Indeed, we felt that if the advice in the Notes were consistently translated into practice on the ground (which is sadly rather unlikely), the UK would arguably have some of the best provision for cyclists in Europe.

Even in Local Authorities such as our own, which has historically had a reasonable degree of commitment to the needs of cyclists and walkers, best practice is rarely adhered to, particularly with regard to widths of cycle lanes and tracks and to the priority given to cyclists on the roads. We have often had to press extremely hard to get even basic standards implemented.

Sadly, the outcome of the consultation on the LTNs has yet to be published. We are looking forward to this and hope that they have not been watered down.

### 3. General transport regulations

As part of our consultation response to the LTNs, we wrote to the DfT asking them to consider a small number of changes to signage regulations which would greatly increase the chance of widescale improvements for cyclists.

These three examples each represent a simple, inexpensive, practical and unbureaucratic approach to making cycling a more attractive form of transport. We hope they might be matters you will speak up in favour of, should the opportunity arise.

**a. Cycle exemptions from one-way streets:** At present a physical bollard needs to be constructed in the road to provide a cycle gap so cyclists are not actually riding past the no entry sign. The expense and space required makes it difficult for our local highway authority to implement schemes even when there is the desire to do so. We therefore again request reconsideration by the Department to enable an 'Except Cyclists' sign to be considered acceptable underneath a 'No Entry' sign. This arrangement seems to work fine in other European countries. A precedent already exists in the UK for bus exemptions, seemingly without problems.

**b. Introduction of traffic lights which allow a cycle left filter:** This would allow cyclists to turn left into a side road whilst preventing other traffic from proceeding while lights are red, purely by the use of signing/lights and without the construction of an extra lane. Again, European examples of this arrangement exist and work without problems.

**c. Pedestrian/Cycle crossing phase at traffic lights:** We would like to see the Department consider the introduction of regulations which would allow a 'pedestrians and cyclists may cross phase' at signalled junctions, as works well in other European countries. This would represent an extension to the existing regulations for an 'all green' phase for pedestrians which allows on-road cyclists (who would otherwise be waiting at a red signal) to proceed in all directions at the same time as pedestrians, perhaps requiring cyclists to give way to pedestrians.

### 4. Cycle Training

Cambridge Cycling Campaign has been in support of a number of cycle training activities in our 10-year existence. We feel this is an area of importance for which more parliamentary support is needed. Cycle training is particularly important for younger children, so that the opportunity to introduce younger children to the benefits of cycling is not lost.

### 5. Mandatory Cycle Lanes

Our most recent activity having a parliamentary aspect to it has been on the issue of vehicle encroachments on mandatory cycle lanes (i.e. cycle lanes where it is mandatory for motor vehicles not to drive/stop/park). The police interpretation of regulations with regard to such lanes has been at variance with the Department for Transport's.

Our concern arose with this issue due to guidance being given to new motorists under instruction that they are 'allowed' to enter such lanes, in order to avoid causing temporary delay to other motorists behind them. We felt this is clearly neither the spirit nor the letter of the law, which we believe seeks to protect cycle space for good reason, and contacted a range of bodies in response.

Sadly this is an area of law where there seems to be little joined-up thinking. Under the new arrangements for Local Authority Parking Enforcement (legally known as 'decriminalised' parking enforcement due to the change to civil enforcement by a Local Authority), action cannot be taken by civilian wardens against vehicles parking in such lanes. Yet the police also take little interest in this, despite the danger and inconvenience to cyclists which parking or driving in such lanes represents.

Our vision is one where the rule of law is adhered to by all classes of road user, including both cyclists and pedestrians. The current situation of barely any enforcement leads to a relative free-for-all by all user groups, resulting in danger, inconvenience and delays – a situation which is manifestly in no-one's interest.

We would be pleased to provide you with any further information you need on any of the above. All our letters are also available on our website, at <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/campaigning/letters/>.

We know this is a busy time for you, but we hope you will have time to let us your views on the proposed suspension of the city centre cycling ban and on any of the above other issues.

Yours sincerely,  
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Martin Lucas-Smith  
Co-ordinator