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City Centre cycle ban to be lifted

The most important Council decision about Cambridge cycling for many years – see page 2



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Cambridge Cycling Campaign was set up in 1995 to voice the concerns of cyclists. We are not a cycling club but an organisation for lobbying and campaigning for the rights of cyclists, and for promoting cycling in and around Cambridge.

Our regular stall on Saturdays outside the Guildhall is the public face of the campaign; volunteers are always welcome to help. And don't forget our meetings, open to all, on the first Tuesday of each month, 7.30 for 8.00 pm at the Friends' Meeting House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge.

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City Centre cycle ban to be lifted for trial period

On 17 January, the Cambridge Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee resolved to:

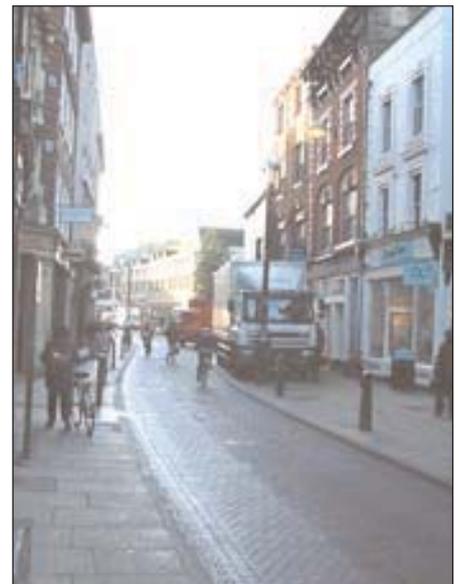
- i. support, subject to consultation, an experiment to suspend the cycling restriction in the historic centre pedestrian zone for up to 18 months;
- ii. delegate the determination of the consultation feedback to the Director of Environment and Transport (or his successor) in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair of the Area Joint Committee;
- iii. support the provision of signing indicating that pedestrians have precedence over cyclists during the 10am–4pm restricted hours;
- iv. retain the closure of the gates at the Hobson Street junction to control the entry speed of cyclists;
- v. support further independent on-street research after 12 months to gauge public opinion on the experimental suspension to be jointly funded by the City and County Councils; and
- vi. refer the finding of the research to this Area Joint Committee for a final decision on whether the experiment is made permanent.

The proposal was put forward by Councillor John Reynolds (Conservative) and seconded by Councillor Sian Reid (Liberal Democrat). It was passed by eight votes (one Conservative and seven Liberal Democrats) to three (all Labour).

The plan to lift the city centre cycle ban is the most important Council decision about Cambridge cycling for many years. At last we will have the viable all-day south to north route through the city centre for which cyclists have campaigned ever since the cycle ban was brought in thirteen years ago.

The reason why the AJC, which consists of equal numbers of City councillors and County councillors, made this dramatic decision derives from efforts to make two-way cycling legal in Trinity Street between 10 am and 4 pm (see report in *Newsletter* 56). The AJC had come out in strong support of two-way cycling, but County Council officers were worried that this would be unsafe and could result in litigation if people were injured. The matter was sent for decision to the County Council's Cabinet. With the support of a petition, we were able to address the meeting and to contribute to the case for two-way cycling. After discussion, the Cabinet referred the matter back to the Area Joint Committee for them to consider what viable options were available for implementing the scheme.

Council officers continued to maintain that two-way cycling in Trinity Street was not practicable. This led to a search for an alternative way of providing a south to north route and to the emergence of the obvious



Sidney Street before 10 am.

simple but radical solution – to lift the cycle ban but to maintain pedestrian priority during the 10 am to 4 pm period. We strongly support this solution, which we think is clearly better for both pedestrians and cyclists than two-way cycling in Trinity Street.

Local government opinion on cycling in pedestrianised areas has been shifting recently partly because of successful schemes to permit such cycling in

continental cities. Updated advice from the Department for Transport now suggests that pedestrians and cyclists can coexist in pedestrianised areas. We would add that such coexistence is currently demonstrated in Cambridge on Sundays when all-day cycling is permitted in the city centre and when responsible cyclists do give way to pedestrians.

We support the principle of pedestrian priority and the suggestion that clear signing should indicate that pedestrians have precedence over cyclists in the area between 10 am and 4 pm. Council officers say that the police should give greater attention to illegal footway cycling and to illegal contraflow cycling. They ask for 'a commitment from cycle interest groups to support enforcement action on illegal cycle movements and to promote sensible and responsible cycling throughout the historic centre pedestrian zone.' We are willing to provide such a commitment: the Campaign's agreed policy is set out in our *Position Paper on Responsible, Legal Cycling*, available online at www.camcycle.org.uk/campaigning/papers/legality/ or on request from our usual contact address.

It is important to remember that much of the historic centre pedestrian zone is, even with the current prohibition, a zone for cyclists as well as for pedestrians. To call it simply a pedestrian zone can give a misleading impression. During the 10 am – 4 pm period, the period of restriction, cycling is, and always has been, permitted on more than half of the length of the roadways within the so-called pedestrian zone – one-way cycling in Trinity Street, St John's Street and Green Street, and two-way cycling in Trinity Lane. The important decision that has just been made is less dramatic than it might seem to people not familiar with these details. For the future we think that a change of name from pedestrian zone to pedestrian priority zone is needed.

The decision on 17 January is only for an experimental scheme, which will not necessarily become permanent. To convince people that it should be made permanent, much work will be needed by local politicians, officials, ourselves and others. This will not be easy.

James Woodburn

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Safety audits, our petition and two-way cycling in Corn Exchange Street

Safety audits are secret no more! The secret and unaccountable procedures by which local authority transport engineers in their role as safety auditors assess the safety of new local road schemes are now out in the open and available for democratic scrutiny and discussion. The latest safety audit carried out on 2 December 2004 on the controversial plans for two-way cycling in Corn Exchange Street can, unlike previous audits, be read and assessed by anyone interested. It has just been published in full on the County Council's website (within the section of their site on Agendas and Minutes for the Area Joint committee), probably largely as a result of the Freedom of Information Act which has just come into operation.

The audit makes depressing reading. The safety auditors' assessment is that two-way

cycling in Corn Exchange Street would be unsafe and should not be permitted, a conclusion which we do not accept. For the first time, however, we can see clearly what the arguments are and can evaluate them and challenge them which we will do at the meeting of the Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee meeting on 17 January. To obtain speaking rights at this meeting we had to obtain the support of fifty Cambridge residents for our petition 'We, the signatories of this petition, ask the Cambridge Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee to insist that two-way cycling be permitted in Corn Exchange Street'. We circulated members of the Campaign by email and received a quite remarkable response. 174 Cambridge residents and many more people from outside Cambridge emailed back in support. Thanks to all who supported us. With this

welcome backing we will be able to put our case.

In *Newsletter 57* (December 2004 – January 2005, pages 6–7) we wrote about our long struggle to obtain a cycle contraflow in Corn Exchange Street. Two-way cycling in this street is essential to provide effective access to the 500-space cycle park to be built as part of the Grand Arcade development. It is also needed to provide a necessary route for cycling to Regent Street and beyond from the Guildhall and Market Square area of the city.

Despite the negative safety audit, the Senior Engineer now responsible for the road design of Corn Exchange Street, gives qualified support for two-way cycling in her report for the 17 January meeting (also published on the County Council's website). We greatly welcome her efforts to amend the design to

make it safer and more acceptable. At the meeting we will be making suggestions for additional amendments to improve the design and have already circulated to the County and City Councillor members of the Committee a written version of many of the points that we will be putting before them.

But there is a sting in the tail of the report. The Officer's report focuses on the place where the proposed contraflow would cross in front of the car exits beneath the Crowne Plaza Hotel where vehicles would emerge into Corn Exchange Street from the new Grand Arcade car park as the location where cyclists would be at greatest risk. She writes: 'Quantifying the degree of risk to cyclists is very difficult and a resolution of this issue is fundamental to the success of this project. Given the risk of litigation that exists if cyclists are involved in accidents at the car park exits, it is considered appropriate for both authorities [the City and County Councils] to balance the risk against the benefits.' We do not accept this approach. The two councils have delegated decision-making powers to their Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee and members of this committee should take the decision as they normally do for Cambridge road designs. They have much more knowledge of road design safety issues and of the details of this particular scheme than any other council decision-making bodies to which the issue might be referred.

We consider that both the car exits and the proposed arrangements for taking contraflow cyclists past the car exits have been much improved from earlier designs. There is to be a raised table at this location designed to slow down cyclists as well as motorists. (We know that this will be controversial with some cyclists!) We believe that the safety auditors' suggestion (paragraph A.1.9e) of cyclists going past the car exits at 20 to 25 mph is implausible if the raised table is appropriately designed and installed.

At present, plenty of cyclists cycle every day across the car exits, as they are legally entitled to do if they have walked their bicycles along the footway beneath the car park. Yet the safety auditors record no injury accidents involving cyclists either at the unimproved car exits or anywhere else in Corn Exchange Street. Although there undoubtedly will be some risk to cyclists, especially the inexperienced, incompetent or careless, even after the car exits have been improved as planned, we consider that the risks are small and comparable to the risks run by cyclists elsewhere in the narrow, congested streets of central Cambridge in which motorists, pedestrians and cyclists in general interact successfully. Fears of compensation claims and possible costs of

litigation must not be allowed to block this or other sensible cycle schemes.

In our view the key to success for the entire Corn Exchange Street and Wheeler Street area is to change the ambience by good design from one in which vehicles dominate and have priority to one in which motor vehicles, cycles and pedestrians interact on more equal terms. For this to be achieved, general speed reduction and control of rogue motorists and cyclists are essential elements.

The argument (in Appendix A of Susan Mills' report) that a 20 mph speed limit is unnecessary because most vehicles in Corn Exchange Street are already travelling below 20 mph is not acceptable. Rules are needed to restrict the minority of drivers who would seek to drive at around the legal limit of 30 mph even when a contraflow is in place.

At present, 20 mph limits exist in Silver Street, Emmanuel Road and Bridge Street but not in the city centre. We favour the imposition of a camera-enforced 20 mph limit either everywhere within the ring road or in a narrower city-centre zone which would be designed to include Corn Exchange Street.

James Woodburn

STOP PRESS

With the backing of our petition, I put our case to the meeting of the Cambridge Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee on 17 January. There was a lively debate with many local councillors putting forward views similar to ours and some others, influenced by the latest safety audit, expressing particular anxieties about the safety of contraflow cyclists at the car park exits. In the end the Committee took the decision to follow the advice of County Council officers to:

- i) note the safety audit report on the preliminary scheme design;
- ii) support the scheme amendments and comments made in response to the safety audit; and
- iii) ask the County Council and City Council to determine whether they wish to support the detailed scheme design with regard to the area in the vicinity of the car park exit.

The issue will now be considered by the County Council's Cabinet at their meeting on 1st March.

James Woodburn

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Junction improvements – for whom?

‘Junction Improvements in North Cambridge’ is the title given to proposed changes in the Milton Road and Cowley Road area. Unfortunately this is not how cyclists will see these plans.

Cambridge Cycling Campaign has already written to Cambridgeshire County Council and some Councillors to express our serious concerns over these plans and below we reproduce headlines from our letter:

We are very concerned that these plans do not take cycling as a transport mode seriously, and strongly oppose them as currently proposed. They will, in effect, force many confident cyclists who currently use the road onto sub-standard shared-use paths.

We viewed these plans at the Stakeholder meeting, and given our strong objections voiced at that meeting, are concerned that no changes appear to have been made to the plans issued for public consultation, following those comments.

Our objections to the detail of the plans are as follows:

- Removal of ‘on-road’ route on Cowley Road used by many cyclists
- Width of main cycle route
- Lack of continuity of cycle route
- Crossing of Milton Road
- Lack of a route for northbound cyclists

Conclusion

It appears that little thought has been given to the needs or requirements of cyclists in this scheme. This area is already one of the most hostile areas for cyclists in Cambridge, and this scheme makes it worse rather than better. Changes need to be made before this scheme is put to Committee.

You can see the full text of our four-page letter at: www.camcycle.org.uk/campaigning/letters/2004/NA05003NorthCambridgeJunctionImprovements.pdf



Milton Road: changes here would remove the cycle lane and alter Cowley Road to make room for more traffic lanes on Milton Road.

Consultation on these plans continues only until Friday 4 February. If you use this area at all, please look at the consultations on the web at:

www3.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transport/managing/projects/cambridge/milton/how_can_have_my_say.htm

Read our letter and then write to your local Councillor and the County Council at cnfe.transport@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Jim Chisholm



Crossing Milton Road on foot or by bike could become more difficult, with three stages and much smaller islands.



Possibilities for on-road cycling would be vastly reduced under the proposed scheme.

Cambridge CC beginners' rides

Cambridge Cycling Club, a local cycle racing group, are in the second year of running beginners' rides, which are held on the first Saturday of every month from April to October inclusive. We meet at the bus stop at Addenbrooke's roundabout at 10 am. The rides are 30–35 miles with a café stop in a local village or town. In terms of kit, I recommend a bike that's comfortable and good enough to ride for up to four hours. Clothing should be sports wear and a helmet is also recommended for group riding. Also, a few spare inner tubes, tyre levers and a pump could be handy.

As for pace, we tend to average about 12 mph, but we don't leave anybody behind. It helps if you are doing a bit of exercise already: whether that's jogging or swimming or a couple of sessions in a local gym, you get more pleasure out of the cycling by having a fitness base.

Once you feel happy with these rides, you can progress onto our weekly Sunday rides, same place but at 9 am.

www.cambridge-cycling-club.org.uk

☎ (01223) 245487

✉ chris.adams@taylorvinters.com

Chris Adams

(Cambridge CTC also run similar rides aimed at newcomers. See the diary page for more information - editor).

Mandatory Cycle Lanes: some progress

For a number of years, Cambridge Cycling Campaign has had concerns over the lack of compliance by motorists of the regulations regarding cycle lanes delineated by a solid line. The *Highway Code* says in rule 119:

Cycle Lanes: ... You MUST NOT drive or park in a cycle lane marked by a solid line during its times of operation.

The law, in the form of the *Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984*, gives extremely few exceptions for this rule regarding Mandatory Cycle Lanes (MCLs).

Abuse by motorists of these lanes seriously degrades the provision for cyclists. MCLs are often used at just the locations where cyclists might be squeezed by motor vehicles, or obstructed by queuing traffic. Drivers illegally entering these lanes often do so without even checking for cyclists and, even where they do check first, cyclists are often travelling faster than the queues of vehicles and may be approaching in their worst blind spot. It is for these very reasons that MCLs are used at such locations to supposedly make life safer for cyclists.

I'd become disillusioned over the attitude of the police to these regulations, having met several officers who told me that driving in such MCLs was not an offence. I've talked to several cyclists who were learning to drive and were told by their driving instructors that there were many occasions when entering such lanes was acceptable. When I met some driving instructors in Cambridge, I took up this point and was surprised by their opinions. One even told me:

If a learner driver was following a car which stopped to turn right, and the only way past was to enter a mandatory cycle lane (which was clear of cyclists), if the learner failed to enter the lane, they would risk failing their test due to 'Unnecessarily impeding following traffic'.

Another told me that:

As with Highway Code rule 108 regarding double white lines, you may cross the line to pass a stationary vehicle or one moving at less than 10 mph.

Initial contact with the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), which is the government body responsible for driving tests and the standards of driving instructors, gave inconclusive results, but I had further contact with driving instructors who insisted that my interpretation of the rule in the *Highway Code* was too strict and that entering MCLs in normal driving was acceptable.

Following an incident with a motor vehicle in such a lane – when, even with a witness, the police were extremely reluctant to take action – I took the problems to officers in the County Council. They supported my view, and hence were surprised when they extracted from the DSA the following quote:

Although it is technically illegal for a car to drive in a mandatory cycle lane this would be tolerated (and indeed expected) in a driving test if this was required for cars to make satisfactory progress. However, the onus is clearly on the driver to ensure that it is safe to carry out such a manoeuvre. If the driver encroaches on a mandatory cycle lane and in

doing so, impedes the progress of a cyclist or has an adverse effect on the cyclist's safety, the driver would fail his test.

This seemed to support the view that in 'normal' driving it is 'expected' that a motorist may enter a mandatory lane to make 'satisfactory progress', and it is easy to see how the driving instructors and police get their liberal interpretation of the law.

Not being easily defeated, I asked the opinion of RoSPA, the CTC and the National Cycling Strategy Board regarding the above quote. Their response, and that of a barrister in the London Cycling Campaign, encouraged us to write to the Transport Minister responsible for the DSA for further clarification. That letter is available at www.camcycle.org.uk/campaigning/letters/2004/NA05002MinisterLetter.pdf

We have since received replies from both the Department for Transport, which supported our view of the law, and one from the Assistant Chief Driving Examiner at the DSA giving a far more explicit version of the above ruling. The crucial sections of this letter state:

In the DSA publication Driving – The Essential Skills the advice given to drivers about cycle lanes states: 'Don't drive or park in a cycle lane marked by a solid white line during its hours of operation shown on the signs. If the cycle lane is marked by a broken line, don't drive or park unless it is unavoidable.' This advice will be given to anyone enquiring about the use of motor lanes by motor vehicles.



The footpath and cycle lane are used by some drivers to make 'satisfactory progress.'



Many drivers seem to enter Mandatory Cycle Lanes even when cyclists are present.

and:

Driving in, or encroaching into cycle lanes on a driving test is not normally acceptable. However, because the driving test takes place in 'live' road and traffic conditions, it is not possible to say that it is never acceptable for a candidate on test to encroach into a cycle lane. The candidate may have to deal with unusual situations – perhaps with the aftermath of an accident, road works, vehicle breakdown or burst water main etc. It is in these situations that will possibly require vehicles to take an alternative course of action to keep traffic flowing, this may mean encroaching on a cycle lane. This does not mean that cyclists are to be ignored, or that drivers have priority. In these unusual situations the onus is on the driver to ensure their actions are safe and that cyclists, or any other road users, are not adversely affected.

This clearly shows that the current attitude of many police officers and driving instructors regarding MCLs is contrary to the law and the guidance of the Driving Standards Agency. Motor vehicles should not be entering them under 'normal' conditions, but only under conditions that are 'unusual'.

We will be working with the authorities to ensure that those in responsible positions are made aware of this more exact DSA guidance, and that some methods of educating motor vehicle drivers on this issue are pursued.

We are, at the time of going to press, still awaiting a reply to a letter on this same issue written in early December to the Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

This is more than a local issue; it has national importance. There seems little point in having the new national guidance regarding mandatory cycle lanes, which is expected this year (revised *Cycle Friendly Infrastructure and Local Transport Notes* on cycling), without higher levels of compliance by motorists to existing regulations. We cannot get this until at the very least driving instructors teach learners correctly, and police on the beat understand the regulations.

Jim Chisholm

Extra powers for parking attendants in Cambridge?

Last year a 'Traffic Management Bill' went through Parliament that included increased powers for Civilian Parking Attendants ('Attendants') in Local Authority Parking Enforcement (LAPE) areas. As originally proposed this would have enabled parking attendants to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) for moving vehicle contraventions of bus lane regulations, but not for cycle lanes. Following lobbying from a number of organisations, including Cambridge Cycling Campaign, an amendment was introduced and passed, to extend coverage of similar 'contraventions' of mandatory cycle lanes. Note, as these actions are taken by 'civilian' staff issuing 'penalty charge notices,' they are dealing with 'contraventions' under civil law rather than 'offences' under the criminal law.



Parking Attendants have no power to deal with this sort of abuse.

We covered this issue briefly in *Newsletter 46* where we talked about 'Decriminalisation of parking enforcement'. see www.camcycle.org.uk/newsletters/46/article12.html.

Cambridge City has been a 'LAPE' area since late October 2004, and we had hoped that actions by the new Attendants might make life easier for Cambridge cyclists. Unfortunately, we were over-optimistic.

Firstly, without the extra powers of the Traffic Management Act, PCNs can only be issued for contraventions of waiting restrictions where there are 'yellow lines'. This means that civilian staff cannot issue PCNs where bus and cycle lanes do not have yellow lines within them. Cambridge bus lanes have now had them added via Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). The Council has stated that, at present, it does not intend to implement TROs for cycle lanes so, in the short to medium term, Attendants will not be able to issue PCNs for vehicles blocking them.

Secondly, it now appears that it will not be until 2006 at the very earliest, that the extra powers on 'moving vehicle' contraventions will be available in Cambridge. We wrote to the Department of Transport (DfT) regarding the timetable and to quote from their reply:

Enforcement of moving traffic contraventions by local authorities is new territory. It is currently being piloted by six London boroughs and Transport for London using powers acquired by London authorities for the enforcement of a range of moving contraventions under section 4 and Schedule 3 to the London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003. These London powers do not include the enforcement of cycle lanes.

Before making regulations under the Traffic Management Act 2004 enabling local authorities outside London to enforce the moving contraventions covered by the table of signs at paragraph 9 of Schedule 7 DfT will want to learn from the experience of the London pilots. These started in July and are due to go on until next April. So it is unlikely that regulations under the 2004 Act will be made before 2006.

Even when these powers are granted, the Officers of Cambridgeshire County Council will still need to propose a scheme and get it passed by the relevant committee.

Unless the police can be persuaded to put resources into the enforcement of cycle lane regulations, it could be well into 2007 before we have enforcement of even the existing regulations.

There is one avenue of hope. We also asked the DfT about the possibilities for issuing warning notices about cycle lane contraventions in advance of gaining powers under the Traffic Management Bill. They said:

Bus lane enforcement and the enforcement of moving traffic contraventions essentially depends on use of cameras to detect the contravention. The owner of the offending vehicle is identified through DVLA from the registration number and the penalty charge notice is then issued through the post. If an authority had suitable cameras in place it would be possible for it to issue warning letters to vehicle owners.

Given the currently poor levels of compliance, probably associated with ignorance of the law, issuing warning notices will probably need to be a first option, even when the powers are available (Education before Enforcement). If the Council uses its resources to do this, it would both educate motorists and build up a database of persistent offenders, enabling better targeting of PCNs when the powers become available.

We've also discovered that enforcement of 'Urban Clearways' is not within the powers of Attendants. There are a number of sections of roads covered by these regulations within the city, which lack yellow lines. In normal times one might expect Urban Clearways on which even stopping is prohibited to have higher levels of enforcement."

Jim Chisholm

Bureaucratic tendrils

One of the biggest influences on the cycling environment is the way local government operates. This has seen some significant changes since we last wrote about it in the *Newsletter*, so we thought it was time to revisit the subject. One feature of local government, and public services in general, seems to be that they are repeatedly reorganised, so I am sure this will not be the last time.

Recent major changes to affect us are:

- the move to cabinet-style decision making in Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridgeshire County councils;
- a recent withdrawal of the agency agreement that involved Cambridge City Council (and Huntingdonshire and Fenland to follow) in doing some of the design and implementation work on behalf of the County Council;
- quango involvement in the development process.

The biggest confusion for most people is knowing who does what among the several layers of local government. One of the reasons for ending agency agreements is to reduce some of that confusion – in principle the County Council will now do everything related to local transport.

This means that some staff have changed employer and others have left, or may even have to re-apply for what is essentially the same job. No doubt some of the work will still be contracted out by the County Council, but to the private sector (we should not forget that the County Council is Conservative controlled). Consulting firm Atkins (formerly WS Atkins) already does a lot of work for the County Council. This might make it more difficult for us to liaise with them over details of design and implementation.

Area committees and cabinets

While the practical work will now be done elsewhere, the City Council does still have a say in what happens in Cambridge. The **Cambridge Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee** (that mouthful abbreviated to AJC) brings together councillors from both the City and County

councils. Because of the Liberal Democrat control of the City Council and the mostly city-based County Councillors on the committee, it has a Lib Dem majority. However, the County Council can overrule it. This doesn't happen often, but a recent case in point was local demand for two-way cycling in Trinity Street, where the County Council would not accept the Area Committee's decision. South Cambridgeshire and the other districts have equivalent committees.

This joint representation is a survivor from the old method of decision-making. Most local government, including both Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County, now operates a **cabinet** system. This means a single councillor taking responsibility for a particular subject area. Shona Johnstone, councillor for Over, is responsible for environment and transport at the County Council. While these cabinet members must still justify their decisions to, so-called, scrutiny committees and ultimately, to the electorate, it does put a lot of power into the hands of one person and limits the transparency of the decision making process. I believe it also puts more power into the hands of the unelected officers of the Council.

For each cabinet member there is a whole department, or **directorate**, within the council. The Director of Environment and Transport at Cambridgeshire County Council is Brian Smith. In practice, his job is mostly running and representing what is a large organisation.

His deputy for Highways is Matthew Lugg, and among the various groups he manages, is the **Cambridge Projects** team, responsible for much of the transport and traffic infrastructure and changes within the city. Inevitably this is where much of our interaction with the County Council occurs. Richard Preston is the head of this small team.

While the County Council decides on county-wide development (e.g., the decision in principle to build a new town near Longstanton, called Northstowe), currently through a document called the Structure Plan, the district councils operate the

planning system itself. One big problem for cyclists is the variable quality in the way the planning system links up with transport decisions. At the strategic level, there is usually good intent but vagueness; at the individual site level, there can be serious problems. For example, for most road schemes, plans are published and comments invited. While the response may not always be what we would like, we are formally asked and our opinions are at least recorded. But for changes related to planning applications, schemes often just happen, out of the blue. For example, the proliferation of traffic lights on Newmarket Road arises out of the neighbouring retail developments. The current impasse over access to the Grand Arcade cycle park on Corn Exchange Street is fundamentally a failure of the planning and transport systems to link up properly.

Shadowy undemocratic organisations

As well as the two layers of council, there are a number of quangos which have a great deal of influence on our area. Of particular note is **Cambridgeshire Horizons** (www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk), a high-powered independent body responsible for making the structure plan happen. Supervising the development at Northstowe will be one of its main jobs. Members appear to be keen to present themselves in business-speak: they are a 'local delivery vehicle' and they will 'ensure delivery by identifying pragmatic and timely solutions to overcome barriers to implementation.' That a number of people in senior roles at our councils now work for this organisation – Peter Studdert, formerly planning director at the City Council, and John Onslow, previously an assistant director in Environment and Transport at the County – underlines its importance, yet it is hardly known.

The **East of England Regional Assembly** brings together representatives from all the East Anglian councils, as well as lots of business interests plus a token environmentalist. It is currently asking for comments on an *East of England Plan*, yet another huge document which could have a major impact on everyone's lives, but that hardly anyone will read. Oddly, they've just

rejected their own document, saying the government won't put enough money into transport developments to support the almost half a million new homes the plan envisages. But in many ways, their document is so strategic that its policies are inconsequential. For example, on Walking and Cycling (why do officialdom persist in always lumping these together?):

T12: Walking and cycling will be encouraged and provision for both will be improved. Strategic access to and within the Regional Interchange Centres (see policy T2) will integrate with pedestrian and cycle provision at the local level. Support will be given to the completion (by 2010) of the National Cycle Network in the region and linking it with local cycling networks to form continuous routes.

Does this actually add anything to what anyone else is saying? Will it change anything? At least it doesn't say 'cycling will be discouraged...', but equally it doesn't say how, when or where the encouragement will happen or what form it will take, except that 'the promotion of walking and cycling is largely a matter for local planning.'

They do cautiously support 'area wide road user charging', but in such a way that anyone could find reasons to ignore it.

The **East of England Development Agency** is another body that influences our environment. Its role is to develop a regional economic strategy, and it is nearly all about money-related expansion: one of their goals, for example, is 'making the most from the development of international gateways and national and regional transport corridors.' Quite how the words 'sustainable' and 'expansion' go together when supporting growth at Stansted Airport is a puzzle. This agency is composed of councillors from all over East Anglia, business interests and others.

What do these regional and high-level bodies have to do with cycling? In one sense, everything; the vast amount of traffic generated by a new town half the size of Cambridge on our doorstep will have a huge impact on our ability to cycle and on how road space is allocated. In another sense,

nothing. And that is the problem – cycling is rather beneath their notice. In a city where 25% of journeys to work are by bike, how could it come about that the new route to be built between the old town and the new was proposed without a proper surface for cycling? How does that square with the Regional Assembly's proposed policy? What is the point to these platitudes if they have no effect?

The constant reorganisation of the bodies, departments, people and policies that affect our environment, the thousands upon thousands of pages of policies and plans, makes it almost impossible for anyone who has a life outside the closed club which is local government to understand or influence the process.

David Earl

Robert Gray



Robert Gray, who sadly died in November, was a committed cyclist, an early member of the Cycling Campaign and a keen supporter of Sustrans. He was a strong believer in the benefits of cycling and rarely travelled by car. He would have been pleased by the number of bikes parked outside for his funeral at a packed Christ Church.

Robert enjoyed practical work and Sustrans work camps became a major part of his life. At these work camps, he would meet up with other regular volunteers and new volunteers, and help to build paths and cycling facilities

across the country. For him it was a holiday, in an attractive place, doing something he was passionate about and in good company. He would always arrive at the camps by bike and train, at times with a mini-fridge full of beer in his trailer!

Robert also volunteered his services to Sustrans in the late 1990s looking at options for the National Cycle Network around Cambridge and, as part of this, he produced a very detailed study, with photographs of lots of options in relation to the route between St Ives and Cambridge. Knowing how thorough and committed Robert was, I was therefore particularly pleased when, at the opening of the Jubilee Cycle Route, he agreed to become a volunteer Ranger for the route. He took some persuading, because he was worried that he might not be able to commit enough time, but said that he would try and ride the route once a week! In reality, this is a big commitment and is way above what Sustrans would expect or hope from Rangers, especially given that Robert's regular ride included litter picking, checking on signs and cutting back vegetation. If things have got worse recently this is because Robert has not been there.

Whilst Robert's death is a great loss, I am sure that he would also have wanted us to look to the future, and he was always keen to encourage others to volunteer. Sustrans is certainly looking for more volunteers in the Cambridge area:

- Firstly, as volunteer Rangers to keep an eye on the National Cycle Network and help out where possible. Further information is available on the Sustrans website at www.sustrans.org.uk or by emailing rangers-south@sustrans.org.uk or calling 0117 9150129.
- Secondly, at the Ely workcamp planned for 6–28 August, to construct the National Cycle Route south of Ely. Again, further information is available on the Sustrans web site.

Robert was particularly looking forward to the Ely workcamp on his 'home patch' and, whilst his absence is already noticeable on the Jubilee Route, his company will be greatly missed at the workcamp. It would be a fitting tribute to Robert if this workcamp turned out to be one of the best ever, giving a real boost for cycling in the area.

Nigel Brigham, Regional Manager, Sustrans

End of the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus Inquiry

Towards the end of the public inquiry, Cambridge Cycling Campaign had the opportunity to present a case to the Inspector, and to be cross examined by the County Council.

We based our case on the article in the last *Newsletter*, but it is probably worth quoting part of our introduction here. Our principal interest is in the promised cycle routes along the maintenance track alongside the concrete trough for the guided bus.

First we'd like to give a little background.

- According to the Council's Traffic Monitoring Report some 3000 cyclists enter Cambridge each week day from the surrounding villages, and even out of University term some 21 000 cycle trips cross the River Cam each day.
- For the Southern Fringe of Cambridge we already have nearly 1000 cycle trips into the city each weekday, and that is before the construction of some 3000 new houses. All this area will be within 2.5 miles of the main station and the many secondary and further education establishments in that area for cyclists using the proposed new route.
- In the Northern Fringe we have the Science Park, Cambridge Regional College with 3000 full-time students and 14 000 part-time ones, as well as other large proposed commercial developments including a new railway station. Within 5 miles of these along the proposed new routes we will have 10 000 new houses at Northstowe.
- By the time proposed expansion around Cambridge is complete, we think the Councils should be aiming for over a million trips by bike each year (on the guided bus service road alone). (1000 in and 1000 out for both northern and southern sections, 5 days per week 50 weeks per year). With a route that is properly surfaced and lit that should be easily achievable.
- We should also like to point out that in the Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2004 – 2011) there is over £4 million for 'Improved Pedestrian and Cycle Access to Rapid Transit' (meaning the guided bus) over four years. That compares with a total of £6 million for cycle schemes on all the other main corridors into Cambridge over seven years
- The proposed maintenance track provides the opportunity to provide routes for cyclists that are direct, continuous, segregated from normal motor traffic, and bypass barriers to cycling caused by major roads such as the A14. It is an opportunity that must not be squandered.

We then presented the case for a sealed surface and better lighting as detailed in *Newsletter 57*. We were able to demonstrate an LED road stud of the type that could be used to light remote sections where street lighting may be considered inappropriate.

The Inspector asked us to provide, by email, a list of locations he could visit to see different surfaces and levels of lighting. In addition, Nigel Brigham of Sustrans was able to provide for us further details on types of surface, and this has been accepted as evidence to the Inquiry.

The Inquiry has now closed and we have some breathing space until the result is announced, probably some time in the spring.

Jim Chisholm

Mudguard stickers

We sent out some shiny new Cycling Campaign mudguard stickers with the questionnaire which everyone should have received in November. We still have plenty of these, so if you have just joined, have more than one bike or you need another, please just let us know on the usual number or email.

David Earl

UNIVERSITY CYCLES

9 Victoria Avenue
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Cycling shorts

Slippery roads

At the end of November, after an unusually dry period, damp conditions left the road surprisingly slippery for a number of days until heavy rain fell.

Cycling home one evening I noticed that salt had been applied to the roads, and although not freezing the road surface was slippery. The following day I had my bike 'twitch' and I heard of a colleague who had fallen heavily on a corner, and some similar incidents were reported on our members' email list, camcycle@yahoo.com. Next day I saw a cyclist fall off at one of the roundabouts by the Royal Cambridge Hotel.

It is well known (among experts?) that after long periods without rain, busy roads become covered with a film of oil and rubber. When this gets wet it becomes slippery, but is usually washed off by rain. The long dry spell in November was followed not by heavy rain that would clean the roads, but by a period of several days of high humidity but little rain.

So remember if we get a long dry spell, and the road then becomes damp, the coefficient of friction may become much reduced and you'll need to cycle more carefully.

Jim Chisholm

Slippery funding

The Government's three-year funding for the National Cycling Strategy Board and for the English Regions Cycling Development Team (ERCDT) runs out in April, and it seems very likely that they will not continue in their present form. Some functions may be taken over by the new body 'Cycle England' and it is hoped there will be an 'English Cycling Resources Board.'

I've heard rumours that three of the people with whom we have had dealings, may have jobs in the new structure, but that there will be job losses.

New Perspectives in Designing for Cyclists

This conference is to be held in Nottingham in April in conjunction with the University, CTC, DfT, and ERCDT. The focus will be infrastructure for cycling in the context of the new guidelines currently being drawn

up, and which will form part of the DfT's forthcoming 'Manual for Streets'. We hope that someone from the Campaign will be able to attend.

Sports utility vehicles

The *New York Times* reports that one person a week in the USA accidentally backs over and kills one of their own children, largely because of the poor design of some of these trendy four-wheel-drive vehicles. See also www.stopurban4x4s.org.uk.

Campaign Diary

www.camcycle.org.uk/events

February

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|--------|---------|---|
| Tue 1 | 7.30 pm | Monthly open meeting , Friends' Meeting House, Jesus Lane, at the Park Street junction. (Tea and coffee, a chance to chat, and for us to introduce ourselves to new members for the first half-hour. The meeting proper starts at 8 pm.) |
| Thu 3 | 7 pm | Cycle Parking Subgroup meeting at 100 Thoday Street. |
| Fri 4 | 8.30 am | <i>Newsletter 58</i> review and planning for 59, over breakfast at Tatties café. |
| Sun 13 | 1 pm | Leisurely Ride . A countryside ride, at a gentle pace. Meet at Hobbs Pavilion on Parker's Piece. Back in Cambridge around 5 pm. |
| Mon 21 | 7 pm | Join us for a social gathering at CB2 café 5–7 Norfolk Street. Please contact us if you plan to come to check that the event is still on. |

March

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|--------|---------|---|
| Tue 1 | 7.30 pm | Monthly open meeting , Friends' Meeting House, Jesus Lane. For a description see 1 February. |
| Sat 5 | | <i>Newsletter 59</i> deadline. Please contact the editor if you would like to write an article. |
| Sat 5 | 10 am | Members are invited to join the CTC's introductory cycle ride . Meet at Brookside for a short ride, at a gentle pace, of about 15 miles, including a coffee stop. Contact Joseph Sugg (joesugg72@yahoo.co.uk) for more information. |
| Sat 19 | 10 am | CTC short ride . See 5 March for details. |
| Sun 13 | 1 pm | Leisurely Ride . A countryside ride, at a gentle pace. Meet at Hobbs Pavilion on Parker's Piece. Back in Cambridge around 5 pm. You will need bike lights. |
| Mon 21 | 7 pm | Join us for a social gathering at CB2 café 5–7 Norfolk Street. Please contact us if you plan to come to check that the event is still on. |
| Wed 23 | 7.30 pm | <i>Newsletter 59</i> envelope stuffing, at the new Baby Milk Action office, 34 Trumpington Street. |

April

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|-----------------|---------|---|
| Fri 1 | 8.30 am | <i>Newsletter 59</i> review and planning for 60, over breakfast at Tatties café. |
| Sat 2 | 10 am | CTC short ride . See 5 March for details. |
| Tue 5 | 7.30 pm | Monthly open meeting , Friends' Meeting House, Jesus Lane. For a description see 7 December. |
| Sat 9 or Sun 10 | | A meeting to draft our responses to Councillors of the Cambridge Area Joint Committee (AJC) . Please ask the Campaign (see page 2) if you need more details. |
| Sat 16 | 10 am | CTC short ride . See 5 March for details. |

Further ahead

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|-----------------|--|
| 31 May–3 June | Velo City 2005 Conference in Dublin. Full details on the CCN website www.cyclenetwork.org.uk |
| 10–12 September | Grand Opening of the National Cycle Network will be in Cambridge. Watch this space for more information. |

Your streets this month

Lots of Good News

Funding has been granted for a large package of cycling improvements in the southern half of the City. Of particular note is a replacement bridge, suitable for cycling, at **Sheep's Green**, linking Lammas Land at Newnham with Vicar's Brook, Trumpington Road and the new Coe Fen path.

The link between Trumpington Road and Long Road via **Porson Road** and **Rutherford Road** will see some improvements to help continuity.

Two abysmal shared-use paths are proposed for long-overdue upgrades: along **Long Road** and **Brooklands Avenue**.



This bridge is in line for replacement by one suitable for cycling.

It is proposed that **Sustrans Route 11**, of which the new Coe Fen path is part, should continue south from Brooklands Avenue via the new developments and then join the last bit of the Hobson's Brook path before Long Road. A short cut to the new development south of Brooklands Avenue was previously scuppered by English Heritage's

intransigence over access to its land in the neighbourhood. This was despite the existence of a tarmaced and lit path which was used as a short cut on foot to the Government offices site.

The bottleneck of narrow bridges in the flood plain on **Coe Fen**, on the path between the weir and Lammas Land, will also be replaced. Work will also be done to improve access at the Brooklands Avenue junction, though we need to be sure that this does not make things worse for those cyclists who stay on Trumpington Road.

Consultation should begin on these proposals very soon now.

Work on **Cutter Ferry Bridge** is now well under way. Closed since November 2003, when it was found to be in danger of collapse, the old span was removed before Christmas. The new span, costing £300,000, should be much more suitable for use by bikes and is due for completion in the Spring. Together with Sheep's Green, Fort Saint George and the new bridge at Riverside, the barrier to cycling posed by the River Cam is rapidly being eroded.

In anticipation of the new bridge at **Riverside**, councillors have decided to close the road to motor vehicles at the point where the new bridge lands, which is also likely to reduce traffic along the whole of Riverside, much improving a well used cycle route.

The **Tins bridge** has been removed for 'renovation' by Network Rail. Being on a major cycle route, it should of course have



'Renovation' at the Tins bridge site.

been replaced by one better suited to cycling. Local Councils seemed unaware this was to happen.

City Centre



After a long tussle with officers, councillors have accepted that it would be too difficult to allow contra flow cycling in **Trinity Street**. However, the strength of feeling is such that instead an eighteen-month experiment was approved by the Cambridge Area Joint Committee **to allow cycling at all times** in the other streets of the pedestrian priority zone: St Mary's Street, Market Street and Sidney Street. If then made permanent, this would put the cycling position back to what it was before pedestrianisation was first implemented thirteen years ago. See article on page 2, and look out for more on this in the next *Newsletter*.

Work has begun in earnest on the Grand Arcade development, the old Robert Sayle building and its neighbours. Expect chaos for the next three years! The row over proper access to the cycle park in the new shopping centre from Corn Exchange Street has moved on. See article on page 3.



Cutter Ferry going.



Cutter Ferry bridge gone: one of the original supporting piers has now been removed.