



# CycleReading

WORKING FOR A CYCLE FRIENDLY READING

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

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## Working For A Reading Bike Hub



Ethical Reading (ER) has identified bike theft as one of the main deterrents to people cycling into central Reading and has been working on plans to improve bike parking in the centre of town.

Reading has one of the highest rates of bike theft in the country, with 421 reported bike thefts between October 2019 and September 2020.

ER has identified 2 types of provision:

1. Storage - full day bike storage for the Reading commuter and worker
2. Parking - ad hoc bike parking to facilitate shopping and leisure activities

and has looked at a number of possible solutions:

1. Attended bike cloakroom
2. Unattended structure
3. Self-service storage lockers such as in the Oracle

The attended bike hub model has been used in Stockton on Tees, where an empty retail unit has been used to provide secure parking as well as providing a range of other services connected with active travel. They are very proud of the fact that they have parked 34,000 bikes and none have gone missing.

Despite what many people see in the town centre there is strong demand for retail units and so it seems unlikely that anything suitable will become available in the near future.

ER has had two very encouraging meetings with Network Rail (NR) regarding cycle parking and storage at Reading Station.

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# Reading Bike Hub continued...

NR initially highlighted three possible locations and are now actively investigating one location in the underground car park beneath the Brunel Arcade.

Should this option prove to be viable, NR will deliver this project and it may be up and running in the third quarter of 2021.

A possible site for a bike hub was suggested by Reading UK (the economic development and marketing company for Reading). This site is positioned next to St Mary's Minster between CUP (Coffee Under Pressure) and Bill's and is owned by RBC. Currently it is used for storing waste bins with stray litter and car parking and looks very scruffy.

Ethical Reading will contact RBC to see if a bike hub scheme can be included in a future funding round.

To find out about bike hub models visit <https://thehubstockton.wordpress.com/cycling/commute/bike-parking/>

Rob Hill  
WBC Campaigner for RCC



Underground car park beneath Brunel Arcade



Site next to St Mary's Minster between CUP and Bill's

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Jean Cronin, Kent



# Campaign News



## Reading Borough Council (RBC)

### Winter Report 2021

With the latest Coronavirus Lockdown, the traffic levels should be closer to the low levels of last April. However, familiarity with restrictions will probably not keep so many at home! Still, there should be more incentive for us to cycle for essential purposes and for exercise, particularly with quieter roads.

### Active Travel Pop-up Cycle Schemes Tranche 1

Any comments about the 'quick to implement' first tranche of the Active Travel schemes would be welcome by RCC. Please send us copies of your comments to RBC too. We are passing comments to RBC and expect to have an opportunity to discuss these with them in the next couple of months. We understand that some funding should be available for improvements.

### Tranche 2 Schemes

Some segregated cycle track schemes are apparently currently being prepared for tranche 2. Consultation with RCC and others should be taking place by the end of March 2021. As RBC did not obtain funding for the full list of schemes that they submitted, we hope to help RBC choose the most appropriate schemes to progress.

The Southampton Street crossing of the IDR to the Oracle, and Castle Hill, are my preferred priorities. Two lengths of bus and cycle lane on London Road, either side of Cemetery Junction, are included within the proposals, but to me, these are really part of the park and ride bus priority and should not receive cycle funding. If road-space is available this should be for two-way cycle tracks.

### Consultations

The next Cycle Forum meeting will be in February and the CAST (Cleaner Air and Safer Transport) meeting is likely to be in early March, so we will make our representations. If we receive any draft plans prior to the meetings,

we'll aim to circulate them to ensure maximum consideration.

**John Lee**  
*RBC Campaigner for RCC*



## West Berkshire Council (WBC)

### Winter Report 2021

#### West Berkshire Cycle Forum

I attended my first West Berkshire Cycle Forum in October and I hope to raise the profile of the eastern part of WBC that makes up the western fringe of greater Reading. A large part of the meeting was taken up with discussion of the Emergency Active Travel Fund scheme that has been installed in Newbury and along the A4 towards Thatcham.

I learnt that the east of the district is covered by the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) produced in collaboration with RBC and Wokingham BC that can be viewed on the RBC site.

#### Newbury Station

GWR are planning to build a bike hub at Newbury Station. There will be an update at the January meeting about capacity and how cyclists can gain entry. The plans show a structure similar in style to the bike hub in Walthamstow.

#### Pangbourne

Pangbourne & Whitchurch Sustainability Group (PAWS) are working with the Parish Council and WBC to



improve bike parking in the village. The area in front of the library is mostly used for staff parking when the library is open and has one Sheffield rack. PAWS has suggested plans for two or three more racks as well as improving the look of the forecourt and has contacted WBC; however, Library Services are concerned about the loss of vehicle access.

A second site has been suggested for bike parking next to the layby in Station Road. The land is owned by WBC and the idea is supported by the parish council. Racks there would be much more visible than the ones that are rather hidden away in the village hall car park.

PAWS has also spoken to the manager of the Co-op about bike parking next to their shop and this will be pursued with Co-op head office in the new year.

**Rob Hill**  
*WBC Campaigner for RCC*



## Wokingham Borough Council (WoBC)

### Winter Report 2021

Happy New Year and welcome to 2021 and it feels a little bit like Groundhog Day for so many reasons.

Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic has spiked and we are back in another national lockdown; in addition, the Active Travel revolution heralded by the government and many local authorities last year hasn't really materialised and whilst there is lots of impressive talk and vision, it feels like very little is changing.

Let's focus on the positives first. In Wokingham Borough we are managing to build a reasonable coalition of groups keen to promote active travel. I have been working with and become part of the WATCH (Wokingham Active Travel Community Hub), who are aiming to provide a cohesive and united Active Travel voice for issues over the borough. We have so far managed to establish links with the Council and Council Officers and

# Campaign News continued...

associated Council Groups such as 'My journey Wokingham'.

Through 2021 the idea is to continue to link up local Active Travel organisations through the borough and participate in regular meetings with Council Officers and organisations, so we can have more influence over infrastructure and developments at an early stage and not just before these are signed off and are already a foregone conclusion.

In addition, we are pushing hard to have access to and influence the Wokingham Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) as this will set out the direction of Active Travel over the next 10-15 years.

At the moment, the WATCH group only has a presence on Facebook but has plans eventually for a website and social media, so if you haven't had a look already please do check out the WATCH Wokingham Facebook page and group. As all the aims of this group align with the RCC, I do not feel there is any conflict in cross promotion and hope that others will feel the same way.

Concrete successes are hard to come by, but I have been liaising with a group from Charvil and together we submitted several objections to a building and additional access development that would have significantly affected a shared use pavement, used by a lot of people around Wargrave, especially children

walking and cycling to the Piggott School.

I was pleased to hear from the Charvil group that this planning permission was rejected. It may be a small thing but it's things like this that over time can make or break Active Travel participation in an area and in addition it is important that we don't lose sight of the small victories in amongst all the negatives.

Starting 2021 the two big projects on the horizon and ones I will be keeping an eye on and attempting to influence are the consultations and development plans for the Wokingham South Distributor Road (SDR) and the plans for how the Tranche 2 Active travel funding will be spent.

The SDR is a new road (effectively a South Wokingham bypass), that will take traffic from close to the Coppid Beech roundabout (on the Bracknell side of Wokingham), around to the Finchampstead Road/Tesco roundabout. The idea is to divert traffic away from the congested town centre and also to service the projected 2,500 homes that will be built in the South Wokingham Strategic Development location (around the current Gray's Farm).

Plans for the 'Western Gateway' (the roundabout at the current Molly Millars Lane/Finchampstead Road roundabout) are currently open for public consultation and myself and others have serious concerns about its suitability for walkers and cyclists and

would recommend anyone interested look up the plans and comment.

The allocation of £576,650 to Wokingham in Tranche 2 Active Travel funding is a big improvement on the £76,000 that was allocated in Tranche 1 (and achieved nothing apart from some temporary bollards that were removed after a few months).

The two projects that have been submitted to spend this funding are apparently improvement of the A4 road between Reading and Twyford (which would link up with some improvements planned by RBC) and improvements to cycling access to Wokingham Town Centre.

We will keep an eye on both of these and comment as soon as any consultations are open - again the WATCH Facebook page is a good way to keep up to date with what consultations are active.

This update has been a bit of a disorganised stream of consciousness, so well done for getting this far. As always I remain focused on the positives, of which there are definitely some, and hopefully this time next year I'll be able to write about a successful suppression/eradication of COVID and a genuine change in direction of Active Travel leadership and provision in the area... here's hoping!

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



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# Campaign News continued...

## Active Travel for 2021

At the end of 2020 Reading Borough Council was awarded £1.179million through the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund (ATF) to support the implementation of walking and cycling schemes in the borough.

This award is the second tranche of funding from the ATF; the first tranche funded the 'pop-up' schemes that were introduced in response to the onset of the COVID pandemic last year. For the sake of speed, the Tranche 1 schemes were introduced without consultation.

In contrast, Tranche 2 schemes are intended to be designed with more deliberation - consequently one of the conditions of the funding is that Local Authorities undertake consultation.

RBC has set out plans for consultation on the Tranche 2 schemes to be undertaken in two phases. According to the Council, the first phase will be to provide the opportunity to raise awareness of the scheme proposals and collect feedback on the schemes in principle.

The second phase of consultation will follow analysis and feedback from Phase 1, and will present more detail on the specific design and traffic management aspects of the proposed schemes and offer greater clarity around the planned timeframe for scheme commencement and completion.

The Council has also stated that Phase 2 will include further workshops with key stakeholders to consider the emerging scheme designs and provide opportunities for comment prior to moving into the detailed design stage.

Reading Cycle Campaign has been calling for engagement with the Council for some time, so this consultation is welcome. However, beyond every rock there is a hard place and the challenge for RBC will be to progress Tranche 2 active travel schemes that are well designed and supported, but without undue bureaucracy and delay.

The Department for Transport's timetable is for new schemes to be in place 'soon after the start of the new financial year' - to meet that target the Council will need to get its skates on.

RBC's bid for Tranche 2 funding from the Active Travel Fund linked to the following five proposed schemes (details from RBC website):

### Southampton Street and Oracle Roundabout (Pell Street - Inner Distribution Road/Bridge Street)

Create a segregated cycle lane along Southampton Street, with changes at the junctions at either end, linking with existing cycle infrastructure through the reallocation of road space from general traffic. A key 'missing link' in the existing network, it will provide a continuous link between existing routes including NCN Routes 4 and 422.

### Bath Road/Castle Hill (Southcote Lane - Inner Distribution Road/Castle Street)

Running from the IDR to Russell Street, reallocate road space from general traffic to create a segregated lane for cyclists to and from the town centre. A further 'missing link' on the existing network. An additional scheme (Russell Street - Southcote Lane) if funding allows, would extend the route west, linking with the new NCN route 422 and connecting with existing routes west of the railway bridge. Both cyclists and pedestrians will benefit from the physically segregated route.

### Shinfield Road (Christchurch Green - Whitley Wood Road)

Create a segregated two-way cycle lane, linking to the Phase One schemes on Redlands Road and Christchurch Road. A high-quality facility on a key route between South Reading and Royal Berkshire Hospital, the University of Reading, local centres and Reading town centre.

### London Road (Borough boundary to Cemetery Junction)

Reallocate road space from general traffic to create an inbound shared bus and cycle lane. This will provide a key missing link with the shared bus and cycle route being implemented in Phase One on London Road outside of the RBH.

### Forbury Road / Vastern Road (Watlington Street - Reading Bridge)

Create a segregated two-way cycle lane by reallocating road space from general traffic on this section of the IDR. This will also provide further

separation for pedestrians through lower volumes of cyclists using the existing shared pavement.

The £1.2million of active travel funding is not sufficient to allow all the above schemes to be progressed and as such a decision will need to be made as to which to take forward using the funding received. Early indications are that the Council favours the schemes for Southampton Street and Castle Hill.

Perhaps by the time you read this the formal consultation, process will have begun. We will let you know by posting details on our Facebook page and website.

## Active Travel - Changing Gear



For years cycle campaigners have been pleading with Local Transport Authorities to put a bit of white paint on some of our busiest roads in order to encourage more cycling. We were thankful when a few proverbial crumbs fell off the transport table to help nourish a healthier, safer, less polluting and more sustainable transport system.

It takes a few decades for mindsets to change - some of those fringe environmental ideas from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that were the preserve of 'hippies' are now government policy. It does now seem that mindsets are starting to change on cycle infrastructure.

In the last few months, we have seen a proliferation of white painted cycle symbols peppered across the middle of Reading's roads, but the world has moved on, and the concept of good cycle infrastructure is no longer a painted cycle symbol or a white line.

# Campaign News continued...

The latest government policy on cycling is contained in the 2020 document 'Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking'. This outlines a break from previous ideas of what cycle infrastructure should look like:

*"Cycle tracks can be separated from traffic using a kerb, or lighter touch materials ... but they must be physically separated, not just on the stretches between junctions, but at junctions themselves, the places of greatest danger for cyclists ... cycle route provision on busy roads which consists of painted markings or cycle symbols will no longer be funded."*

*"Cycles must be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians. On urban streets cyclists should not share space with pedestrians."*

Although it is local authorities that design and install cycle infrastructure what central government thinks matters, as more often than not local authorities create the cycle infrastructure using central government funds that have to be bid for.

With regard to the current Active Travel Fund allocations the Department for Transport wrote to all Councils stating that all cycling schemes, permanent or temporary, will need to include segregation or point closures to through traffic: advisory cycle lanes, and those marked only with white paint, will not be funded.

So local authorities will need to widen their cycle infrastructure palette to include more than just white paint.

## Reading's Local Transport Strategy

It is well known that in February 2019 the Council set a target for the town to be carbon neutral by 2030. Two years in we ask what progress has been made in the field of transport?

Reading's Transport Strategy to 2036 was issued as draft for consultation in May 2020. This set out a bold vision for transforming transport in Reading and was due to be adopted in December 2020, but at the time of writing in January this has not yet happened.

At the beginning of 2021 we are waiting to see this strategy get off the ground.

Keith Elliott, RCC Secretary

## Bike Rack For Sale

**Robust bike rack for tow-hook mounting (one owner).**

**Note: suitable for flange-type but not swan-neck tow-hooks.**

This bike rack is simplicity itself. It consists of an alloy mounting block, into which fit two steel arms, held in place by a removable pin.

The bikes (two fit comfortably) simply hang on the arms. Also provided is a

separate number-plate/rear light board which plugs into the tow-hook's light socket.

The rack takes about three minutes to assemble when needed. The rustproof mounting block needs to be permanently bolted on to a flange-type tow-hook. (A garage will do this cheaply.)

Price £20 to benefit RCC, for enquiries phone Toby on 07961 323597.



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to do it yourself?**

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# CAST: Cleaner Air Safer Transport

An RBC Cleaner Air and Safer Transport meeting took place on Thursday 3 December. A number of subjects were covered, and the following are the RCC notes of the meeting.

There was interesting feedback on the School Streets by the Head-teacher of Park Lane School in Tilehurst. The scheme to close the adjacent road to through traffic at opening and closing times was working reasonably well once the initial teething problems had been overcome. Communication and consultation were apparently the main issues.

Following an RBC introduction and questions by (mainly) RCC on the Active Travel Schemes, various information was forthcoming:

There will be some funding available to improve and make permanent Tranche 1 schemes, once their trial period has been approved by RBC. Len (RCC) raised the subject of the Oxford Road; apparently the Town Centre to Norcot Road is a separate

scheme that is to be progressed separately in 2021.

A Tranche 2 Consultation Plan had to be sent to Department for Transport (DfT) by RBC for approval by mid-December. Consultation on these schemes would be during February-March 2021, with completion by Wednesday 31 March 2021. DfT are to ensure high standards of schemes, but it is unclear how this will be done. All of the Tranche 2 works need to be completed by 31 March 2022.

Both CAST and the Cycle Forum would be consulted (two chances for cyclists to comment!).

The next Cycle Forum will be in February 2021.

The next CAST meeting will be in March 2021.



## Other issues covered

The cycle training for bus drivers was raised by Richard R, RBC are to chase Reading Buses!

Future topics for discussion at CAST were requested: 20mph limits are on the list already.

RBC is trying to get DfT approval to allow them to enforce 20mph zones/limits.

Police Commissioner elections are in May 2021, so it is worth lobbying the candidates.

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# Old Bikes Given A New Life And RBK A New Home

## For hundreds of Lockdown cyclists!!!

I'm hoping all RCC members have heard about, visited or even volunteered with this fantastic community facility; Reading Bicycle Kitchen (RBK) - who have helped repair, recycle and reuse hundreds of bikes during the challenging COVID Lockdowns, meaning lots more people across Reading have been able to take up or continue cycling.

As well as being a great asset in making cycling more open to all, RBK has a really positive environmental benefit - every bike journey helps save pollution and congestion and by repairing and refurbishing old bikes, recycling/reusing everything possible, reducing waste also keeps costs down!

The upsurge in cycling during 2020 has to be one of the highlights in an otherwise very difficult year and the massive demand for bikes and repairs was a perfect calling for all those at RBK. During the first period of Lockdown last spring, the hardy RBK volunteers weren't able to offer the usual weekly pop ups for people to bring along bikes for repairs.



However, undaunted they continued working in garages, gardens and sheds around Reading, carrying out repairs to help people get their bikes road-worthy, also refurbishing donated bikes and supporting [Avanti Cycling](#) in loaning over 80 bikes to Key Workers including many NHS staff and community volunteers.

Once COVID restrictions were lifted, RBK was able to re-open by adapting its operations at the weekly Queen's Arms Saturday pop ups. This involved working on customers' bikes entirely outdoors (great during the July heat-wave but a gazebo needed for shelter in the August downpours!) with



workstands spread out across the car park area and bollards/signage to ensure social distancing.

A booking system was introduced for people looking to buy bikes and our handy mechanics had to become experts with using online platforms as well as allen-keys and spanners!

Supported by additional funding via the Big Bike Revival programme run by [Cycling UK](#), RBK has been able to keep costs to customers to a minimum and invest in replacement tools and consumable parts.

Unbelievably, our volunteers have managed to carry out over 200 repairs on bikes during this period - ranging from Trikes to Tandems, Mountain bikes to Bromptons - even seeing some fancy e-bikes needing a little TLC (as they can still get punctures!)

Through generous community donations RBK have restored, repaired and re-homed 150 bikes to new owners at a very low cost. Many of these being sold to local people taking up cycling for the first time, enthused by the quiet roads during lockdown, looking to increase their health, take part in family activities or avoid using public transport. Suitable bikes are also donated for free to worthy causes, including to refugees and homeless people through

linking with these charities, and a number of children's bikes have gone to Berkshire Woman's Aid for the children in the refuge.

The continued interest in cycling, with the massive demand for bike sales and repairs has been difficult to sustain in the small space and storage area available to RBK at Queen's Arms. We have been looking for a much larger and permanent facility for several years and have now found a new home in nearby Weldale Street. We had hoped to have moved in before the end of 2020, but subsequent

Lockdowns have delayed proceedings but not daunted our enthusiasm!

We are now up and running in the new location Unit C10 Weldale Street, RG1 7BX - continuing to operate outside until restrictions are lifted. Sadly our grand opening will have to wait until later in the year, but there will be plenty more workstands, benches and floorspace, thus enabling indoor and outdoor working. Keep an eye on our [website](#) for more news!

Anyone keen to learn more or volunteer, even novices wanting to learn how to fix bikes, please contact: [info@readingbicyclekitchen.org](mailto:info@readingbicyclekitchen.org)

### FOOTNOTE:

Reading Bicycle Kitchen is an entirely volunteer-run, not-for-profit organisation founded to encourage cycling by making low-cost bicycle maintenance available to all.

The objective of Reading Bicycle Kitchen is to help people in the Reading area to keep their bikes safe and working well, so that they can enjoy all the benefits of cycling.

We are very fortunate to get a lot of bikes and related items given to us, and we ensure that we make the most of everything possible. The majority of bikes are refurbished by our keen volunteers and then resold, at very reasonable prices, to local people. Nothing goes to waste; if a bike is beyond economic repair, we strip it of all the useful parts, which are then used as spares to fix customers' bikes.

We are a 'we help you fix it' bicycle workshop. You supply the problematic bike, and we help you with the tools, tips and support you need to mend it. Maybe you have a puncture, need to adjust your brakes or gears, replace worn out parts, or upgrade with some shiny new bits?

We are very cost conscious, so we reuse, repair, and recycle whenever and whatever we can. Combined with an amazing array of tools, spare parts, expertise and enthusiasm for bikes it's hard not to love RBK!!

**Karen Robertson**

# Global Refills at RISC

On 1 October last year the newly installed dispensers at Global Refills were brimming with nuts, pulses, pastas, rice and dried fruit. Fresh produce was heaped upon a repurposed table, bread bins were full of freshly baked loaves from Aston's, and an array of Fairtrade, organic, and local beers and wines lined up neatly.

We opened our doors for the first time that morning as the newest venture from the Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC), joining the World Shop, meeting rooms, roof garden, Food4families, and education team.

Global Refills comes as a response to our concern over the excess plastic being used during the COVID crisis, and its impact on the environment. RISC's mission has always been to raise the profile of global issues and promote action for sustainability, human rights and social justice.

A zero-waste shop fits neatly into that ethos. We will be working over the coming months to highlight the interconnected nature of these issues, both in store and across our social media channels.

A great example of this is Côteaux les Cèdres du Liban - the world's first Lebanese Fairtrade wine. It's grown in the Bekaa valley, where wine production has offered farmers



an alternative to growing cannabis and opium poppies for the illegal drug trade.

With Global Refills, we hope to do our part to make zero-waste shopping more accessible to our local community. Our aim is to be able to provide a full weekly shopping experience to customers seeking an ethical alternative to the high street.

Together with the World Shop next door, we can offer fresh bread, fruit and veg, all sorts of pantry products from non-dairy milks to tea to chopped tomatoes and tinned fish, as well as household cleaning

products, and toiletries—even fair trade and sustainable household basics like socks, stationery, and water bottles.

The marriage of fair trade and zero-waste is a happy one, and we are excited to bring it to central Reading.

**Global Refills Opening Hours:**  
10am-6pm Tuesday-Sunday  
**Location:** 35-39 London Street,  
Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4PS

For more information on RISC and our values and activities:  
[www.readinginternationalsolidaritycentre.org.uk](http://www.readinginternationalsolidaritycentre.org.uk)



# Interview with Cllr Paul Gittings

Cllr Paul Gittings recently took over from Cllr Adele Barnett-Ward as the Chair for the SEPT (Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport) Committee.

Paul kindly provided answers to a few questions we put to him on transport matters:

*RCC: Doing things quickly is always a challenge for local government given procedures that need to be followed. Reading has a net zero carbon target by 2030, which is only nine years away. What changes do you expect to see in transport in Reading in the next three years?*

PG: This is indeed an ambitious target, although I'm confident the Council and its estate and other public sector organisations will meet it, having made good progress over the course of the last decade and more since being one of the first signatories of the Nottingham Declaration.

Regarding the next three years, or indeed the next nine, it's very difficult to make predictions, not least because of the implications of a global pandemic which is likely to cast its shadow for some time yet.

As we have seen, I expect a significant shift to methods of sustainable transport such as cycling and walking and hope the habits formed by people during lockdown continue.

The size of that shift is largely dependent on factors outside of the immediate control of the Council, probable changes in working practices, more done from home, less commuting and by implication a reduction of peak traffic flows and congestion, which is surely a good thing.

The government has provided limited funding, with strings attached, for temporary and permanent schemes that encourage, in the main, cycling by putting in better infrastructure, and we are about to consult on

Tranche 2 which will cover some of the main arterial routes into and within Reading.

I would hope that with the near £1.2million provided, we can implement at least one of these schemes and hold the others in readiness for future funding, if they can command sufficient levels of public support.

These will be in tandem with other measures in the local Transport Plan, not least the extensive work being done on the A33 corridor and the coming on stream of Green Park station.

More difficult to predict will be the impact of the pandemic on our award-winning bus company, but I would expect in three years for passenger numbers to return to pre-pandemic levels and probably increase as part of a modal shift which has always been inherent in the Council's planning.

Leaving aside the move to EV, which still does not tackle congestion and road safety, the biggest part citizens can play in tackling climate change is to reduce their own emissions through less use of their motor cars. And I hope the Council can encourage this through the transport plan and other related measures.

*RCC: What do you think is the biggest blocker to more uptake of cycling and what changes would you most like to see to improve cycling in Reading?*

PG: I think it is clear that concerns over safety act as a blocker and it's no coincidence that during the first Lockdown, when the roads were largely deserted, we saw more people out and about on bikes.

However, I think that's only part of the problem, as over the past 50 years and more we have developed a car-dominated culture in Britain, compare and contrast to the Netherlands and Denmark, and a built environment

and infrastructure based on that premise.

If you look at the major arterial routes into Reading and the IDR in particular, this is self-evident and there are real challenges involved in unravelling that historic planning and design in favour of cycling, but not impossible.

So, for every town like Reading, and we are not uncommon, we need a better segregated (and non-segregated) cycling infrastructure. This comes at a very big price and must be almost entirely funded by the government and other bodies such as the Local Enterprise Partnership plus planning gain.

We also need locally and nationally to really press home the public health message about the benefits of cycling. I think the BMA produced statistics that the risks to health of not being active (by cycling) outweighed the risk from fatality in an accident by 20 to 1 and that is telling.

The Council is actively working on or considering other measures, School Streets being a prime example, Lower Traffic Neighbourhoods, which would also improve the general conditions and uptake of cycling.

*RCC: How do you see the Cycle Forum contributing to the Council's future vision for Reading?*

PG: The Cycle Forum is important because, see my comments above, cycling can play a really big role in meeting our targets for carbon emissions in the light of the Council declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019.

It's also a forum where we can have an open and transparent exchange of views on these issues.

It is now being scheduled in tandem with the Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum (CAST) which was introduced by my predecessor as SEPT Chair Cllr

# Interview with Cllr Paul Gittings continued...

Adele Barnett-Ward, which is designed to look at the broader sustainable transport issues and I think this is a good mix.

*RCC: The Local Transport Plan that was issued for consultation talked about demand management - what form do you think that should take?*

PG: The LTP does indeed offer up a variety of these measures, some such as Workplace Parking Levy, have already been successfully implemented in other towns and cities. I would like to see measures that limit polluting and Heavy Goods Vehicles from using Reading as a 'cut through', because this is an ongoing problem and air quality in parts of the town needs to improve, although there has been some temporary 'relief' during the pandemic.

From a purely personal point of view, I am strongly in favour of macro measures such as road pricing which charges per mile driven, based on where you are driving, what time you are driving and what you are driving.

Realistically, this requires action by national government to implement such schemes in consultation with local authorities. Only by this type of demand management do I believe we can make real progress to net zero in the future, but is there the political will to take these steps?

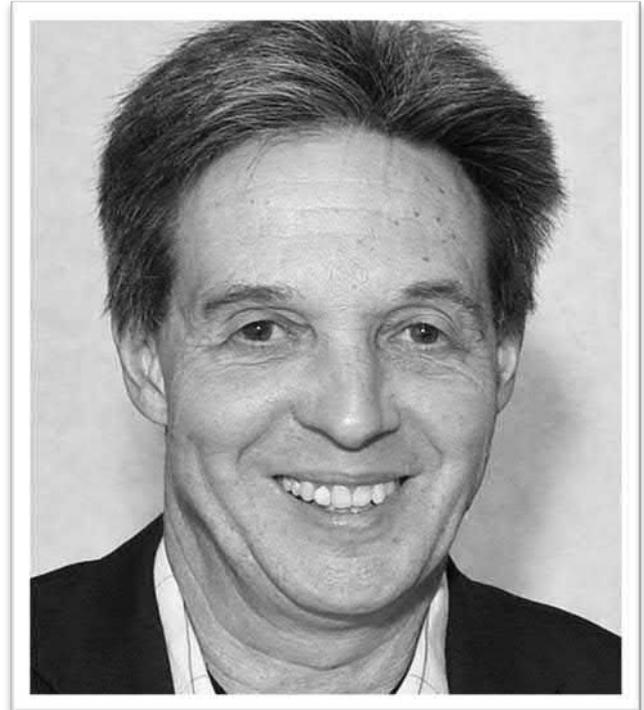
*RCC: What would your advice be for engaging with Ward Councillors on transport issues?*

PG: Keep engaging! I can't speak for opposition Councillors, but my Labour colleagues are always keen to hear your views and are able through bodies such as the Traffic Management Panel to make representations and support road safety and transport schemes in their ward.

*RCC: You are a keen West Reading cyclist - (a) which roads do you try to avoid (b) where would you go for a leisure cycle?*

PG: I can honestly say that I make no conscious effort to avoid any road as I believe with the correct positioning and general aptitude it's perfectly safe to ride on all our roads in Reading and the general area.

If I'm pushed, I would say that on the A33 relief road dual carriage-



*Paul Gittings*

way I would prefer to use the segregated path alongside it, but if out 'training' and riding more briskly I use the main carriage-way.

For a leisure ride, within the borough boundaries, I go with my younger son along the Thames footpath, using Christchurch Bridge and the Horseshoe Bridge depending on the route. These routes are not just great for leisure rides, but also offer great alternatives for commuters going West-East and vice-versa.

## Members of RCC can apply for Cycling UK Affiliated Membership

- 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance cover of £5m worldwide except USA and Canada
- Cycling UK membership with access to a wide range of discounts and benefits, see [www.cyclinguk.org](http://www.cyclinguk.org)
- Weekly Cycling UK email newsletter

Please note these benefits apply only as long as you remain a fully paid-up member of RCC.

The cost of the Cycling UK affiliated membership is £25 for a full year.

Further details obtainable from the Membership Secretary on 0118 986 0230.

## RCC Corporate Membership

*Whole business support for our campaign*

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- Free advertising in the newsletter and on the website
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- Signposting to cycling training for all employees

*For more information, email [membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk](mailto:membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk)*

## CycleReading Advertising

For 1/6 page display advert (87.5mm x 80mm)  
RCC members £6 • Non-members £12  
Bikes 'n' Bits (text only) free to RCC members  
Contact the Editor (details below)



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### Next newsletter copy deadline: 1 April 2021

The newsletter will now be delivered electronically to members. If you prefer to receive a paper copy, please email [membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk)

### West Berkshire Council

01635 519080 or [www.westberks.org.uk](http://www.westberks.org.uk)

### Windsor and Maidenhead

[www.rbwm.gov.uk](http://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 17 Mar 2021 - cttee mtg**

**Wed 21 Apr 2021 - open mtg**

**Wed 19 May 2021 - cttee mtg**

Currently held virtually via Zoom during the COVID-19 crisis. See RCC's Facebook Page or the website for updates. We hope to see you there.

## Advertising Rates:

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

RCC members £6 - Non-members £12

**1/3 page (180mm x 80mm):**

RCC members £10 - Non members £20

**1/2 page (180mm x 120mm):**

RCC members £14 - Non members £28

**Full page (180mm x 247mm):**

RCC members £25 - Non members £50

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