



“Working for a cycle-friendly Reading”

www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk

Pangbourne - Cycle Route Audit

Purpose

The Reading Cycle Campaign (RCC) has undertaken this cycle audit of Pangbourne at the request of West Berkshire District Council (WBDC). The Pangbourne area to be considered is as agreed with WBDC. A group of RCC members has studied the area for routes that are likely to be of particular benefit to cyclists. They then cycled the various sections noting the existing infrastructure, any specific problems, and then listing a range of improvement measures, both short and long term.

Leisure routes have not been considered as much as utility routes, but some comments are included as there is potential demand and Pangbourne is popular passing place for leisure cyclists.

This report includes the specific recommendations as well as general ones.



Areas considered and key cycling attractions

Pangbourne is a separate village community having its central shopping area and a rail station to the west of the centre. Both can be attractors from Pangbourne itself and the more outlying villages such as Whitchurch, Upper Basildon (Pangbourne College) and Tidmarsh. Cycling to Theale and Calcot should be feasible as they are only four miles away. However, the current road conditions on the A340 discourage most cyclists.

The village centre has a 20mph limit reinforced with raised zebra crossings which provides a generally satisfactory environment for cycling. Other than the Reading Road most roads leading into Pangbourne are relatively narrow but carry high levels of traffic. There appears to be relatively little immediate scope to provide either on or off-carriageway cycling.

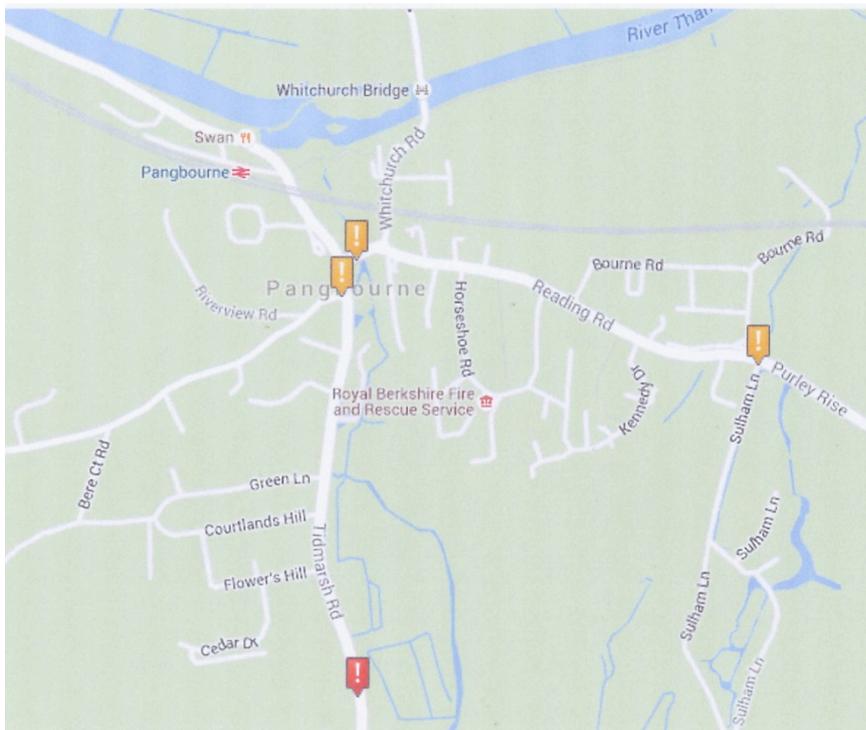
The Pangbourne railway station attracts a few cyclists, with four covered racks outside and three inside the station. Observations showed these to be about half full.

Cycling into Reading may be a quite feasible commute. Taking an average cycling speed of 10mph, this gives a time to cycle into central Reading of about 40 minutes, which may be slightly longer than car and bus journeys at peak times.

Dozens of leisure riders pass through Pangbourne on fine weekend days, often stopping for refreshments. They seem to comprise of two main categories, fast road cyclists, and less confident slower cyclists who are trying to avoid the roads which they see as threatening. The slower group tend to come along the Thames path or via Mapledurham and Whitchurch.

A fair number of cyclists were seen cycling (carefully) on the footways, particularly outside the village centre, showing that traffic fear was a major concern and that off-carriageway cycling may be desirable.

Cycle collisions are relatively low in the Pangbourne area, partly maybe due to the low level of cyclists, but probably helped by the 20mph limit. In the last five years two crashes have been recorded close to the village centre, one being on the southern approach, a third crash on the eastern boundary and a fourth on the Tidmarsh Road southern boundary.



Reference www.crashmap.co.uk.

Yellow - slight, red - serious, black – fatal

Suggested routes

The following routes are suggested:

- A. A329 route linking central Pangbourne to Purley and onwards into Reading.
- B. Route from the centre to Upper Basildon
- C. Route to Tidmarsh and Theale
- D. Leisure routes, including by the Thames and the Pang

Route problems and possible solutions

For simplicity the various routes are grouped as:

1. A329 Reading Road and Shooters Hill (Oxford road),
2. The village centre
3. To Upper Basildon and Pangbourne College
4. To Tidmarsh and Theale including the A340
5. Leisure routes, Thames Path and Pang valley
6. General

Route	location	problem	Suggested measures
1	Reading Road	A heavily trafficked road that is intimidating to cyclists	Provide slightly raised pedestrian crossing places with traffic islands to help slow traffic to 30mph or less (outside the 20mph area).
		ditto	Extend the 20mph limit area
		ditto	Provide a cycle lane leading into Pangbourne from the east.
		Poor road surface is compounded by traffic overtaking	Resurface carriageway
2	All central area	General traffic	Extend the 20mph zone to beyond the railway bridge on the Streatley Road, and extend by about 200m in other directions. The villages housing roads could logically also be 20mph.
	Central mini-roundabouts	The mini-roundabouts can both be difficult for cyclists	Make the Tidmarsh Road mini roundabout raised and more prominent
		Lack of cycle parking	Provide cycle parking in various places close to the shops
3	To Upper Basildon	Narrow and quite busy road	Reduce speed limits and provide cycling warning signs
4	To Tidmarsh	The A340 is a narrow fast and busy road	Review and reduce speed limits.
		Alternative route	Provide an improved alternative route via Sulham via improved existing lanes
5	Leisure routes	Improve Thames 'towpath' particularly where muddy	The towpath on the south of the river Thames appears well used by cyclists but has little or no surfacing. Providing a gravel surface on at least the worst areas would help cyclists and pedestrians.
		North-south route	As 4 above, an route via Sulham
			Routes in the Pang valley
6	General	Traffic dominance and danger	Reduced and 20mph speed limits and traffic calming measures
-	General	Poor road surfaces, including potholes and poor trench reinstatement that passes right through Pangbourne	Resurface where necessary, particularly where defects are close to the line where cyclists wheels pass and so are crossed frequently.

Conclusions and recommendations

The compact and flat nature of central Pangbourne make it reasonably attractive for cycling. However, there are a large number of measures that can be taken to improve conditions for cycling in the Pangbourne area. Some are relatively straightforward improvements whilst others are equally important long term improvements that need to be agreed and programmed when resources, road 'improvement' and developments take place.

The main cycling routes at present and in the future need to be agreed so that work and expenditure can be effectively targeted. The 'quick fix' measures need to be agreed and implemented to give early improvements for cyclists. Longer term improvements should be clearly identified, developed and progress made on them when possible.

Extension of the 20mph limit in Pangbourne should be implemented, this would help cyclists and pedestrians.

Reduce vehicle speeds on Reading Road (A329 east) and Shooters Hill (A329 west) outside an extended 20mph zone. This could take the form of surfacing or marking changes and improved pedestrian provision.

A long-term plan to provide for cyclists to Purley and Reading on the A329 Reading Road needs to be initiated. This is likely to require land acquisition on the north side to allow at least a shared path, or a segregated cycle track or on-carriageway cycle lanes.

Provide more cycle parking in the village centre by the shops and near the river. Additional cycle parking at the station will be needed as this becomes more attractive and popular.

Road resurfacing is needed on many of the roads, not only to make a more comfortable ride, but because of the safety issues cyclists have when concentrating on and avoiding road surface defects.

Leisure routes for cycling are currently lacking, but despite this there are considerable numbers of leisure cyclists. The Thames Path needs improving to reduce the considerable muddy and waterlogged areas. An agreed route near the River Pang to Tidmarsh should be identified and improved, possibly using some of the existing footpaths. The route to Sulham and Theale and Calcot via Sulham Lane and Nunhide Lane should be signed and improved. The cycling link through to Theale via North Street should also be signed and improved.

A programme of works, timescales and costs should be produced so that future planning and funding can be directed towards the necessary improvements to the cycling conditions and infrastructure.