

CYCLING CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE



Vision: To see Bedford as a 'Town of Cyclists' and 'Cycle Friendly Communities'

Cycling on Pavements – Briefing Paper - 3

Introduction

CCNB does not condone illegal pavement cycling.

Definitions

Pavements /footways are paths for pedestrians at the side of roads whereas **footpaths** are paths for pedestrians that are away from the carriageway.

Law

Cycling is only permitted on a footway/pavement or footway provided that the Highway Authority has designated all or part of it as a cycle track under the terms of the Cycle Track Act 1984 and it is signed. The cycle track can be either shared (dual) use or segregated use.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for pavement cycling were introduced in 1999 by the then Home Office Minister, Paul Boateng. In the guidance given to Chief police officers who are responsible for enforcement it stated:

"The introduction of the fixed penalty is not aimed at responsible cyclists who sometimes feel obliged to use the pavement out of fear of traffic and who show consideration to other pavement users when doing so. Chief police officers, who are responsible for enforcement, acknowledge that many cyclists, particularly children and young people, are afraid to cycle on the road and sensitivity and careful use of police discretion is required."

This guidance has been recently confirmed by the current Minister for Cycling, Robert Goodwill.

Reasons why people cycle on pavements

Safety

Many cyclists consider that roads with large volumes of speeding traffic are too dangerous to cycle along and so prefer to ride on off-road cycle paths/tracks and sometimes illegally on pavements. This particularly applies to the less confident, inexperienced or young cyclists as well as the elderly, and includes a lot of disabled/partially disabled people who use a bicycle or tricycle to enable them to remain mobile.

Inconsistent signing

Not all off-road cycle paths/tracks are adequately signed so cyclists are not always aware when they ride on an illegal section. Similarly pedestrians do not always realise they are on a legal cycle path/track and on segregated paths many are not aware they should keep to the pedestrian side.

Not aware of law

Some cyclists have a negligible or non-existent knowledge of the law (or Highway Code) relating to bicycle use.

Unsociable Behaviour

The irresponsible minority of cyclists do not respect any other users and tend to ride anywhere, often at high speed.

Requirements to minimise pedestrian conflict and encourage more cyclists to use the road

Studies have shown that conflict between cyclists and pedestrians on off-road cycle paths is often more perceived than real.

Infrastructure

All off-road dual use/segregated cycle paths and on-road cycle lanes must be constructed to high standards of safety and design.

For off-road cycle paths/tracks attention must be paid to sight-lines, obstructions such as bollards, barriers, lamp columns, lighting and maintenance.

For on-road cycle lanes all junctions and roundabouts must be cycle friendly.

Cycle Audit

All cycle facilities must be subjected to cycle user audits and road safety audits in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

Training

Children and (adults) should be encouraged to have cycle training to Bikeability Level 3, a must for cycling on busy roads.

Recent studies have shown that children who have had cycle training are less likely to cycle on pavements.

Responsibility (on dual use or segregated paths)

Cyclist should ride at slow speeds and always give way to pedestrians and wheelchair users. Some people are hard of hearing or visually impaired and not be hear or see a cyclist. Cyclists should ring their bell twice or politely call out to warn of their approach and acknowledge people who give way to them.

On segregated paths both pedestrians and cyclists should endeavour to keep to their part of the path. Dogs should be kept under control, particularly those on extendable leads.

Volume/speed of traffic

All residential roads and those near schools and town or local shopping centres should have a 20mph speed limit or zone to improve the quality of life of all residents but particularly to encourage cyclists to use the road or only off-road cycle paths.

Enforcement

Action should be taken against the minority of cyclists who give cyclists a bad name by riding recklessly not only on legal/illegal pavements but also on the road.

In the same way action should be taken also against vehicle drivers who drive and park on pavements and obstruct cycle paths and lanes and the minority of mobility scooter riders who ride recklessly.

A Code of Conduct for Cyclists on Shared Use and Segregated Paths

Cyclists tend to be the fastest movers on shared use and segregated paths, but most are not suitable for high speeds so it is important to keep cycling speed under control. Remember they are for sharing, not for speeding. If you wish to travel quickly, train for fitness or record personal best times, this is better done on quiet roads.

Following this code of conduct will ensure that everyone can benefit from shared paths:

- Give way to pedestrians.
- Pass a cyclist as you would on the road, stay left, so that an oncoming cyclist passes on your right.
- Be courteous and patient with pedestrians and other path users who are moving more slowly than you – shared paths are for sharing, not speeding.
- Slow down when space is limited or if you cannot see clearly ahead
- Be particularly careful at junctions, bends, entrances onto the path, or any other ‘blind spots’ where people (including children) could appear in front of you without warning.
- Use your bell or give an audible greeting to avoid surprising people.
- However, do not assume pedestrians (or other cyclists) can see or hear you – remember that many people are hard of hearing, visually impaired or may be using earphones.
- In dull and dark weather make sure you have and use both front and rear lights and wear high visibility clothing so you can be seen.
- Cycle at a sensible speed and do not use the paths for recording times with challenge apps or for fitness training.

Tips for pedestrians:

- Keep dogs under control, particularly those on extended leads.
- Keep as much as possible to the correct side of segregated paths.

For more information on CCNB see www.ccnb.org.uk (campaigning) and www.cyclebedford.org.uk (promotion)

pj blakeman – issue 3 – 26 February 2015