

Thames Valley Police and the Stolen Bikes Problem



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Thames Valley Police (TVP) has been helping us understand the stolen bike repatriation process.

If your bike is found and collected by TVP, they will check both BikeRegister (www.bikeregister.com) and Immobilise (www.immobilise.com).

If your bike is registered, TVP will contact you and your bike will be returned to you.

TVP hold bike marking events where they use either the BikeRegister or Immobilise kits. RCC will publicise these on Facebook when we receive advance notice.

TVP bike marking events are promoted via Thames Valley Alerts, which is a free email messaging system where

you can receive regular crime updates, information on ongoing incidents and crime prevention relevant to your local area. Subscribe to receive these emails here: thamesvalleyalert.co.uk

Unfortunately, limited resources means that these scheduled events can often be cancelled at short notice, if a more urgent requirement for a police presence occurs.

In addition, TVP advised RCC that they no longer pick abandoned bikes up unless they can prove they have been stolen. They simply do not have enough vehicles for transport, space at the station for housing the bikes, or personnel.

TVP and the Stolen Bikes Problem cont...

We suggest that we all look out for abandoned bikes, which if registered (with a sticker or stencil code) we can easily check on the two databases and report as being found.

If your bike has been stolen, report the theft as soon as possible on stolen-bikes.co.uk regardless of whether you have registered the bike with any of the Bike Marking services.

Another associated website, findthatbike.co.uk, offers a search of bikes offered for sale on third party sites such as Gumtree and eBay. Adverts are usually placed within 24 hours of the theft, but if not, keep looking as they sometimes take a few months to pop up.

Locally there is a WatchWokingham Facebook group 'Wokingham Lost, Stolen and Found Cycles' (www.facebook.com/groups/wokinghamlostcycles), plus you can always send photos and details to the RCC Facebook page which we will share for you.

Finally, don't forget to report all thefts to TVP at: www.thamesvalley.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/

Although bike theft is considered a low-level crime, it often prevents victims from cycling and disproportionately impacts the young and most vulnerable.

Surely we can do better at stopping this plague on cyclists, particularly as bikes are often stolen to sell and buy drugs and commit other crimes.

Accessible, secure bike parking can help. Read our update on Reading's new bike hub on page 12.

ImmobiBike from Immobilise contains a chip with a unique code that can be read by a suitable scanner (typically used by police and responsible second-hand traders).

A search for the code against police or trader systems enables the bike's return to its rightful owner.

Benefits:

- FREE lifetime registration at Immobilise.com



ImmobiBike - RFID Bicycle Security Tag (Presentation pack) costs £14.99

- The patent-protected shuttle sits snugly in a range of frame sizes and is virtually impossible to remove without significant effort, tooling and considerable risk of damaging the bike.
- The QR coded warning label deters theft by making it clear that another, invisible identification is within the bike.

- If you sell the bike, the new owner doesn't need to buy a new tag. Just tell them the tag number and to register at Immobilise.com, then remove the tag number from your account.

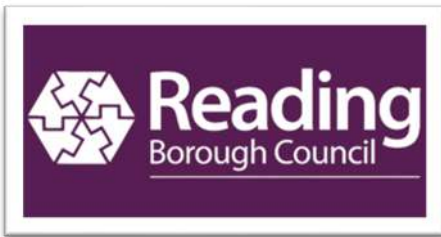
Finally, please email publicity@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk if you have any other advice regarding reporting and finding stolen bikes and we will share with our members.

Susan Children
RCC Publicity Coordinator

awcycles

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Reading Cycle campaign

110 Henley Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 6DH
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Reading Borough Council (RBC)

Autumn Report 2023

There has been no Cycle Forum in the last few months but below are a few updates:

Traffic Management Sub Committee (TMSC)

I missed the last meeting, which did not appear to have much relevance to cycling matters.

Cleaner Air and Safer Transport (CAST) 4 July

Again, the meeting attendance was low, with short notice being given. RBC gave an interesting Air Quality presentation with Q&As.

There was no reported action by RBC following the previous meeting's presentation that I made on 'Crossings for Pedestrians and Cyclists'. The points raised and awaiting responses and actions from RBC are:

- All RBC Committee reports to have crossings considered within a Sustainable Transport section.
- Reading Developers guidance to be reviewed and made more pedestrian friendly.
- Dropped kerbs should be added where needed.

- Raised tables with sinusoidal or shallow ramps to be the recommended road hump and used more widely, such as at most road junctions.
- Zebra and other controlled crossings should be located where needed.
- Pedestrian delays at signals should be minimised.
- All-green pedestrian stages (all traffic stopped with red lights) at traffic signal junctions should be trialled.

Shinfield Road Active Travel Scheme Tranche 2

Siteworks are still in progress and are supposed to finish this summer. Most of the detailed design work is apparently complete. Despite reminders and promises RBC has yet to provide us with the statutory signing proposals. Works are progressing slowly and without signing and full marking being added, which is adding to some confusion and dissatisfaction from users.

Redlands Road Area Traffic Calming

Despite RBC's agreement to make some improvements there has been no action that we are aware of.

Cycle Hub

RBC has signed an agreement for the lease of premises for the Cycle Hub in West Street; you can read more about this on page 12.

Town Centre Signing and Routes

RBC has said that it has agreed to the provision of many of the missing and wrong signs that we have been

campaigning about for many years. Maybe by the time of this newsletter they will be fixed!

Trouble with Humps?



The speed cushion humps in Oakley Road have now been modified to the correct profiles. Many other speed cushions appear to be steeper than the LTN 1/07 regulations allow, which is a 1:8 front gradient.

With a recommended 3 inches high hump (maximum height is 4 inches), the ramp would be 24-32 inches long. The ramp should be approximately the length of the white triangle. Steeper gradients damage motor vehicles as can be seen from the photo above, but for cyclists the discomfort and danger are our main concerns.

Check the humps that affect you and report them on FixMyStreet if they are too steep or otherwise problematic.

John Lee
RBC Campaigner for RCC



Example pictures taken in Portsmouth: cycle gap to side of hump and red cycle track over sideroad

Campaign News continued...



**West Berkshire Council
(WBC)**

Autumn Report 2023

There have been no new active travel projects announced by West Berkshire Council as the new Lib Dem Council takes office and new committee members and portfolio holders are appointed.

The next West Berkshire Cycle Forum is on Tuesday 12 September 2023.

If there are any matters about cycling or active travel in West Berkshire that you would like raised at the meeting, contact Rob Hill via this email: wbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk



Whitchurch Bridge

PAWS (Pangbourne & Whitchurch Sustainability) has had positive discussions with WBC officers about proposals to improve the approach to Whitchurch Bridge. The photograph, taken recently, illustrates the problems that face all users of the bridge.



Plant Locks

Plant Locks have been installed by WBC in front of Yattendon Village Stores. They provide attractive and secure bicycle parking and are simple to install as there is no need to dig up tarmac or paving. If you know of other locations in West Berks that would benefit from these let Rob Hill know.

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**Come and
join us for
a ride!**

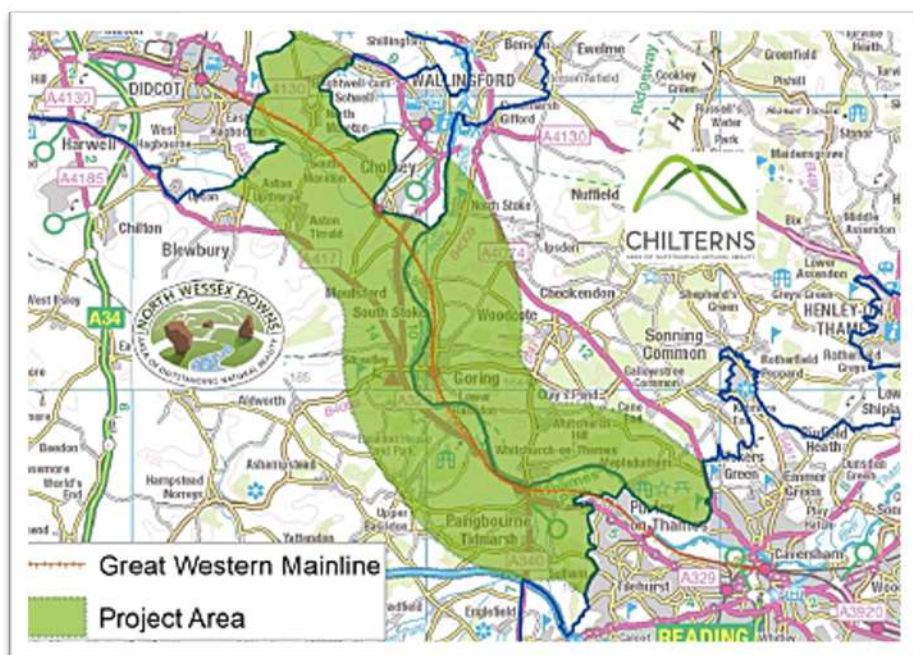
- Friendly, sociable group rides to great cafes/pubs.
- All levels of cyclists welcome. Ride your E-bike, gravel, mtb, hybrid, or road bike.
- Wide variety of on and off-road rides throughout the week - day or evening.
- Over 300 rides annually from 20 to 100 miles, we've got something for everyone.

For ride information visit: www.cyclingukreading.org.uk/rides

Or contact Sel Dixon, the club secretary: secretary@cyclingukreading.org.uk
Phone or text: 07867 442046

www.facebook.com/cyclingukreading

Campaign News continued...



Mend the Gap Programme Project Area

Mend the Gap

The Mend the Gap programme aims to enhance the areas of the Chilterns AONB and North Wessex Downs AONB that have been negatively impacted by the electrification of the Great Western Railway.

There is a budget of £3,000,000 for enhancement projects within the programme area which is shown on the map.

There is a small grant scheme of up to £15,000. Details can be found on this website: mendthegap.uk/enhancement-projects/

The types of projects that may be supported through the small grant scheme include those that bring about benefits for:

- Landscape
- Nature and biodiversity
- Access, engagement & understanding
- Heritage
- Sustainable tourism and the local economy

Cycling projects could be covered by the sustainable tourism criteria.

If you know of any schemes or have any ideas that might benefit from this scheme, let me, Rob Hill, know via wbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk.

Rob Hill
WBC Campaigner for RCC



Wokingham Borough Council (WoBC) Autumn Report 2023

WoBC Stakeholder Engagement

Wokingham Borough Council has been involving stakeholders (including Wokingham Active Travel Community Hub (WATCH)) in planning sessions for:

- The new Local Transport Plan (LTP);
- The next cycle route planned as part of the new LCWIP;
- The review of a poorly designed new junction which has been constructed and interrupts an existing cycle lane.

Engagement with the current Council is good, which is a significant step forward; however there is still work to do educating highway officers and designers on what good useable cycle and walking infrastructure looks like.

A recent example of this was the approval to place a new 5G telecoms mast on an existing shared use pavement, which was already below the recommended width, with the

highways officers not supporting objections from local groups and the general public.

Woodley/Reading Cycleway

Progress remains stalled following objections from the local Conservative Councillors and a small but vocal group of local residents. The scheme is on its third redesign to try to address some of these objections.

Hopefully the redesign will deal with the objections; however it does appear that the cycle lane is being politicised, in keeping with certain recent political proclamations from our ruling national party.

Active Travel England remain supportive and despite the delays the money has not been withdrawn yet, but it is unclear if and when work on this will resume.

The Tanhouse Bridge

The Council and Network Rail are continuing to collaborate on building an accessible and cycle-friendly bridge to replace the current stepped bridge.

A decent cycle-friendly bridge would provide a safe (and possibly unique) entry for cyclists wishing to get into central Wokingham from the south, without using the Finchampstead Road or Barkham Road railway crossing (neither of which are conducive to cyclists).

We are hopeful of a good outcome on this next year, overturning Network Rail's original decision to build a stepped-only bridge, which WATCH and other local cycling groups spoke up against at several Council meetings.

Kidical Mass

Kidical Mass continues to go from strength to strength and it's great to see new faces and even some new volunteers at recent rides.

The latest KM took place on 8 July; we took about 45 people including a three year old on our usual route around the town centre.

This followed on from the very successful KM ride we had organised from Cantley Park in June, to coincide with the Wokingham Bikeathon. This was a slightly longer route of 2.5 miles and many riders said they preferred this to the shorter 1.25 mile route we normally do in the town.

Campaign News continued...

Going forward we are looking at ways of accommodating riders of differing ages and abilities by possibly taking some people who want to cycle further on an extended route and other younger or less confident riders on a shorter route.

Ideally this would involve starting and finishing at the same place and time,

however it may involve two separate rides. We will continue to listen to feedback and look at all options to grow this excellent event.

There is no KM ride in August, but we will be back again on 10 September in Christchurch Meadows, Reading and then 7 October in Elms Field, Wokingham.

For more information on Kidical Mass rides, future rides, write ups, photographs and videos of previous rides please follow Kidical Mass on Facebook or look at:

<https://kidicalmassreading.co.uk/>

Alex Cran
WoBC Campaigner for RCC

Reading Cycle Campaign Annual General Meeting Wednesday 18 October 2023 at 7.30pm in the RISC Main Hall

RISC Global Cafe, Refills, and World Shop

Here's your chance to meet the RCC committee,
and find out how we operate and learn about our future aspirations.
We will have an inspirational speaker and refreshments available.

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Chairman's Letter

Dear RCC members

I was intending to write a long diatribe fulminating against the dire state of the local roads, but as most of you who read this newsletter are cyclists, you will know as well as I do how bad they are. Sadly it reflects the state of most aspects of the public sector in these times of austerity and my words here, even if all the councillors in our local authorities read and take notice, will not generate the cash needed to repair them properly.

As I have written before, I feel that as concerned cyclists and taxpayers, we should be encouraging our elected representatives to make sure that the available monies are used to the best effect. To do this they need to consult more widely and take notice of cyclists' views and also to go and look at best - and worst - practice in other places. I have in mind particularly, the Shinfield Road scheme which is currently under construction and which at the Christchurch Road end is mostly complete.

Whilst the signage is not yet in place and we think there is to be a resurfacing of the road itself, it is possible to use the new cycle paths in both directions. Last week, I cycled these paths and will put up on the website a fuller account of what I think, but in brief, I found that going uphill on the University side it was quite useful until you got to the Pepper Lane traffic lights where you

were on your own to fight it out with the traffic, but coming back, there were too many obstacles to a smooth downhill ride - including a bus stopped in the middle of the path and cars backing out of the doctors' surgery.

Later that week I spent a pleasant lunchtime in West London and was able to have a close look at the cycle scheme along Chiswick High Street. Here they have implemented a dedicated two-way path along one side of the street, with very clear indications to motorists as to who has priority.

Of course, being London on a sunny Sunday afternoon, the cycle path was very well used, and motorists seemed to be giving way to cyclists. It got me thinking that it might have been better to build a wider two-way path on the University side rather than separate ones on both sides.

I look forward to the start of the Autumn term to see how well used the scheme becomes and what cyclists and others think about it. I trust RBC have made plans for a proper evaluation and that this will inform future schemes like Castle Hill.

I have been cycling into the centre of Reading quite a bit recently and have still not found any sensible way to incorporate Sidmouth Street into my route, but I have my favourite short-cuts and manage to get in and out without being troubled too much by traffic. The bus lane down London

Street is a lifesaver for me. Riding around gives me opportunity to watch how other cyclists behave and at the risk of sounding like an old white fart, I am increasingly concerned about the use of e-bikes and the way they are being ridden by the gig economy food delivery riders.

Setting aside the matter of their legality and also that of electric scooters (see the Government website <https://www.gov.uk/electric-bike-rules>), the way they are being ridden risks bringing all cyclists into disrepute.

The Southampton Cycle Campaign has a code of conduct for cyclists here: southamptoncyclingcampaign.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Southampton-Cyclists-Code-A4-A5-fold.pdf.

Whilst promoting cycling is generally the flavour of the month at present, the car drivers' lobby is still very powerful as we saw in the Uxbridge by-election and cyclists can do a lot to help or hinder the cause by the way they ride and how it affects pedestrians and other road users.

I would be interested to hear from our members as to whether we should be promoting a similar code here. Please do get in touch or come and talk to us at the various events we attend such as the Reading Cycle Festival in September.

Joe Edwards
RCC Chairman



True Food will be embracing the Soil Association's 'Organic September' initiative with events, offers and product sampling in-store.

This campaign aims to raise awareness of the incredible benefits organic farming can bring for our climate, nature and our health.

Organic farming works with nature, rather than against it by using no artificial pesticides or fertilisers.

For more information, please visit www.truefood.coop and follow True Food Co-op on social media.

True Food Co-op is a local organic, independent grocery shop with integrated zero waste shopping.

Find us at 61 Grove Road, Emmer Green, RG4 8LJ. Free parking. Open: 10 - 6 pm Tuesday to Saturday.

Kidical Mass Autumn Report

Kidical Mass at the Climate Festival

Reading's Climate Festival week kicked off with Waterfest on 10 June in Forbury Gardens.

Climate action is an issue close to the hearts of all of the Kidical Mass organisers, so we were delighted to run one of our family friendly rides that tied in with and finished at the event.

Despite the climate focus, the weather seemed determined to act against us, with thunderstorms forecast for the time of the ride.

A few of our organisers work in weather forecasting (funny the correlation between that and climate activism), so we told them to go away and get a better result.

Luckily they were successful, and the weather on the day was perfect for a group ride.

We were joined by Cllr Dave McElroy of the Green Party, accompanied by a very small person who was new to riding.

Dave was planning to run (we warned him that we'll hold the pace for pre-schoolers on bikes but not for adults on foot).

He and his little one did very well, and when they ran out of steam,



we unusually had enough capacity to allow both to hitch rides on cargo bikes to our destination.

Increasing bike usage should be a key part of the strategy to combat climate change. And a key part of increasing bike usage has to be building better infrastructure.

Infrastructure that is safe for families to ride on without needing a dedicated route finder and safety marshals.

If you agree with these aims, then please consider joining us - come as you are or bring your favourite small riders with you.

If you are happy to help marshal (no previous experience required) then we'd love to add you to our wonderful team.

Our next ride in Wokingham will be on Saturday 7 October in Elms Fields Playground starting from 2pm.

(We will also run a ride at 12pm on Sunday 10 September from the Cycle Festival in Reading if you get to see this in time!)

Find out more from our website at kidicalmassreading.co.uk

Hilary Smart



Register Bikes with National Cycle Database



BikeRegister is the UK's national cycle database and the leading online bicycle identification initiative, with over 1.25 million bikes registered. It aims to reduce cycle theft and enable owners to be reunited with their bikes if they are stolen and recovered.

BikeRegister is used by every UK Police Force in the UK, including Thames Valley Police, to search for bikes they recover and return them to their rightful owners. It is the preferred bike marking system of the Metropolitan Police Service and British Transport Police and the only Police-approved cycle database available for use 24/7.

Registering your bike is free and provides you with the following benefits:

- ✓ Lifetime registration on the BikeRegister database
- ✓ A registration Logbook, to be used as proof of ownership
- ✓ Secure online access to manage your account

Registering on BikeRegister means you could be reunited with your bike in the event of it being stolen, but it does not stop thieves taking your bike.

However, BikeRegister claims that a bike that is marked with a BikeRegister Marking Kit is 83% less likely to be stolen than an unmarked one.

BikeRegister offer three different Security Marking Kits:

Membership Plus Kit - A highly durable tamper resistant QR Code label that gives your bike a unique BikeRegister ID. Cost: £12.99



Permanent Marking Kit - to permanently mark your bike frame with a unique BikeRegister ID. This product holds Police-preferred 'Secured by Design' accreditation. Cost: £19.99



UV Covert Kit - A kit to mark all of your bike's components with hundreds of uniquely coded microdots, as well as a permanent, colourless UV etch and a high security TESA label to visibly mark your frame. Cost: £29.99

Thames Valley Police often hold bike marking events where they will mark your bike for you. RCC will publicise these events. We also recommend you check on BikeRegister before buying a second-hand bike.

RCC Members receive a 10% discount on all BikeRegister security marking kits

All the kits can be purchased from BikeRegister

(www.bikeregister.com)

either:

- when going through the free online registration process (new users)
- for existing users via your online account

To receive your discount code, email Susan Children on publicity@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Top Tips to Protect Your Bike:

1. Get a lock

- Buy a decent lock - preferably two.
- Expect to pay at least £40 for a lock.
- Make sure you buy a certified Sold Secure lock, as these are often requested by insurance companies.



2. Make your mark

- Ensure the security mark is clearly visible. This will act as a deterrent to bike thieves.
- Apply a tamper-proof sticker to the frame, warning that the bike has been marked.
- Make sure you register your bike online at BikeRegister.

3. Insure your bike

- You may have invested a significant amount of money into your bike, so be sure you're covered for theft.
- It's worth considering specialist cycle insurance, especially if your bike is valuable, as some home insurance providers often have a value limit on your bike.

For more tips please go to: www.bikeregister.com/advice/top-tips-to-protect-your-bike

Millie Quickenden
BikeRegister

How To Lock Your Bike Securely



One of the biggest deterrents to cycling is not being able to securely park your bike and know that it's still going to be there when you come back. Even the fear of having your bike stolen is enough to put many people off cycling.

Whilst it is virtually impossible to prevent a determined and tool-equipped bike thief, we'll quickly go through some issues about finding a secure place to park a bike and about how to securely lock your bike.

Bike locks

Firstly, choose your bike lock! There's a bewildering array of bike locks out there in the shops at a huge range of prices. Choosing a bike lock is probably a whole article in itself, but generally D shaped locks offer the most security.

Cable locks are relatively light and convenient to take with you when out cycling, but really aren't very secure - they can easily be broken using a hammer, bolt cutters or even by just twisting apart. They will however deter a casual thief and may be practical for short-term parking or when you can keep an eye on your bike.

D-locks are less tamper proof, so are more secure if your bike is going to be left for any length of time. They tend to be very heavy and are much less easy to carry around. They are not unbreakable as they can still be forced open with a scaffolding pole, small hydraulic jack or angle grinder.

Adding a cable to a lock can secure other parts of a bike, but cables are susceptible to cutting with bolt cutters or an angle grinder.

So, whatever lock you choose needs to be practical and a balance between convenience and security. Even if you're parking a relatively inexpensive bike, the hassle and inconvenience of having it stolen means that it's worthwhile having a good lock.

Locking your bike in the street

Whilst many of these tips apply to locking your bike in the street, they will also be appropriate to locking your bike at a station or workplace - locations where bikes are likely to be left for much of the day.

Also, it's worth remembering that while street theft gets nearly all the attention, over 50% of stolen bikes are taken from the owner's home.

Firstly, try to choose a busy location with lots of people walking past. Even better if it's an area well covered by CCTV. Other people and CCTV make thieves nervous, who prefer to be hidden away while they "work".

Choose a place where lots of other bikes are already locked up. An ideal location is in the middle of a group of bikes rather than on the end. There's a reason for this: firstly, there's bound to be badly locked bikes that are more tempting to a thief than your well-locked bike.

Secondly, lots of bikes crammed together give a thief less room to manoeuvre and use their tools effectively.

Finally, the comings and goings of other cyclists may disturb them and if anyone is going to challenge a bike thief, it's going to be other cyclists.

Next, lock your bike to an immovable object, such as a cycle parking stand. A bike is only as secure as the object it is locked to, so make sure you always choose a fixed, immovable object that's not easily broken. Avoid trees, aluminium or wooden posts, signposts, scaffolding and chain link fences.

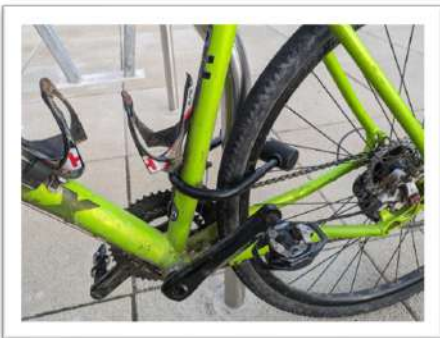
How To Lock Your Bike Securely cont...

Also, something that's often forgotten is don't leave anything attached to your bike, such as bags, speedos, pumps etc.

How should I lock my bike?

The golden rule is to always lock your bike frame to the immovable object. If you only secure your bike through a wheel, a thief will simply remove your wheel and walk off with the rest of the bike. This may sound obvious, but it happens all the time.

Try to keep the lock away from the ground, as a thief can use a hammer to smash the lock against the floor to break it. Also, the closer it is to the ground, the easier it is to use the floor for added leverage in a bolt cutter attack. So, ideally the lock should go high up around the down tube or the seat tube.



Also avoid locking around the top tube. If the lock is around the top tube of the bike, a thief can use the parking stand to try to break the lock by lifting the bike and twisting it. Also, the space left inside the lock could allow the lock to be levered open.



The next tip is to make the lock as difficult to access as possible to make an attack more difficult. If you can position it so the keyhole is facing downwards, this will make it more difficult to pick or tamper with the locking mechanism, such as filling the keyhole with superglue.

If you're using a D-lock, try to fill as much of the space within the lock with the bike and the thing it's

attached to. This is really important as the most common way that D-locks are broken is with leverage attacks. A length of metal or scaffolding pole is inserted into the space within the D-lock and twisted until it pops open.



Locking your bike with two locks

The most secure way to lock your bike is by using two locks. The first lock should go around the back wheel, the frame and the bike parking stand. The second should go around the front wheel, the frame and preferably the bike parking stand as well. This means the frame is secured in two places and both wheels are secured to the frame and the bike stand.



To be even more secure, a further option is to use two different types of lock because this requires a thief to carry two different types of lock breaking tools.

Carrying two different locks around isn't always going to be practical. If parking in the same place on a regular basis, one option is to leave the locks attached to a parking stand. This is far more convenient than moving around heavier locks but runs the risk of a thief sabotaging or compromising a lock.

Locking your bike with one lock and a cable

One of the most practical ways of locking a bike is to use one decent lock and a good cable. Attach a D-lock around the rear wheel, the frame and the bike stand as described above.

Next, push one end of the cable through the front wheel, bike frame and ideally the parking stand.

Then pass the cable through the loop at the end of the cable and secure the other cable loop to the main lock.

The advantage of this method is that the cable is relatively light, so you're saving a huge amount of weight over using two locks.

However, the cable is the only thing securing the front wheel and cables can be cut through quite easily. There is however the visual deterrent of the cable.



Locking your bike with one lock and a removed front wheel

Finally, a further way of securing your bike with a single lock is by removing the front wheel.

Attach the D-lock around the rear wheel, the frame and the bike parking stand, as well as the front wheel which you've removed from the front forks.

This ensures that both wheels and the frame are secured with one good lock. As the D-lock is going to be full of more stuff, it is less susceptible to a leverage or bottle jack attack.



However, it's much more time consuming to lock your bike this way and requires a larger D-lock to fit around both wheels, bike frame and parking stand.

Also, to use this method you'll also need quick release wheels, which means you'll have to do it everywhere you go to prevent the wheel being stolen!

Tony Carr

Secure Bike Parking in Reading



As you may be aware, we have been working with Ethical Reading, Bike Kitchen and Avanti Cycling to support Reading Borough Council to set up a pilot secure bike parking hub for around 80 bikes in central Reading.

The hub will operate at 32-41 West Street, the site of the former Primark Store. The change of use lease has at last been agreed, the bike racks have been ordered and we are now waiting for a health & safety review to be completed. We are ever hopeful that the hub will open this year!

The hub will initially operate as a secure bike parking facility; however there is the potential for other activities to be run from the hub in the future such as cycle training, bike repairs and organised bike rides.

In conjunction with this initiative, we have also been involved with a Reading University project to produce a guide to setting up a cycle hub. The report will be published in September and copies will be available on our stand at the Reading Cycling Festival (10 September) and our website.

A key finding of the report is that:

“Secure cycle parking hubs can support increased - and more diverse - cycling. Done right, hubs can help tackle practical barriers to riding such as (fear of) cycle theft.”

From Hub to Haven

The report also introduces the idea of Reading becoming a ‘cycling haven’, with world class safe and segregated cycling infrastructure and secure bike parking making cycling accessible to everyone.

This will help Reading achieve net zero targets, improve our air quality

and health, and further boost our vibrant town centre.

Susan Children
RCC Publicity Coordinator

Wokingham Cycle Parking Project

To address the issue of bike theft in Wokingham, the idea of a cycle parking project became a collaborative effort between Wokingham Town Council and My Journey, Wokingham Borough Council, as both had aims to provide secure cycle storage in the town centre.

My Journey’s proviso was to include sedum roofs and Wokingham Town Council’s was for it to be accessed easily via an app. Several potential suppliers were investigated but they were deemed too expensive and could not provide easy app access for users.

In January 2022, My Journey secured an air quality grant from DEFRA that could fund the purchase of the lockers and after considering several companies, SpokeSafe was contracted as they could meet all the requirements with the technology.

The secure lockers are managed and maintained by SpokeSafe, which offers a simple online booking system and round-the-clock email and phone support with access via a code for maximum security (booking a daily slot for just £1 with future plans to offer more slots during the day).

Wokingham Borough Council was responsible for the preparation of the sites and subsequent installation of eight secure cycle lockers took place, four in Denmark Street carpark in November 2022 and four at Carnival Hub in March 2023 (using two locations made it accessible for more people in the community).

Wokingham Town Council is responsible for monitoring the app and booking system which had low usage to start with, but both councils are now upping promotion to increase take-up.

Julie Pillai
My Journey, WoBC

DO YOU CYCLE INTO TOWN?

There are secure bike lockers at the entrance to Denmark Street car park and Carnival Hub

Perfect if you cycle into work or into town for gym, library, shopping and leisure





Wokingham Town Council

£1 per day hire fee
To book go to
www.spokesafe.app



Cycle Theft - The Big Picture



We have focused on cycle security in this newsletter as being able to securely park your bike and know that it's still going to be there when you come back is an important factor in encouraging people to cycle.

Worrying whether your bike will still be there when you get back nevertheless remains a concern to many, whilst for some people the fear of having your bike stolen is enough to put them off cycling completely.

In the most recent We Are CyclingUK magazine, there's an excellent article about a cycle owner reporting a cycle thief to the Police, watching the thief being arrested and then appearing in court to give evidence.

However, data would suggest that such instances of a cycle thief being identified, arrested and then charged are unfortunately very rare.

The sad truth is that most stolen bikes are never recovered, and cycle thieves are unlikely to be caught or charged.

Home Office data shows that of the 78,619 bike thefts reported to the Police for the year to September 2022, no suspect was identified in 83% of cases, whilst only 1.3% cases resulted in someone being charged.

This is actually likely to be an underestimate of the actual number of bikes stolen as these figures don't include those cases not reported to the Police.

Ministry of Justice figures for the five years to June 2022 indicate that out of approximately 350,000 reported bike theft cases, just 159 people were charged with bike theft.

Dealing with bike theft is both time consuming and difficult, so with limited resources and other priorities, solving bike crime is not going to be a top priority for the Police.

Therefore, the more that we can do to secure our bikes the better.

Using a robust cycle lock, or two, helps minimise the risk of your bike being stolen. Most cycle shops should be able to advise on cycle locks.

Use your bike lock in the most effective way to secure your bike.

Lock your bike to a secure fixture, ideally a cycle parking stand. We will be looking at public cycle parking across Reading in a future article. Not all cycle parking stands are the same or secure!

Consider having your bike security marked as one of the issues is

identifying individual bikes. Security markings help the Police return a stolen bike to the rightful owner and bring prosecutions.

There is also the suggestion that marked bikes are less likely to be stolen as thieves know that they are less likely to get away with a bike that has clearly been stolen.

Only 5-10% of bikes in the UK are registered with a secure marking scheme such as BikeRegister, who claim that a marked bike is 83% less likely to be stolen than an unmarked bike.

Finally, if all else fails and you do unfortunately have your bike stolen, hopefully your bike will be covered by insurance.

Many people will be able to add their bike to an existing household insurance policy, but it pays to closely look at the small print of what is and what isn't covered.

Separate, specific cycle insurance policies are also available, that can be much more flexible and can cover higher value bikes.

Tony Carr

Reading's Transport Strategy 2040



In 2020 Reading Council consulted on its Transport Strategy for the period 2020-2036. Then came a pandemic and, for the stated reason that travel patterns were significantly impacted by the pandemic, the strategy was shelved.

Fast forward three years and the Transport Strategy has been taken off the shelf, given a refresh, and will now go back out to consultation. To give a bit of background, transport authorities such as County Councils and Unitary Authorities are required by law to have a "Local Transport Plan". The Reading Transport Strategy 2040 will be the fourth such plan that the Council has produced, the previous one being for the period 2011-2026.

The Reading Transport Strategy document is 180 pages long. The first 70 pages (Sections 1 to 4) describe the Council's vision for Reading, what transport related things the Council has done over recent years and the transport challenges we face in the coming years. The Council's policies are listed in Section 5 and prospective schemes for Active Travel in Section 6 (pages 122-133).

Policies

The strategy includes 32 specific policies ranging from policy on aviation to policy on streetworks. Policies that catch the eye include:

Policy 13 which states *"we will reallocate road space away from the private car to provide healthier streets and encourage more sustainable, active modes of travel"*.

Policy 14 which states *"we will transform our walking and cycling network to be safe, clean and green and better connect people to local facilities and services, including education, retail leisure and employment"*.

Policy 18 which states *"we will improve the safety of vulnerable road users"*.

Policy 25 which states *"we will maintain our transport infrastructure to a high standard"*.

Since cyclists use the road network Policy 25 (maintain our transport infrastructure) has a direct bearing on Policy 14 (transform our cycle network) and Policy 18 (improve the safety of vulnerable road users). We would like to see the strategy explicitly recognise that link and commit to improving road surface quality on the arterial routes that are by necessity key cycle corridors.

Schemes

The Active Travel schemes in the strategy related to cycling are:

- Town and Local Centre Public Space Enhancements (better access for walking and cycling)
- Strategic and Town Centre Cycle Routes
- Shinfield Road Active Travel Improvements
- Bath Road / Castle Hill Active Travel Improvements
- London Road Active Travel Improvements
- Local Cycle Routes
- Sustainable and Safer Travel to School
- Cycle Parking Mobility Hubs
- Micro-Mobility Hire Scheme

The three 'Active Travel Improvement' schemes listed are already at various stages of design, in fact the Shinfield Road scheme was due for completion in Summer 2023. The other listed 'schemes' are more

nebulous, and the strategy does not go into detail of what, where and when - though reference is made to the Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP).

Funding

Funding is dealt with in Section 7. Funding is where ambition collides with reality. For example, the previous attempt at a cycle hire scheme (now rebranded micro-mobility to include scooters) collapsed, as it could not pay for itself. At present Reading Council has no dedicated ongoing budget for cycle improvements, and bids for central government funding for specific high-profile schemes such as the three Active Travel Improvement schemes listed above.

Both the previous and current version of the draft strategy include the introduction of demand management (ie charging) as a policy. Policy 22 states *"we will develop demand management measures to reduce congestion and improve the quality of life for residents"*. This could potentially create a revenue stream that would be reinvested into transport to help realise the aims of the strategy.

The strategy does not spell out what form demand management would take, and in recent months there have been efforts by the Council to manage expectations about managing demand. In June the leader of the Council (Councillor Jason Brock) went public to rule out any form of congestion charging - instead the focus seems to be to look at ways to manage the demand of drivers who don't live (or vote) in Reading from passing through the town.

Targets

In terms of targets the strategy looks to increase the proportion of adults who cycle at least three times a week from 6% currently to 15% by 2040. The previous (2020) version of the strategy aimed for an increase to 10% by 2036.

At the time of writing, we do not know when the consultation on the draft strategy will begin. However, we would encourage all cyclists to engage with the consultation when it happens.

Keith Elliott
RCC Secretary

The Return of Reading Cycle Festival



Reading Cycle Festival will return to Christchurch Meadow in Caversham on Sunday 10 September, 11am-4pm.

This free and fun event is family friendly and will offer a wide range of entertainment for adults and children - cyclists and non-cyclists!

A thrilling stunt display with Fusion Extreme who this year are also providing BMX workshops for children.

There will be bike ramps for teens to try out and obstacle courses for young riders.

We took our two young children to last year's event, and particularly enjoyed the live music and the stunt bike displays. We were amazed by the height and the precision of the jumps the stunt team performed on and off ramps, obstacles and even their van.

The commentary was lively and engaging for both children and adults. My two year old was so entranced that I was able to sit down for a the full length of time it took to drink a hot coffee from one of the food vans.

Avanti Cycling (who deliver the Bikeability training in schools) arranged the whole festival and had contacted lots of local groups who brought a range of interesting bikes to

be tried - my five year old was very excited to get on a unicycle, though he didn't stay on it for long.

If you are an adult who would like to ride a bike, but need more than a standard bicycle, this is a great place to come to explore your options. It was on the AWCycles stand at Reading Cycle Festival a few years ago that I first tried out a cargo e-bike, which was a slippery slope as I now use one instead of a car for the school run.

Many local cycling groups are represented, so if you aren't sure how to get cycling more and need route

advice or training, or if you want to join some group rides, come and have a chat, as everyone will gladly help.

The group I'm part of (I fell DEEP down the rabbit hole) is **Kidical Mass Reading**. We organise family friendly bike rides and we will be running a marshalled circular ride from the festival at 12pm, suitable for young riders with their families.

For more information on this year's event see [Reading Cycle Festival](https://www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk) or follow us on Facebook. I hope we see you there!

Hilary Smart and Kidical Mass!



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Next newsletter copy deadline: 1 November 2023
The newsletter will now be delivered electronically to members. If you prefer to receive a paper copy, please email membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Council Contacts

Please let the relevant campaign officer know of anything you've reported.

Reading Borough Council

Highway queries: 0118 937 3797; parking: 0118 937 3767; potholes: 0800 626540

Wokingham Borough Council

0118 974 6302 or www.wokingham.gov.uk

West Berkshire Council

01635 519080 or www.westberks.org.uk

Windsor and Maidenhead

www.rbwm.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council

Roads and Transport: 0845 310 1111

RCC's Monthly Meetings

7.30pm on the third Wednesday of each month

Wed 18 Oct 2023 - AGM

Wed 15 Nov 2023 - cttee mtg

Wed 20 Dec 2023 - open mtg

See RCC's Facebook Page or our website for more details. We hope to see you there.

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