

Just Keep Cycling

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David Betts on his trusty tricycle – see page 14

When did you start cycling?

Perhaps as a small child, or maybe when you became an adult and realised how convenient or liberating it could be?

And how long do you think you will continue cycling?

In this issue we celebrate two cyclists who have kept cycling until their 90s.

Also in this newsletter, Matt from MT Cycle Repairs looks to clear up some common cycling myths, and has some advice on getting back on the road if you are unfortunate enough to be involved in a collision.

In addition, we spell out the basics of UK law and the Highway Code as it relates to cycling.

We have the latest news on what Reading Borough Council plans for that unloved child of the COVID pandemic - the Sidmouth Street Cycle Scheme (and it's not good), as well as the usual roundup of Council activity.

And, of course, the usual updates from Kidical Mass and the Chairman's Letter.

Campaign News



**Reading Borough Council
(RBC)**

Summer 2026 Report

Future Funding of Cycle Schemes

We have previously highlighted the on-going issue of funding for cycle schemes in Reading. RBC fund measures to support cycling, including adult cycle training, cycle security and parking enhancements, and include improvements for cyclists as part of roads resurfacing and bridge replacement projects.

However, funding for new cycle schemes has been provided through Government Active Travel Fund (ATF) grants, which have been linked to specific major schemes only, such as Sidmouth Street and Shinfield Road.

This has meant that 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, filling missing links etc.

The good news is that this has all changed as part of the latest ATF grants to the Council. The grants now include capital funding to construct new walking, wheeling and cycle schemes, but this is no longer tied to specific major schemes. It also includes revenue funding for network planning, scheme development, community engagement etc - which is a part of the process which hasn't been funded until now.

RBC has been awarded £575,563 capital funding and £180,587 revenue funding each year for the next four years. It's not a huge amount, but is a good settlement considering the size of the town and is to be welcomed as it provides continuous multi-year funding for RBC.

RBC is presently looking at how this funding can be used, 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, including previous suggestions from members.

Bath Road and Castle Hill - Active Travel Tranche 3

The Bath Rd and Castle Hill scheme has been subject to a design review following consideration by Active Travel England inspectors. We understand that revised designs have been developed, which will need to go through the Council approval process before these options are discussed with ourselves and then going to wider public consultation.

Palmer Park to Woodley Cycle Scheme

Construction of the new cycle route has started in Woodley, which includes a segregated two-way cycle route, with kerb segregation along Woodlands Avenue. This is only a small part of the overall scheme and is far from finished, but it is looking good so far. The only observation is that the low

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Campaign News continued...

kerb separating the road from the cycle route means that it would be easy for cars to bump up onto the cycle route.

Cycle Hangars



RBC has confirmed that funding for cycle hangars at six locations has been identified and that the designs for each are being developed. Progress will be reported at the next CAST forum in early June.

Bus Lane Schemes/ Sidmouth Street Cycle Scheme

RBC has Government funding to introduce a number of bus lanes to improve service reliability where buses are presently delayed in heavy traffic.

The latest scheme is for a bus lane on A4 London Road between Redlands Road and Sidmouth Street. To accommodate general traffic displaced from London Road by the bus lane, changes are proposed to

Sidmouth Street that would affect the existing cycle lane (see page 5).

Whilst the Sidmouth Street two-way cycle lane has limited cycle use due to a lack of connectivity to other cycle facilities, it is disappointing to see that additional highway capacity for general traffic is going to be provided by taking away space that is currently dedicated for cyclists.

We have provided initial comments to RBC on the proposed changes. We have suggested that the proposed removal of this cycle facility would be more acceptable if improvements were included to make alternative local cycle facilities safer, more connected, more convenient and easier to use in order to develop the overall network of routes in this part of the town.

The bus lane scheme and changes to Sidmouth Street will be subject to public consultation later in the year.

Station Subway and North Side of Reading Station

We noted in the previous newsletter that although the route through the station subway and north side of the station was opened in August 2024, there had been no progress with replacing the temporary covers over the electric supply cables to the coffee vans.

I'm glad to report that just as the last newsletter was published, works were completed to put the cables in ducts

underground, thereby removing the trip hazard for cyclists and walkers alike.

Cycle and Pedestrian Safety

Local media has recently highlighted a worrying number of injury crashes involving cyclists and pedestrians. Very often these reports have little detail of the incident, which results in the impression that cycling and walking are inherently dangerous.

We would like to see RBC develop a more coherent approach to reviewing road safety for vulnerable road users, with a particular focus on those sites with a high number of reported injury crashes involving cyclists and pedestrians.

School Streets

RBC has appointed consultants to update the Council's approach to School Streets. One of the issues has been a lack of local volunteers to manage road closures at school arrival and departure times.

Future Schemes

The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is the strategic plan for developing local cycling and walking networks, schemes and associated initiatives.

However, these are 10-year plans which seem relatively inflexible and they can quickly become out of date, meaning that opportunities can easily get missed. RBC is planning to start the process of reviewing the plan later

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this year. We welcome the opportunity to contribute towards the development of the new plan and will ensure that members are involved in the development of new schemes and initiatives.

The Community Infrastructure Levy generates funding from development schemes towards locally identified improvement schemes, including cycling schemes. RBC has appointed consultants to review the list of schemes, which will hopefully give cycle schemes greater priority.

Future Meetings

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

The next Clean Air and Sustainable Transport forum (CAST) is on 9 June, and the next Cycle Forum is on 3 September.

Tony Carr
RBC Campaigner for RCC



West Berkshire Council (WBC)

Summer 2026 Report

WBC covers large parts of Tilehurst and the surrounding areas of Purley, Pangbourne, Theale, Calcot and Burghfield. The West Berks Cycle Forum focuses mostly on schemes in Thatcham and Newbury.

Mortimer-Burghfield pedestrian/cycle route

The scheme, previously promoted by Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council, now has planning approval.

WBC's contribution will be to the on-highway sections, in particular at the northern end (Reading Road/Padworth Road junctions area).



Cycle Parking Improvements

A number of cycle parking improvements have been installed across West Berkshire including four new StreetPods at The Cotswold Centre in Tilehurst.

Future Meetings

The next West Berks Cycle Forum will be on Wednesday 10 June.

If there are any cycling or active travel matters you would like raised at the Cycle Forum or with WBC, please let me know.

Rob Hill
WBC Campaigner for RCC
wbc@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk



Wokingham Borough Council (WoBC)

Summer 2026 Report

Woodley to Reading Cycle Scheme

Work is progressing well on the new scheme and the first half (from Woodley Precinct along Woodlands Avenue towards Reading) is scheduled to be completed in around eight weeks' time.

This cycle scheme was heavily criticised by some political parties, who organised vocal local opposition at Council meetings and via online consultations and politicised its designs and introduction.

WoBC organised multiple consultations and re-designs and the cycle scheme,

which will provide the borough with its first LTN 1/20 compliant cycle infrastructure, was given the green light last year, the work being funded by central government Active Travel fund money.

Even though the cycle scheme had been so politicised and condemned in certain quarters, the incumbent Liberal Democrats recorded their strongest ever results in South Lake Ward in Woodley, the ward in Woodley in which the cycle scheme is located.

This might point to the fact that active travel infrastructure, despite often coming up against vocal and well organised opposition, might not always be as unpopular as people might have you believe.

This was played out across the Borough, and despite being accused of a war on motorists for changing speed limits to better reflect road use and improve road safety, the Liberal Democrats maintained their control of the Council.

WoBC will issue a press release on the Woodley to Reading cycle scheme once this section is open and available to use. In the meantime, you can find further up-to-date information by following WoBC on social media, or by visiting the following website: <https://tinyurl.com/2uz9ju7d>

Safer Streets



The safer streets consultation closed on 1 May 2026. According to the Council there were over 600 submissions from local residents keen for improvement to road safety in their neighbourhoods.

The next step will be for the data to be looked at and for schemes to be designed in areas where safer streets are popular and practical; these will then be put out to wider consultation.

For more information on safer streets: <https://tinyurl.com/55tndfen>

Alex Cran
WoBC Campaigner for RCC

Councillors Clash Over Cycling Infrastructure



Cycle lane on Sidmouth Street

At the Reading Borough Council meeting on 23 April 2024, a routine discussion on the Local Transport Delivery Plan escalated into a wider clash over the Sidmouth Street cycle lane and whether Reading should consider introducing a Low Emission Zone (LEZ). The exchange, recently reported in the *Reading Chronicle*, once again highlighted how cycling infrastructure becomes the focal point for broader frustrations about transport, funding, and political priorities.

The *Reading Chronicle* report on councillors clashing over the Sidmouth Street cycle lane and the possibility of a LEZ has once again highlighted a familiar pattern in Reading's transport politics: cycling infrastructure becomes the lightning rod for wider frustrations, while the structural issues behind congestion, pollution and funding challenges remain unaddressed.

Here we take a look at what the debate reveals and what Reading must do if it is serious about cleaner air, healthier residents and a modern transport system.

Air Quality, Sedentary Lifestyles and Reading's Transport Plan

During the Council debate, Cllr John Ennis emphasised the growing problem of sedentary behaviour and the role active travel can play in addressing it. He also acknowledged that many residents still rely on cars and will continue to do so.

This is an important point. Reading's transport system must support those who need to drive, while also enabling those who want to walk or cycle to do so safely. Yet the Council's Local Transport Delivery Plan, a multi-million-pound bid for government funding, risks becoming another document full of good intentions without the long-term commitment needed to deliver real change.

The plan includes:

- Improvements to bus journey times
- Expansion of electric vehicle charging
- Active travel schemes
- Measures to reduce emissions

But without a coherent strategy that prioritises safe, continuous cycling routes these measures will struggle to shift travel behaviour in any meaningful way.

Sidmouth Street: A Case Study in Short-Termism

The Sidmouth Street cycle lane has become a symbol of Reading's inconsistent approach to active travel. Originally installed using emergency COVID-19 funding to support socially distanced travel, it is now being considered for partial removal to create an additional turning lane for motor traffic.

Opposition councillor Dave McElroy described the situation as "frustrating and disappointing", arguing that installing a cycle lane only to shorten it later represents a waste of time and

resources. Many in the cycling community agree. However you dress it up, removing a cycle lane without providing an alternative is not a good look for the Council.

The deeper issue is not the lane itself, but the stop-start nature of transport planning in Reading. The scheme was funded through a competitive national bidding process, described by one councillor as a "Hunger Games-style system", which forces councils to scramble for short-term pots of money rather than plan strategically.

This leads to:

- Isolated cycle lanes that don't connect
- Projects that are vulnerable to political shifts
- Infrastructure that is installed quickly and removed just as quickly
- Public confusion and declining confidence in the council's transport vision

Sidmouth Street is not an isolated case. It is a symptom of a system that rewards speed over strategy.

The LEZ Debate: A Distraction from the Real Work

The idea of a Low Emission Zone in Reading surfaced during the debate, with some councillors questioning why it was not being considered. LEZs can be effective tools for reducing pollution, but they are not a silver bullet, and they are certainly not a substitute for a robust active travel network.

If Reading is serious about reducing emissions, the evidence is clear: the fastest, cheapest, and most effective way to cut pollution is to enable more people to cycle.

What Reading Actually Needs

To move beyond reactive debates and piecemeal schemes, Reading must commit to a long-term, evidence-based transport strategy. That means:

- A continuous, protected cycling network linking neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces and the town centre
- Safe junctions, where most cycling collisions occur

Councillors Clash Over Cycling Infrastructure

- Secure cycle parking, especially at stations, shopping areas, and residential developments
- Traffic-calmed neighbourhoods, making walking and cycling the natural choice for short trips
- Reliable, long-term funding, not competitive bidding rounds that force rushed decisions
- Integration with public transport, enabling seamless multimodal journeys
- A commitment to maintain and improve existing cycle lanes, not dismantle them when political winds shift

These are not radical ideas. They are standard practice in cities that have successfully reduced congestion and improved air quality.

Our Message to Councillors

The Reading Cycle Campaign urges councillors to stop treating cycle lanes as expendable experiments or political symbols. Every time a scheme is watered down or reversed, public trust erodes and progress stalls.

Reading deserves a transport system built on evidence, not short-term politics. A system that supports those who need to drive, while giving

everyone else safe, attractive alternatives. A system that prioritises health, sustainability and long-term thinking.

The debate over Sidmouth Street and the LEZ is a reminder that Reading stands at a crossroads. The choices made now will shape the town's transport landscape for decades.

Let's choose a future where cycling is safe, convenient and central to Reading's identity, not an afterthought.

Susan Children
RCC Publicity Coordinator

Chairman's Letter

Dear RCC members

I recently read that Adam Yates was involved in a 30-rider crash in the Giro d'Italia and although he finished the stage covered in blood he has been withdrawn from the race by his team.

This got me thinking about just how dangerous cycling is, not just as a sport, but every day on our local roads and tracks. I won't say uniquely dangerous, as from my experience skiing both as a sport and as a pastime is just as dangerous, but we don't routinely ski to work or school, at least not here in Reading.

To try to get a handle on just how dangerous cycling is, I have been looking at the government's latest accident statistics for 2020-2024: <https://tinyurl.com/mak7m8z4>. These show that during that year there were 14,545 casualties of which 82 were fatalities.

These are the lowest figures in a data set going back twenty years to 2004 where the comparable figure were 16,648 and 134 fatalities. The trend is obviously in the right direction, but 82 is still 82 too many.

Over the last four years for which we have data, fatalities are down, although still two a week on average, while serious injuries are up 16%. Cycle traffic is said to be up 36% over

this period according to the National Road Traffic Census so things are getting better relatively.

Drilling down into the data, we find that male cyclists are five times more likely to be hurt or killed than female ones, and that the 30 - 60 age range had the most accidents.

Most of the casualties were because of a collision with another vehicle, and heavy goods vehicles (or their drivers) seem to be the worst offenders.

The report states that the biggest contributory factor to these accidents as 'ineffective observation by either the driver or rider or pedestrian'.

In other words, "Sorry Guv, I didn't see you". Over the years this has happened twice to me - oddly enough at both ends of Bridge Street alongside the Oracle.

However, over a four-year period, 84 cyclists were killed in accidents which did not involve another vehicle. How do we account for this as the report makes no comment?

Is cyclist inattention a factor? Every young cyclist I see seems to be looking at a mobile phone.

Is deteriorating road surfaces another factor? I have twice come off my bike after hitting an unseen hole in the road.

Is it the increasing use of illegal e-bikes that often seem to be ridden without any respect for road rules or even common sense?

But how do you have a bad enough crash to kill yourself without being hit by several tons of motor vehicle?

If you have suggestions, I'd be interested to hear your views - please post a reply on our Facebook page if you can shed some light on it or have personal experience.

When we ask people why they do not cycle, one of the most common reasons given is that it is too dangerous. The statistics seem to show that cycling is getting relatively safer, with accident rates per mile travelled decreasing and especially fatalities.

But, of course, this is not the whole story, as reporting rates of non-fatal accidents is still too low and near misses are hardly ever recorded.

Knowing the statistics will not persuade a lot more people onto bikes, but it is a start. Better driving training, more cyclist training and perhaps better enforcement of traffic regulations would all help. Please let me know your views.

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

Kidical Mass Spring 2026 Report

Community Festivals, Campaigning and Councillors

Around 60 people joined Kidical Mass Reading's Spring Ride on a beautiful day at the University of Reading's Community Festival.

We love the university campus which has many bike paths that are completely separate from traffic – we recommend it to any family with young children looking for a place for a weekend ride.

On the surrounding roads we were particularly pleased with the drop curb coming out of the university onto the Shinfield Road bike lane. We asked the Council to add this after some of our smallest riders found the turn difficult last year.

In other changes which have come from Kidical Mass's campaigning in Reading, the boom barrier blocking cars at the bottom of Chestnut Walk by the Abbey Ruins has been shortened to allow a bike to pass by (see picture), creating a lovely traffic free route into town along the river.

Everyone who joins our rides helps amplify our voice when asking for these changes – we are especially grateful to the marshals who help keep our smallest riders safe on the roads.

We were really glad that four Councillors came along for the Spring Ride to see firsthand what children need to be safe on a bike. Thank you to Will Cross (Labour), Louise Keene and Kat McCann (Greens) and Al Neal (Lib Dems and longtime friend of Kidical Mass).

We were also delighted to be joined by many of our skating friends associated with the Bike Hub – Kidical Mass is for everyone using wheel-based alternatives to cars! If you're interested in taking up skating, please contact Late Skates.

We will be running more family friendly rides on Sunday 7 June and also from Reading Cycle Festival on Sunday 13 September – we'd love to see you there!

Visit <https://kidicalmassreading.co.uk> for full details.

Hilary Smart



Letter to the Editor

This is in response to our e-newsletter invite to an Open Social Ride which we sent to members in April. -- Editor

Dear Susan

I've put the date and time [of the social ride] in my calendar. My attendance will have to compromise a meeting with a local friend who I haven't met for months.

At this stage I have to admit to my increasing disappointment with the level of the [public authority's] understanding for the need of provision for cycling facilities.

The discrepancy between the provision and need for 'demand'-responsive cycling facilities in Reading appears totally misunderstood!

The result is very obvious: numerous non-compliant fat-bikes and the absence of a significant increase in the number of genuine cyclists.

In comparison with London, where more cyclists are crossing the river

than cars at peak times, Reading has completely missed the boat!

Another example, from my personal point of view after having lived almost 30 years in the Shinfield Road/ Northcourt Avenue area, is that there is still no safe direct continuous cycle route to/from Reading Station.

Last year I had even two bad falls due to a combination of poor road maintenance and poor driver behaviour. One fall, in Redlands Road, involved an immediate visit to A&E.

Isn't this level of progress scandalous, after three decades? I am very sad that even my wife, with whom I had many happy cycling holidays, has given up on cycling. I keep going at a utility-cycling level.

I keep hoping that your good work will finally resolve issues like this and ensure that Reading will eventually become an exemplary cycling city.

Kind regards

Bob Castelijns



Good afternoon, Bob

We can only echo your concerns and disappointment over the lack of progress regarding providing safe cycling infrastructure.

We will continue our lobbying and communications with Reading Borough Council and other stakeholders and local groups.

As you rightly point out no account is taken of those who have simply stopped cycling!

Thank you for your comments and support.

Best wishes

Susan Children
RCC Publicity Coordinator

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Cycling and the Law



What you need to know

A plain-English guide for everyday riding: where you can cycle, what equipment is legally required, and a few common myths worth retiring.

Introduction

If you cycle to work, nip to the shops, ride with family at weekends or head out on club runs, you've probably heard confident claims about what cyclists 'can' and 'can't' do.

This article pulls together the basics of UK cycling law and the Highway Code, with a focus on the questions that come up most often.

A quick note: I'm not a lawyer. I've summarised information from reputable sources (*see the References on the next page*) and I believe it to be accurate at the time of writing, but it isn't legal advice.

Key takeaways (if you only read one thing)

- You can ride on most roads (including many bus lanes), but not on motorways or where a 'No Cycling' sign is shown.
- Cycle lanes and tracks usually aren't compulsory – use your

judgement about what feels safest.

- It's legal to ride two abreast and it can be safer in groups or with children.
- Pavements aren't for cycling unless they're signed for shared use or as a cycle track.
- Red lights apply to cyclists too (including at junctions and advanced stop lines).
- At night you must have lights, and there are specific reflector rules that catch people out (especially clipless pedals).

If you want further information, there is a more detailed version of this article on our website:

<https://tinyurl.com/4xct2ymk>

Your bike: what the law actually requires

Brakes

Your bike legally needs two independent braking systems, normally a front and rear brake. If you ride a 'fixed wheel' bike, that is one with no freewheel, where the pedals are directly linked to the rear wheel, that also counts as a brake for that wheel, but you still need a working brake on the other wheel. So, you cannot ride a 'fixie' with a brake only

on the rear wheel. I have no idea how this applies to unicycles and bicycles such as penny-farthings.

Lights and reflectors

At a glance: if you ride between sunset and sunrise, your bike must show a white light at the front and a red light at the rear, and it must have a red rear reflector (plus amber pedal reflectors if the bike was manufactured after 1 October 1985).

Flashing lights are permitted, as long as they flash at an even rate between 1 and 4 flashes per second (60-240 per minute). Many people use a steady light to see where they're going and an additional flasher to help them be noticed.

One practical 'gotcha': the legal requirement for amber pedal reflectors can be awkward if you use clipless/cleated pedals, because many systems don't accept reflectors.

If you regularly ride after dark, it's worth checking your setup (some pedals take clip-in reflectors, and some riders keep a second set of pedals for winter/commuting).

Reflective clothing is great for visibility but doesn't replace the legal reflector requirement.

Cycling and the Law continued...

Other equipment

You are not legally required to have a bell, helmet, hi-vis, or special clothing, although new bikes must be sold with a bell and the Highway Code recommends a helmet and visible clothing.

Behaviour: ‘must nots’ and common myths

You must not ride dangerously, carelessly or inconsiderately; carry passengers on a bike not designed for them; hold on to moving vehicles; or ride while under the influence of drink or drugs.

Serious offences can lead to heavy fines and, in extreme cases, a driving disqualification or even prison.

A lot of frustration between road users comes from mixing up what the Highway Code recommends with what the law requires. For example: you’re not legally required to wear a helmet, hi-vis or special clothing; you don’t have to have a bell; and cycle lanes generally aren’t compulsory.

However, some of these ‘shoulds’ can still be sensible choices depending on the road, the weather and your confidence.

Frequently asked questions

Here are some quick answers to common Berkshire/Wokingham questions:

• *Can I cycle on riverside paths and towpaths in Berkshire (Thames/Kennet and local parks)?*

It depends on the route. Some riverside paths are public footpaths (walking only), while others are signed as shared-use or a cycle track. If you’re unsure, check for signs at entrances, bridges and junctions. Where paths are busy or narrow, slow right down, give way, and consider a nearby on-road/NCN alternative.

• *How should I ride on narrow rural lanes around Berkshire (blind bends, fast A/B roads, horse riders)?*

On narrow lanes, ride far enough out to avoid being “squeezed” past, and consider the centre of the lane at blind bends, crests and pinch points.



Use passing places where they exist; if you choose to let a queue go, do it somewhere you can pull in safely and rejoin without a close pass.

Expect horses and farm vehicles – slow down early, be patient, and give plenty of space.

• *Is it legal to ride two abreast?*

Yes. It’s recognised in the Highway Code and can improve visibility, particularly in groups or when riding with children. Be considerate and, where appropriate, move into single file to help vehicles overtake when it’s safe.

• *Can I cycle on the pavement (especially with a child)?*

Not unless it’s signed for cycling (shared use or cycle track). Discretion is sometimes used – particularly for children – but the safest option is usually a signed route, a quiet street, or a protected cycle track where available.

• *What are bike boxes (advanced stop lines) and can I use them?*

They let cyclists wait in front of motor traffic at junctions. You may enter the box on red, but you must not cross the second stop line until the signal turns green. If the box is full, wait behind the first stop line.

• *Can I use bus lanes around Berkshire (including routes into Reading/Wokingham/Bracknell)?*

Often, yes – but it depends on the signs (and sometimes the time of day). Many bus lanes allow cycles and are marked accordingly, but restrictions vary by location, direction and operating hours. If in doubt, follow the signs for that stretch.

• *There’s a dangerous pothole / broken drain cover (or mud/hedge cuttings) on my regular Berkshire route – what should I do?*

If it’s an immediate danger, report it as urgent to the highway’s authority. Otherwise, use the relevant Council ‘report a problem’ service (for example, Wokingham, West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest or Reading, depending on the road). Include the exact location and, if possible, a photo – rural-lane hazards can change quickly.

• *What do I legally need at night?*

Between sunset and sunrise you must have a white front light, a red rear light, and a red rear reflector. Many bikes (manufactured after 1 October 1985) also need amber pedal reflectors – worth checking if you use clipless pedals.

References

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I hope you’ve found this article useful, both here and on the extended version on our website.

If there are other cycling-law questions you’d like the committee to cover in future, please contact us via the website.

Happy (and safe) cycling!

Keith Collyer
RCC Membership Secretary

Clearing Up 13 Myths That Put Cyclists At Risk



Cycling in Reading is growing and with it comes a swirl of persistent myths about what cyclists should do, must do, or are allowed to do.

These misconceptions don't just cause confusion; they shape behaviour on the road, influence how drivers interact with cyclists and can even affect what happens after a collision.

This article tackles these myths head-on. Using evidence, Highway Code guidance and practical experience, we're setting the record straight so every road user - whether on two wheels or four - can make safer, more informed decisions.

Myth 1: Cyclists must stay close to the kerb

Reality: The Highway Code (Rule 72) explicitly allows cyclists to ride in the centre of the lane in slower-moving traffic or when it prevents unsafe overtaking. Positioning further out increases visibility and reduces the risk of close passes.

Myth 2: Taking the lane blocks traffic

Reality: Taking the lane is a protective measure, not an act of defiance. It discourages dangerous overtakes and keeps cyclists clear of

hazards such as potholes, drains and opening car doors.

Myth 3: Cycle lanes must always be used

Reality: Cycle lanes are optional. If a lane is obstructed, poorly designed, or simply unsafe, cyclists are fully entitled to use the main carriageway.

Myth 4: Helmets prevent serious head injuries

Reality: Helmets reduce the frequency of injuries, but cannot prevent all head trauma, especially in high speed or side impacts. Safe road positioning, visibility and awareness remain the most important safety factors.

Myth 5: If you feel fine after a crash, you're unharmed

Reality: Adrenaline masks pains and symptoms. Many injuries, including concussion, soft-tissue damage and internal bruising, can appear hours or days later. A medical check is always recommended.

Myth 6: Accepting cash after a crash is easier

Reality: Cash rarely covers injuries and loss of earnings. Plus, hidden structural damage to a bike can be

serious and expensive. Without a proper report, you may have no recourse if problems emerge later.

Myth 7: Mirrors replace shoulder checks

Reality: Mirrors help, but they don't replace the lifesaving habit of looking over your shoulder before manoeuvring.

Myth 8: Flashing lights are always best

Reality: Flashing lights attract attention, but steady lights help drivers judge distance. A combination is often safest.

Myth 9: Drivers can pass anywhere if there's space

Reality: Drivers should leave at least 1.5 metres when overtaking up to 30mph and significantly more at higher speeds. Anything less could be considered as 'careless driving' and therefore illegal.

Myth 10: Minor crashes don't need reporting

Reality: The benefit of reporting details of any crash is two-fold. This records the vehicle driver details in case of future issues and improves infrastructure. The more we report, the faster the infrastructure improves. Reporting also creates an official record that protects you if injuries or mechanical issues appear later.

Myth 11: "The driver didn't see you, it was unavoidable"

Reality: Many collisions are a result of positioning, visibility or attention failures. Predictable riding and space management reduce risk.

Myth 12: A bike that looks fine after a crash is safe to ride

Reality: Cracks, frame stress and component damage can be invisible. Always get a professional check.

Myth 13: Safety comes mainly from equipment

Reality: Equipment helps but the biggest safety gains come from road positioning, awareness, and decision-making.

Matt Touw
MT-Cycle Repairs

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Matthew Touw

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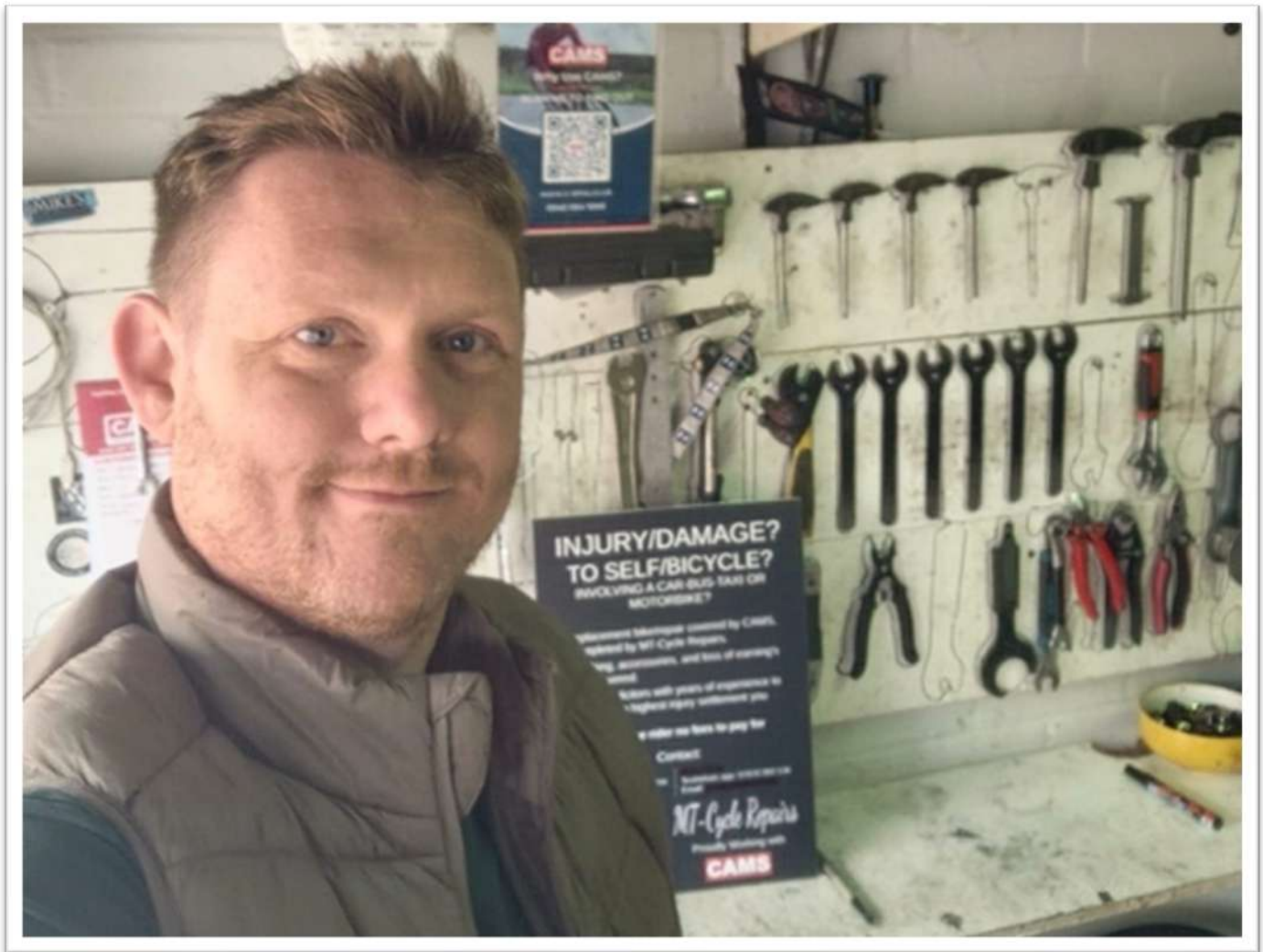


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Working in Partnership with

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CAMS: Keeping Cyclists Moving After A Crash



Matt Touw, MT-Cycle Repairs

If you're involved in a cycling collision, the aftermath can be stressful, confusing, and disruptive, especially when your bike is your main way of getting around.

CAMS is one of the UK's leading cycle accident management specialists, offering a fast, cyclist-focused service designed to get you back on the road with minimal hassle.

What CAMS Offers

- Quick bike repair or replacement
- Replacement clothing and accessories
- Access to legal representation
- Loss of earnings and out-of-pocket expenses
- Over 25 years' experience in cycle accident management

- A fair and independent bike valuation
- Freedom to use your nominated bike shop

CAMS take the stress out of a worrying and traumatic event.

Your Local CAMS-Approved Repairer

For riders in the Reading and West Berkshire area, CAMS works directly with **MT Cycle Repairs**, a trusted, independent workshop offering professional servicing, repairs, and assessments.

MT Cycle Repairs are authorised by CAMS to handle inspections, repairs or replacement support, keeping everything local, convenient and cyclist-centred.

The owner, Matt Touw, is happy to answer any questions about the process.

Check out his website:
<https://bit.ly/4uMkJJB>

Find him on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/MTcycles>

Text/WhatsApp: 07519 684 766

How to Make a Claim

CAMS operates a 24/7 helpline: 0345 054 1000. More information via their website: <https://c-ams.co.uk/>

If you make a claim through CAMS, please inform them that you know about CAMS thanks to MT Cycle Repairs.

Matt Touw
MT-Cycle Repairs

Cycling Through The Ages

I interviewed David Betts and Peter Finch, both in their 90s, about what it is like to be a more mature cyclist.

David is still cycling, using his trusty tricycle (see picture). I tried sitting on it, and it felt very secure. Its many features enable better visibility, not only because it takes up more space on the road, but David can also sit back and take his time to look where to go. He also has installed a big shopping box on the back and was keen to point out the 'fat tyres' which aid stability.

Peter only stopped cycling regularly in December (once he turned 90). He regretted this was due to declining health, lack of balance and getting a bit forgetful (according to his wife). He used to cycle regularly to the pub, but now only goes as far as his allotment. However, he was pleased to announce his three grandsons regularly cycle, passing down his interests accordingly.

Both nonagenarians relayed the delight they had going on cycling holidays, mostly abroad, including the La Semaine-Federale in France, a community of cyclists meeting up for a week of cycling events at varying levels. It is obvious cycling had been a major part of their family lives, which had contributed towards their cycling longevity. Peter only stopped holidaying abroad five years ago.

Using a bike to commute to work was preferable to both men. David worked at the University of Reading which was very close to his house. Peter cycled to Twyford Station from Woodley to catch his train to his job in the city.

Retirement also contributed towards an increased cycling lifestyle, especially with group rides like the CTC. David noted he still can ride his trike at least 15 miles out and back as a veteran member. Both men said joining a cycling club helped with making friends and getting necessary advice to keep cycling safely.

David admitted he gave up driving when he turned 80, having become anxious about causing an accident due to heavy traffic and bad weather. After two of his friends had serious accidents on their bikes, his family bought David an almost new electric tricycle from eBay. He soon learned through intuition how to steer it



David Betts on his electric tricycle

properly (by leaning the other way) and hasn't looked back!

I asked them about the benefits of cycling. Both men said cycling was an excellent way of getting out and keeping active, fit and healthy. Cycling also protects the environment, which makes it a worthy reason. David said cycling made it easier to get to where he wants to go, and using a D-lock as well as the built-in electrical lock increased parking security. Peter said a lightweight electric bike is imperative as it provides the necessary assistance to keep going.

I asked them if there was anything they didn't like about cycling nowadays. Both moaned about bad weather, potholes, fast traffic and increasingly busy roads. Peter also noted the lack of protection for bikes on the road, and both vehicles and pedestrians not checking before turning or venturing into the road.

Also the lack of maintenance of hedges on country roads caused bramble injuries to thin skin. David noted the bad manners of other cyclists, their lack of safety and inappropriate clothing, and the legality of their bikes. More effort should be invested into cycling; however, the Government treats cycling well, but other cyclists fail to use the facilities adequately.

Advice for other mature cyclists? David recommended getting a tricycle after the age of 80, as a visible, reliable and secure source of pleasurable transport. A trike also provides a ready-made seat on the touch line at the University rugby and hockey matches! It is also a talking point or a conversation opener when chatting with other people.

Peter was not so keen on tricycles.

Alice Elliott

Cycling Through The Ages continued...

When we interviewed David and Peter to celebrate veteran cyclists, both mentioned the benefits of group rides.

Group rides not only provide the benefits of being part of a community, but can also give cyclists confidence on the road and the chance to explore new routes and localities.

Locally we have Kidical Mass groups in both Reading and Wokingham, which focus on short group rides for families, particularly those with younger children. Kidical Mass is a grass roots movement that has taken off across the country in recent years, and is clearly meeting a demand for family friendly rides that was previously not being catered for.

We also have Cycling UK Reading (still known by some as Reading CTC), which organises a variety of rides for different tastes and schedules. These include on-road and off-road rides, weekend and evening rides, and also weekday lunchtime destination rides, which are often popular with the more mature cyclist.



A CUK Reading weekday lunchtime destination ride

Festivals 2026

We will have a stand at WaterFest this year. It's on Saturday 27 June and we will be in Forbury Gardens. Come along and say hello.

Another date for your diary is Sunday 13 September, when the annual Cycle Festival, organised by Avanti Cycling, will be in Christchurch Meadows.

An Early Correction

In our last newsletter (Spring 2026 Issue 169) we reported that Network Rail plans to replace the footbridge at Earley Station.

The footbridge in question is the one between the platforms, not the footbridge just to the west which links Wokingham Road to Woodley, as implied by the report in the newsletter.





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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

18 June @ 19:30 - 21:00
RCC Open Meeting Talk by Thames Valley Police
26 June @ 19:30 - 21:00
Critical Mass - Cycle for Change
27 June @ 11:00 - 17:00
WaterFest
31 July @ 19:30 - 21:00
Critical Mass - Cycle for Change
28 August @ 19:30 - 21:00
Critical Mass - Cycle for Change
13 September @ 11:00 - 16:00
Reading Cycle 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 Jul 2026 - cttee mtg

Thurs 20 Aug 2026 - open mtg

Thurs 17 Sep 2026 - cttee mtg

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

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