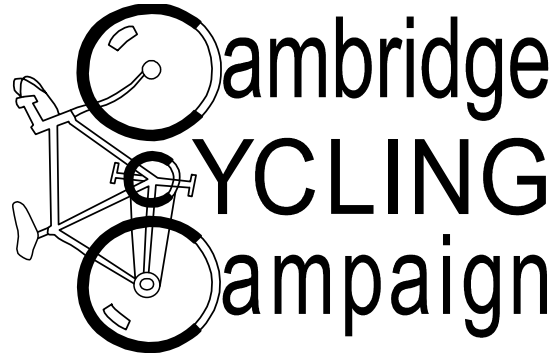


September 13, 2006

Our ref: C 06 027

Ellen Muirhead,  
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CB1 1JG



**Cambridge Cycling Campaign**

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Dear Ellen,

**Operation Cyclone: clearance of abandoned bikes**

We have just heard that a cull of abandoned bikes is about to take place in the city centre<sup>1</sup>. We welcome such a move, though we note this has already been ongoing by the City Rangers for years. We agree that removal of abandoned bikes is a good thing, as it keeps streets / railings / cycle parking clear for active users, thus meaning more space available to park cycles securely.

However, a few concerns have been raised by on our members' e-mail list about the clearance. We would welcome reassurance on the following points, and hope that they can be actively considered if they have not been already.

1. Guidance is needed on what exactly constitutes an 'abandoned' bike, to prevent mistakes being made.
2. The period of 7 days notice is too short (and wouldn't allow for a typical holiday). 2 weeks or more would be appropriate.
3. Labels added to bikes must not be stuck on with an adhesive, in case damage results to a bike that turns out not to be abandoned. One member suggested use of a cable tie to affix a laminated notice.
4. A quality management scheme needs to be in place to ensure that notice periods are correctly adhered to. By a "quality scheme" we mean a management structure that ensures that if the policy / notice says the labelled bike will be impounded in two weeks, it is not removed any earlier, and that labels don't appear on bikes claiming that they were there a week before they actually were. It shouldn't require a published set of rules, just good management and fairness / discretion in the way it is applied.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cambs-police.co.uk/newsappeals/news/newsitem.asp?NewsID=1596>

5. Any bikes removed should be registered and stored for a reasonable period (perhaps a month or two?) before disposal in order to allow people to recover bikes that have been wrongly removed.
6. No sweeps / purges should be carried out during college holidays when owners may be away for long periods. Having said that, it is in nobody's interests to have students bikes left unused on the streets or public cycle parking for long periods so holiday storage is an issue that should be addressed. Avoiding Christmas and Easter vacations in the first instance would be sensible.
7. What is the procedure for people who return to find that their bike is missing? One member suggested a notice attached to the rack notifying the phone number to call.

We look forward to hearing from you on these points and hope that we can work pro-actively together on such matters.

We would welcome being consulted on operations like this in future. Not only would this help ensure that problems are minimised, but would give additional publicity to a valuable scheme, publicity we are very happy to give.

### **The need for more cycle parking locations**

Whilst writing, we wish to restate our view that by far the best way to reduce (still high) levels of cycle theft is to provide an increased number of secure stands. We really hope that the police can bring pressure on the City and County Councils for a widespread programme of new cycle stands, as cycle theft will remain high while parking is unavailable.

You will be aware there remains a very considerable shortage of cycle parking around the city, as evidenced by cycles left against walls, on pavements, etc. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of locations around Cambridge where new stands could be provided, and we are in the process of building up a public database of these via our the mapping system on our website, at <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/map/> .

The following photo, which a member of the public has added to our system, at:

<http://www.camcycle.org.uk/map/location/9069/>

taken in Bateman Street demonstrates this problem. Here is an example where literally hundreds of cycles are parked totally insecurely. Banks of stands should be installed on-street at intervals along the length of the street. Similar examples of insecure parking can be found all over the city.

As this project progresses, we would welcome discussions with you about pressuring the relevant authorities, perhaps including pressure within the police authority itself, to fund such parking. Without new stands, the efforts to reduce cycle theft will be of limited effectiveness.

Yours sincerely,  
on behalf of the Cycle Parking Subgroup,  
Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Martin Lucas-Smith  
Co-ordinator