



# CycleReading

WORKING FOR A CYCLE FRIENDLY READING

[www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk](http://www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk)

Spring 2026 No 169

## How Much Are You Affected By Bike Theft?



### What's Inside

- 2 Campaign News
- 4 Chairman's Letter
- 5 Kidical Mass Spring Report
- 6 Bike Theft Survey for Reading
- 7 Other Bike Theft Information
- 8 Contact Us • Campaign Diary

Reading Cycle Campaign works to create a cycle-friendly Reading, but that isn't just limited to better infrastructure and road safety.

One of the things that can deter people from cycling is the fear of your bike getting stolen once you've parked it somewhere.

To get a further insight into the problem in Reading, we created

a survey on bike theft which you can read more about on page 6.

And page 7 contains information about bike theft, bike security and what can be done about it, as well as insights into why this phenomenon happens.

And, as always, there are the Campaign and Kidical Mass reports along with the Chairman's letter in this issue.

# Campaign News



**Reading Borough Council  
(RBC)**

## **Spring 2026 Report**

### **Future Funding of Cycle Schemes**

Limited funding for construction of cycle/active travel schemes has been a constant issue over the past few years. RBC does fund measures to support cycling, such as adult cycle training, cycle security/parking enhancements etc, and has included improvements for cyclists as part of roads resurfacing and bridge replacement projects.

However, there has been no funding to progress smaller cycle improvement schemes, such as town centre signing,

making traffic calming cycle-friendly, widening paths through parks, and missing links, etc.

Funding for new cycle schemes has been provided through Government Active Travel Fund (ATF) grants, which have been linked to specific major schemes only. The good news is this has all changed as part of the latest round of ATF grants which was announced last December.

The funding now includes both capital funding to construct new walking, wheeling and cycle schemes (no longer tied to a specific scheme) as well as revenue funding for network planning, scheme development, community engagement, etc.

RBC has been awarded £575,563 capital funding and £180,587 revenue funding per year for the next four years. RBC is presently looking at how this funding can be applied, which is likely to be linked to feedback from the Task and Finish Group, which was set up to review progress with the Council's Active Travel schemes.

In the meantime, we have submitted a wide-ranging list of cycle schemes to RBC, based on previous suggestions from members.

### **Bath Road and Castle Hill - Active Travel Tranche 3**

As we reported in the last newsletter, this scheme is funded through the Government's Active Travel Fund and has been subject to a design review following consideration by Active Travel England inspectors.

We understand that revised designs have been developed, which will be considered by Councillors before discussing these options with ourselves and then going to wider public consultation.

### **Palmer Park to Woodley Cycle Scheme**

Construction of the new cycle route between Palmer Park and Woodley town centre began in February, with works to provide an off-road cycle path on Woodlands Avenue, Woodley.

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# Campaign News continued...

We don't have a date yet for the works planned at the Reading end of the scheme, which include a parallel cycle/zebra crossing on Palmer Park Avenue and the footway under the bridges on Palmer Park Avenue/Culver Lane widened to provide an off-road cycle path.



## Cycle Hangars

Although we noted in the last newsletter that RBC have confirmed funding for four cycle hangars as part of the pilot project, there hasn't been any further progress.

Whilst we identified several suitable areas, including suggestions from members, there have been difficulties for the Council to find practical on-street locations.

We have suggested researching the installation guidelines and best practices that other Councils have adopted and simply copy them, rather than trying to come up with something new.



## Bus Lane Schemes

RBC have an on-going Government-funded project to introduce six bus lanes to improve bus reliability where buses are presently delayed in heavy traffic. Modifications are proposed to the bus lane on the A4 London Road in the vicinity of the junction with Liverpool Road.

Also, a new bus lane is proposed on the A4 London Road between Redlands Road and Sidmouth Street, which will likely involve changes to the Sidmouth Street cycle Lane. Both schemes will go to public consultation shortly.

We haven't seen any plans as yet but will report back on how these will impact cyclists.

## Station Subway and North Side of Reading Station

Back in August 2024, we celebrated the station subway being opened to cyclists. It provides an attractive and safe route away from heavily trafficked roads around the station.

We noted then that power cables to the coffee vans on the north side of the station had a temporary raised cover over them, affecting cyclists and walkers alike, but were assured that the cables were to be placed underground shortly.

Eighteen months later, it's still disappointing to note there has been no further progress on this. We will continue to raise this with RBC.

## Future Meetings

We have regular informal meetings with RBC officers to discuss progress on the various schemes and initiatives which are on-going. If there are any suggestions or issues from members, we would be happy to raise them at these meetings.

The next public meeting is the Clean Air and Sustainable Transport forum (CAST) on 31 March. Future meetings, including the Cycle Forum, have yet to be arranged for the new municipal year.

**Tony Carr**  
*RBC Campaigner for RCC*



## Wokingham Borough Council (WoBC)

### Spring 2026 Report

### Network Rail to Rebuild the Earley Station Footbridge

The planning consultation to rebuild the footbridge over the platforms at Earley station, linking the Wokingham

Road to Woodley and providing a valuable access route across the train tracks, closed on 3 March 2026.

This bridge will replace the existing bridge. Disappointingly the new version does not have lifts, ramp access or bike gutters and so will become inaccessible to many.

As national rail infrastructure is seen as 'vital national infrastructure', there was no obligation for Network Rail to listen to local objections from residents or Council members.

This bridge will be another missed opportunity for Active Travel and will discriminate against many groups unable to ascend and descend staircases, which is incredibly disappointing.

## Wokingham Borough Council Safer Streets Speed Limit Suggestions

In January WoBC adopted a new speed limit policy. The Council are now asking residents to tell them which particular streets they feel the speed limit should be lowered.

This is a good opportunity for residents to have their say and decide on what routes are particularly important for active travel and speed limit reduction.

To nominate a street, visit the WoBC website or click on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/55tndfen>

## Sutton Seeds Roundabout on A4 London Road into Reading

WoBC are working in partnership with Reading Borough Council to improve transport links into Reading along the A4 London Road.

A public consultation has been opened to get views on a set of proposals to improve the Sutton Seeds roundabout and the existing bus lane on the A4 London Road.

To respond to the consultation, please click on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2h4uh6tv>

**Alex Cran**  
*WoBC Campaigner for RCC*

# Chairman's Letter

Dear RCC members

Bike theft is a really big issue which probably stops many people from cycling as much as they would like, or even leads to them giving up cycling altogether. I was talking to a friend recently and when I said that I was going to cycle into Reading, she immediately asked: 'Won't you get your bike stolen?'. If this is a widespread view, then there is obviously a big problem to tackle.

Personally, I have only had two bikes stolen in my life and the first was when I was a teenager and was helping to collect for the mission to seamen in our local village. This was in the days before bike locks were invented. In fact, I only started using a lock regularly after I came to Reading in 1979.

My wife and I had both our bikes stolen while in a London pub at the end of a CTC Sunday ride. They were locked to a Sheffield rack and to each other and it was obviously a very quick and professional job, and the police were singularly uninterested in this particular crime. However, my policy of not having a flashy expensive pair

of wheels and religiously locking them up, even just for five minutes, seems to have worked for me over the years.

What of course we do not know is the true extent of the problem. From what we can gather, the chances of recovering stolen bikes are pretty low. The police do not have the resources to make it a high priority and the benefit to the thieves must be significant, although again how the trade in stolen bikes operates is far from clear.

There are obviously two closely related problems. How to make bike parking safer and easier is a major concern; Sam Hatfield's article lays out some practical solutions: <https://tinyurl.com/2uyppn94>. But how to tackle the public perception of bike theft is a different and perhaps harder problem.

The Campaign recently carried out a survey of people who have been victims of bike theft to gather information on its impact on them (see page 6). It generated 25 responses and while we have some numbers from the police, we have no idea how many thefts are not actually

reported and, perhaps as important, how frequent in real terms is bike theft. I have made many hundreds of trips to Reading town centre over the years and have not lost a bike. How representative is my experience and am I tempting fate by writing this?

Only this month the BBC website have reported that a boy from Coley Park has started a petition after both his and his Mum's bikes were stolen from their home (see page 7). He hopes to press the Council, the Police and his local MP to take action and I can only commend him on this. However, this is another story that feeds into the perception that theft is widespread and perhaps unavoidable.

To try to get some clarity in this area we have invited Thames Valley Police to come to our open meeting on Thursday 18 June. Inspector Betsy Palmer has agreed to give a presentation and answer our questions, so please put the date in your diary and come along to give her a fair hearing.

**Joe Edwards**  
RCC Chairman  
(chair@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk)



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110 Henley Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 6DH  
0118 946 3050 | [info@awcycles.co.uk](mailto:info@awcycles.co.uk) | [awcycles.co.uk](http://awcycles.co.uk)

# Kidical Mass Spring 2026 Report

## Themed Rides and Traffic Lights

The end of last year saw lots of themed rides, with a Hallowe'en and Christmas Kidical Mass ride as well as an evening Glow Ride (which Kat Heath, Kidical Mass Chair, organises with a different hat on).

Our Christmas ride was a small and select group, but those of us who came out still very much enjoyed the ride, particularly one happy little elf who loved riding with Santa.

After the ride the elf enjoyed giving out copies of this year's Kidical Mass Christmas book to the mechanics and visitors at the bike hub where we ended the ride.

November's glow ride was very well attended and the riders enjoyed parading through Reading lit up like proverbial Christmas trees.

We've been doing this for a while now and are starting to get recognised locally as a voice speaking up for cyclists, especially vulnerable or small ones.

We have been able to directly report issues where maintenance and upgrades have caused issues with a few toucan traffic lights (with signing not allowing cyclists, and a push button for pedestrians disappearing) and these have been fixed.

On a personal level, it's gratifying that our oldest son sometimes cycles his own bike to school on the bike lane on Lower Henley Road which became safer approaching the traffic lights as a result of cycle campaigners' work.

Of course, we don't always get what we ask for. But, on balance, I think things are better with us involved than they would be without us, so I'm pleased we're here - and grateful to everyone who supports us.

The next family-friendly ride from us will be at the University of Reading community festival on Saturday 16 May. We hope to see you there!

Hilary Smart



# Bike Theft Survey for Reading

## What Our 2026 Survey Shows

Reading Cycle Campaign (RCC) has just run a survey to understand the real impact of bike theft in Reading.

Twenty-five residents shared their experiences, with several reporting multiple thefts. Their stories paint a clear picture: bike theft is a major barrier to cycling.

### You told us:

*“There was no CCTV... the police could do nothing to help.”* A common frustration, especially around Reading Station and town-centre racks.

*“Used the bike for Deliveroo - lost my income.”* For some, theft meant an immediate hit to their livelihood.

*“I had to spend money I didn't have [on a new bike] before Christmas... I struggled to get back on track.”* The financial strain of replacing a bike was significant for many.

*“It was just infuriating... someone had gone to significant effort to steal the bikes.”* Anger and disbelief were recurring themes.

*“I have lost all confidence in authorities and justice.”* Several respondents felt unsupported and unheard after reporting the theft.

Multiple thefts, same locations. Repeat victimisation left cyclists feeling targeted and unsafe leaving bikes anywhere in town.



Bike theft isn't just inconvenience or a low-level crime - it's a barrier to active travel.

### Key findings:

- Theft hotspots: Reading Station, Broad Street & home sheds/gardens
- Most people lost £250-£1,000
- Many cycled less or stopped altogether
- 86.7% never got their bike back
- Repeat thefts are common

### What needs to change:

- Secure, monitored cycle hubs

- CCTV and lighting at open cycle parking
- Effective police follow-up
- PIN-protected storage at stations
- Residential secure bike parking

Reading wants more people cycling. But that won't happen while bikes keep disappearing.

**It's time for a coordinated response.**

**It's time to take bike theft seriously.**

Read the full report here:

<https://tinyurl.com/3pepdctf>

Susan Children  
RCC Publicity Coordinator

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# Other Bike Theft Information

## Recent News



**ReadingToday:** Reading tops bike theft rate per cyclist as campaign urges secure storage:

<https://tinyurl.com/mryuxvj>



**London Cycle Campaign** are calling for action to be taken on cycle theft, and they have created a petition for people to sign:

<https://tinyurl.com/36pt5cep>



A teenager has started a petition after his bike was stolen:

<https://tinyurl.com/373h7f2v>

## Past RCC Articles



Tony Carr outlined his thoughts on Cycle Theft - The Big Picture:

<https://tinyurl.com/2drxtrcj>



Susan Children spoke about what TVP do about bike theft and her recommendation for bike security:

<https://tinyurl.com/yk8nbrup>



Alice Elliott provided a summary about how to recover a stolen bike:

<https://tinyurl.com/3ydehar3>

## Search Recommendations



**BikeFinder** gives tips on how to avoid bike thieves:

<https://tinyurl.com/ju7psjjk>



**BikeFinder** signals - understanding the technology that keeps your bike connected, anywhere you ride:

<https://tinyurl.com/3x8sujn8>



**Stolen Ride** offers an insightful interview with a former bike thief:

<https://tinyurl.com/39c5p99n>

## Please remember to update your details with us

If you move house or change your email address, please could you let the RCC know.

We can only work with the latest information you have given us, which involves sending this newsletter to you.

This was one of the reasons why we voted to discontinue offering life membership, as we had no idea of what happened to many of our life members who joined us 40 years ago.

Hence if you could help us keep our database up to date, we would be very grateful.

Email: [membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk](mailto:membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk)

## RCC's Mission

- To campaign for better facilities for cyclists in Reading, in particular a network of safe cycleways linking residential, industrial and commercial areas, and giving access to the town centre.
- To work with Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans), Cycling UK (both locally and nationally), and others interested in promoting cycling and the well-being of cyclists.
- To identify the needs of cyclists in Reading, for example, the location of safe and secure parking, and to campaign for their provision.
- To work with and advise local authorities and, where necessary, criticise and highlight their shortcomings.



## Contact Us

readingcyclecampaign.org.uk  
facebook.com/ReadingCycleCampaign  
@rdgcyclecampaign.bsky.social

<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Joe Edwards</b> chair@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Keith Elliott</b> secretary@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Sam Hatfield</b> treasurer@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	<b>Keith Collyer</b> membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk
<b>Publicity Coordinator</b>	<b>Susan Children</b> publicity@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk
<b>Events Coordinator</b>	<b>Kat Heath</b> events@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk
<b>Reading Campaigners</b>	<b>Tony Carr &amp; John Lee</b> rbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk
<b>Wokingham Campaigner</b>	<b>Alex Cran</b> wokingham@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk
<b>West Berks Campaigner</b>	<b>Rob Hill</b> wbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk
<b>Newsletter Editor and Designer</b>	<b>Alice Elliott</b> newsletter@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk
<b>Website Manager</b>	<b>Stuart Ward</b> webmaster@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk
<b>CUK Liaison</b>	<b>Karen Robertson</b>
<b>Newsletter Distribution</b>	<b>Kat Heath and Nick Zealey</b>

**Next newsletter copy deadline: 1 May 2026**

The newsletter is delivered electronically to RCC members.  
If you prefer to receive a paper copy, please email  
membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

*Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily endorsed by the Campaign.*

## Cycling Events

27 March @ 19:30 - 21:00

Critical Mass - Cycle for Change

24 April @ 19:30 - 21:00

Critical Mass - Cycle for Change

16 May @ 12:00 - 17:00

Reading University Centenary Community Festival

29 May @ 19:30 - 21:00

Critical Mass - Cycle for Change

21 June @ 12:00 - 18:00

East Reading Festival

View more events on our Events page:

<https://readingcyclecampaign.org.uk/events/>

# RCC's Monthly Meetings

7.30pm on the third Thursday of each month

**Thurs 16 Apr 2026 - open mtg**

**Thurs 21 May 2026 - cttee mtg**

**Thurs 18 Jun 2026 - open mtg**

See RCC's Facebook Page or our website for more details.

## Advertising Rates:

**1/6 page (87.5mm x 80mm):**

RCC members £6 - Non-members £12

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