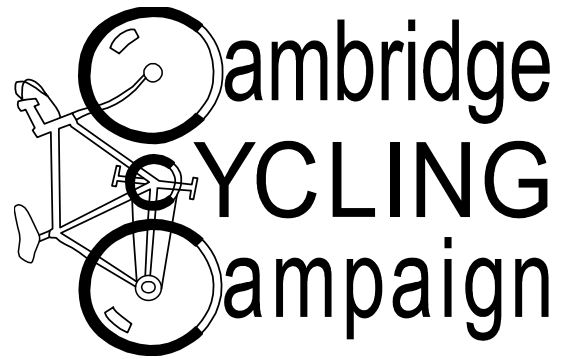


December 19, 2005

Our ref: L06004  
Your ref:

Julie Spence  
Chief Constable  
Cambridgeshire Constabulary HQ  
Hinchingsbrooke Park  
Huntingdon  
PE29 6NP



**Cambridge Cycling Campaign**

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

Dear Chief Constable,

### **Policing of Mandatory Cycle Lanes**

Cambridge Cycling Campaign has continuing concerns over the attitudes of Officers regarding the enforcement of the Law relating to Mandatory Cycle Lanes (MCLs).

We have raised this issue in the past and, following a letter written to the previous Chief Constable, we received a most unsatisfactory answer. We copied that letter to the Department for Transport who replied to the Officer concerned questioning the answer given. We received no amended letter. We attach copies of those three letters.

We raise this again as a member wrote on a similar issue following a crash with a motor vehicle entering an MCL, and feels he has had no satisfactory answer. I, the Cambridge Cycling Campaign's Liaison Officer, have also had what I feel is unsatisfactory answers from Officers on several occasions. (e.g. incident no 111 of Nov 4<sup>th</sup> where an unlit HGV trailer was left overnight in a contra-flow cycle lane).

Finally on 14 December a Goods Vehicle was parked completely blocking the contra-flow cycle lane in Pembroke Street for some 4 hours and no Officer took any action.

You should be aware that some 28% of all trips in Cambridge are by bike, and the contra-flow cycle lane in Pembroke Street/Downing Street is one of the busiest routes for cyclists in the City. We very much doubt that if one of the busiest motor vehicle routes in the area was blocked by illegal action for 4 hours (11:00-15:00) Officers would pass by and ignore the fact.

Whilst cycling to a meeting I first encountered the obstruction and pointed out to the driver that he was causing a serious and dangerous obstruction, and that what he was doing was illegal. On my return from a meeting over an hour later I was very concerned to find the vehicle still there. I complained again, and the driver said it couldn't be illegal as on at least two occasions Police Officers had passed in vehicles and taken no action. I returned to my office and reported the matter as incident 279 of 14 Dec. I gather that a female Officer (CSO?) also cycled passed in the lane, yet took no action.

We are very concerned that the lack of action by Officers at such incidents when either passing, or when they are reported, leaves motorists believing that they do no wrong by entering or parking in such lanes even when they endanger cyclists. We would be grateful if you could tell us how many drivers have been prosecuted in the last two years for entering or parking in a MCL.

As far as we are aware there is no ambiguity over the Law. No motor vehicles may enter such lanes except under exceptional circumstances. Both the DfT and the DSA have confirmed our view. We have checked with the County Council that the TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) for this lane has no exceptions. I will agree that there is ambiguity in some eyes because of the existence of Local Authority Parking Enforcement (LAPE), but it must be clear to all in authority, that Civilian Parking Attendants currently have no powers over enforcement of such things as Urban Clearways, MCLs and 'zigzag' lines adjacent to pedestrian crossings, and hence this must remain the responsibility of the Police.

We quite understand that no specific action can be taken about this individual vehicle in Pembroke Street, but Cambridge Cycling Campaign would ask for some assurances that Officers are correctly briefed about the Law regarding cycle lanes. We also ask that the dangers that cyclists face when motorists disregard this law be taken seriously by all Officers.

As a responsible organisation Cambridge Cycling Campaign has produced both a 'Legal and Responsible Cycling' booklet and a Cycle Lighting poster (copies enclosed). We expect our members and others to obey the Law. We have also written to the Department of Transport, regarding the provisions in the Traffic Management Act that should eventually allow Civilian Parking Attendants to enforce regulations regarding MCLs, but it seems that such powers will not be enabled in the short term.

There are a number of locations both within and outside the City where abuse of MCLs either by stationary or moving vehicles is a daily occurrence. Cambridgeshire County Council has just been criticised by Government for failing to reduce the KSI figures for cyclists. Without co-operation from the Police in enforcing such Laws as make cycling safer we fail to see how such targets will ever be met.

The ACPO/DfT/Home Office statement on a 'Roads Policing Strategy' issued in January states:

*Roads policing seeks to ensure that people can all use the roads, go about their daily life and get round their towns safely and without being harmed or intimidated by unlawful and anti-social behaviour on the road.*

Please can you let us know how Officers are currently briefed on this issue, and how you propose to improve the situation? I would be happy to meet informally with a Senior Officer if that is seen as the best way to progress this issue.

Yours sincerely,  
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Jim Chisholm

cc Brian Smith, Cambridgeshire County Council  
David Howarth MP  
Andrew Lansley MP  
Bob Richards, DfT