



One Way Streets

Cyclists are inconvenienced by one-way streets far more than motorists. For this reason, cyclists have been exempted by a variety of means from the one-way restrictions in several streets in Cambridge.

This document discusses these various ways of exempting cycles from one-way restrictions and proposes that they be applied far more widely in Cambridge.

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One Way Streets

Exempting cyclists from one-way streets is a simple but very successful way of making cycling easier and more convenient. Experience in Cambridge has shown that wherever an exemption has been introduced it has worked well and made a big difference to the convenience of cyclists.



*One way for cars,
two-way for cycles:
Garlic Row*

The reason why exempting cyclists from a one-way street makes such a difference is that it opens up a totally new route to cyclists that did not exist before. There is no other way of creating a totally new cycle route as cheaply.

We would therefore like to see many more exemptions for cyclists from one-way streets. Introducing an exemption is relatively simple (though we would like to see it made even simpler) but the benefits are disproportionate. They are therefore a very good use of council money.

In this document we discuss the reasons why one-way streets exist and discuss the various technical means for exempting cyclists. We point out that cyclists have already been successfully exempted from some of the narrowest and also some of the busiest one-way streets in Cambridge. This suggests that almost all one-way streets in Cambridge can be opened up to two-way cycles in a similar manner.

We therefore propose that a review be conducted of every one-way street in Cambridge with the aim of opening up as many of them as possible to two-way cycles.

Why are streets made one-way?

There are two main reasons why a road is made one-way:

- Because it is narrow - though this is far from an absolute principle: some very narrow roads (such as Trinity Lane or Botolph Lane) are two-way, whilst of the many roads in Cambridge which are too narrow for two cars to pass, only a minority are one-way.
- As part of a wider traffic management scheme, such as the streets in the Newtown area south of Lensfield Road which have been made one-way to discourage rat-running.

*Cover: Bene't Street:
Can it be made two-
way for cyclists?*

Why exempt Cycles?

For many years, however, it has been common practice to formally 'exempt' cycles from many of the one-way streets on Cambridge. There are several reasons for doing this:

- Cycles require less road width than cars and lorries
- Cycles are environmentally benign and so need not be included in traffic management measures aimed at motor vehicles
- Cyclists find one-way streets much more of an inconvenience than motorists. Cycles are human-powered, and any diversion needs additional physical effort. In addition, since bicycles travel more slowly than motor vehicles, any diversion causes greater delay to cyclists than to motorists.

How can Cycles be exempted?

Government regulations provide two means to 'exempt' cycles from a one-way street:

- by keeping the street one-way to motor traffic whilst providing a contraflow lane to allow cycles to travel in the opposite direction.
- by making the street two-way for all traffic and 'plugging' the entry point at one end so that only cycles may enter the street. The resulting street is sometimes described as a false one-way street.

Whilst contraflow cycle lanes provide a certain degree of protection for cycles travelling against the flow of motor



*Left: Contraflow lane:
Downing Street*



*Right: False one-way street with plug:
St Barnabas Road*

traffic they are difficult to implement because they require a ban on parking on the contraflow side of the road. For this reason contraflow lanes are rare. In Cambridge there are only three examples, Downing Street/Pembroke Street being the most well-known.

The false one-way street arrangement, however, is much easier to implement because it doesn't require a ban on parking on the contraflow side. Although such streets do not provide a protected lane for contraflow cycles (though an advisory lane can sometimes be of value) they have been introduced in numerous locations around Cambridge and have proven to be entirely satisfactory. St Barnabas Road is one of many examples.



Narrow and two-way to all traffic: Trinity Lane

Making Exemption Universal

We believe that many more one-way streets in Cambridge can and should be made available to cycles in both directions. In fact we would say that there should be a general presumption that all one-way streets be made available for two-way cyclists unless there is a good reason for not doing so.

We would, moreover, argue that there are very few one-way streets in Cambridge which cannot be made two-way for cyclists.

Most are similar in width and traffic levels to other streets that are still two-way to all traffic, and certainly to many that are two-way to cycles.

We see no reason, therefore, why even the narrowest one-way streets should not be made two-way for cycles. **In our**

view, no street is too narrow to be made two-way for cyclists. There are already numerous examples in Cambridge of very narrow streets which are two-way for cyclists: George Street and Garden Walk, for example, are too narrow for even a car and a bicycle to pass one another and yet both have the 'plug' arrangement to make them two-way for cyclists. We believe this to work perfectly satisfactorily. One reason for this is that the very narrowness of the streets keeps traffic speeds low.



Narrow and one-way, even to cycles: Green Street

Perhaps contrary to what might be expected, any conflict between motor vehicles and cycles travelling in the 'wrong' direction is most likely to occur where the street is wider and traffic speeds are greater. Measures can, however, be taken to minimise such conflict. For example, in Bateman Street an advisory con-



*This very narrow street is one-way to cars but two-way for cycles:
George Street*

traflow cycle lane has helped avoid conflict, not by providing protection for cycles but by giving a visible reminder to motorists to expect oncoming cycles. In the one-way 'except cycles' section of New Street, the presence of speed humps keeps traffic speeds low and reduces conflict between motor vehicles and oncoming cycles.

We therefore propose that a comprehensive review should be made of all one-way streets in Cambridge with the aim of making as many as possible available to two-way cycles. The appendix at the end of this

document contains a full list of all the one-way streets that we would like to see converted.

Many one-way streets in Cambridge are already used, illegally, by cyclists in the 'wrong' direction. Because such illegal use provides strong evidence of a 'desire line' for cyclists, those streets that see most illegal use should be considered most urgently for conversion.

Simplifying the Layout

In the Netherlands and in Denmark, cycles can be exempted from a one-way street simply by placing an 'except cyclists' notice under the no-entry signs. In Groningen in the Netherlands, every one-way street has such an exemption.



One-way street with cycle exemption in Groningen. The plate under the no entry sign says 'except cycles and mopeds'

In Britain, however, cycles cannot be exempted from no-entry signs. Instead a traffic bollard must be constructed and a narrow 'gap' provided for cycles. This is relatively expensive and takes up a significant amount of road width. It is also visually intrusive.

Although we approve of the simplicity and cheapness of the Dutch and Danish arrangement we do see that the British arrangement has some advantages: in partic-

ular it helps prevent conflict between traffic waiting to emerge from the end of a one-way street and contraflow cycles turning into it. We do, however, believe that a physical bollard is unnecessary in many places and white road markings would be adequate.

An additional disadvantage of providing a traffic bollard is that it forces cyclists over to the far left-hand side of the road so that if a vehicle is parked close to the junction then cyclists must perform a sharp right turn to pass it. When this occurs cyclists frequently ignore the cycle gap and ride

straight through the no-entry signs. This is the case every day in St Philip's Road.

The best arrangement we have seen in Cambridge is Malcolm Street, at the entrance to the contraflow lane, although we are not sure whether it satisfies government regulations. Here a white line is used instead of a bollard.

We would encourage the County Council to continue to seek imaginative methods to exempt cycles from no-entry signs at the entrance to 'false' one-way streets, without the burden of the full arrangement of bollards and signs.



Left: Contraflow cycling with no bollard and a single no-entry sign: Malcolm Street



Right: Detail of entrance to contraflow lane

In some locations in Cambridge cycles have been given exemption from no-entry signs by marking a cycle track on the footway that bypasses the no-entry signs. Examples are Hobson Street (King Street end) and Garden Walk (Victoria Road end). Whilst we applaud the ingenuity of the County Council in trying to work round the restrictions of Government regulations, we believe that such arrangements are awkward and inconvenient for cycles and we would prefer them to be avoided.

Changing the Regulations

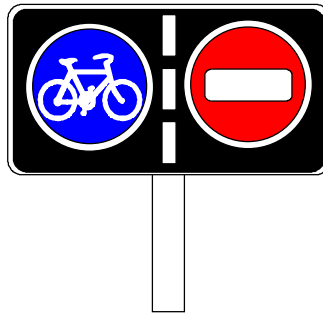
Whilst we realise this is not directly within the County Council's control, we would like to see Government regulations being amended to make it much simpler to allow cycles to use a one-way street in both directions.

There are two changes we would like to see:

- It should not be necessary to construct a physical bollard with cycle gap to allow cycles past a set of

no-entry signs. Whilst a bollard may be appropriate in some locations, it should be sufficient to mark a lane divider on the carriageway surface, perhaps in thick white paint as can be seen in Malcolm Street (though we believe this may unfortunately bend the current regulations).

To support such a layout we would like to propose a



new design of traffic sign, to be erected to the left of the cycle gap. This consists of a cycles-only together with a no-entry sign:

- It should be possible to make a street one-way for motor vehicles and two-way for cycles without the need to construct a contraflow cycle lane. This would avoid the need to make the street two-way to all traffic, with a plug at one end, when a contraflow lane cannot be provided.

Appendix 1: One-way streets in Cambridge

Priorities for Conversion

This section lists some one-way streets in Cambridge that we believe should be made two-way for cyclists as a matter of priority.

- Bene't Street/Wheeler Street.
- Newtown area: Brookside (southern end)/St Eligus Street/Norwich Street /Coronation Street/Panton Street (northern end)/Union Road

- Kingston Street.

This street lies on a direct desire line for cyclists heading from the station to the North of the city.

- North Romsey: Sedgwick Street/Catherine Street/Thoday Street/Ross Street/Hemingford Road/Belgrave Road.



Bene't Street. Would be a valuable alternative to the pedestrian zone.



Panton Street, one of several one-way streets in Newtown



Kingston Street, on the direct route north from the station



Sedgwick Street, one of many one-way streets in North Romsey

- Burleigh Street (eastern end). This is a very busy route from the Norfolk Street area into the City Centre, despite the fact that the eastern end is one-way.
- Argyll Street (west)/Cockburn Street/Hope Street.

In this block of streets, Stockwell Street already has a cycle plug to make it two-way to cyclists whilst the eastern end of Argyll Street is two-way to all vehicles. We see no reason why all these streets cannot be two-way to cyclists.



*Burleigh Street:
The eastern end is still one-way*



Hope Street: Adjacent streets are two-way to cyclists. Why not this one?

- Mawson Road (northern end).

Ironically, because of waiting restrictions at the Mill Road end, the one-way section of this street is wider than the two-way section. Exempting cycles from the one-way restriction here would allow cyclists from the Perowne Street area to avoid Mill Road completely.



Argyle Street. The section of street behind the camera is no wider yet is two-way



Hemingford Road. Exempting cyclists here would allow some cyclists from Coleridge Road to avoid Mill Road.

Other Streets for Conversion

This section lists the remaining one-way streets in Cambridge that we believe should be considered for making two-way for cyclists

- Corn Exchange Street.

If this street were two-way to cyclists then, together with Bene't Street and Wheeler Street, it would provide an invaluable route from King's Parade to Downing Street and St Andrew's Street, avoiding both the pedestrian zone and the unpleasant Silver Street and Pembroke Street junctions.

Some rearrangement might be needed to allow cycles to join the car park exit road and avoid the car park queue.

- New Square (South side)
- Willis Road/Collier Road/Guest Road/Mackenzie Road
- Perowne Street/Emery Road/Emery Street
- Covent Garden (northern end)
- Vinery Road (northern end)
- Mercers Row/Swann's Road
- Harvest Way
- Abbey Walk
- Trinity Street/St John's Street
- Market Street/St Mary's Street
- Bridge Street (southern end)/Sidney Street (northern end)
- Green Street
- Round Church Street
- Park Terrace
- Fitzwilliam Street
- Mount Pleasant/Shelly Row/Albion Row
- Springfield Road
- Albert Street

Appendix 2: Existing One-way streets with cycle exemption

This is a list of all the 'one-way' streets that can be used by cycles in both directions. These generally work very well, and are included here for reference.

One-way Streets with Contraflow lanes

The following streets are one-way, with a contraflow lane for cycles

- Downing Street/Pembroke Street
- Malcolm Street
- Tennis Court Road (southern end)

False One-way Streets with Cycle Plugs

The following streets are technically two-way but motor traffic is prohibited from entering at one end, making them one-way in practice.

- Hobson Street. We think the design and signing of the cycle (and motor cycle) gap is too discreet.
- St Phillips Road. Parking close to the cycle gaps causes many cyclists to ignore them.
- St Barnabas Road
- Abbey Street



*Left: St Phillip's Road.
Parking close to the far cycle gap
has rendered it unusable.
This is cycle exemption at its most
complicated and expensive.*



*Right: King Street.
The cycle gap appears to take
cyclists onto the pavement.
Most cyclists choose
to stay on the road.*

- John Street
- Garlic Row
- Norfolk Street
- New Street (central section)
- Fair Street
- George Street
- Selwyn Road
- Tenison Road (the short section on the west side of the green).

There is a missing cycles-only sign at the cycle gap.

- Sidney Street (south).

The cycle gap at the Market Street junction is on the right-hand side of the road. This is dangerous and quite wrong. It leads cyclists onto the wrong side of Sidney Street, directly into the path of oncoming traffic. Many cyclists find it safer to perform a conventional right turn here, even though this means they have to ride through the non-entry signs.