

CABINET

17 DECEMBER 2013

PROCEDURAL MATTERS: PETITIONS

Notice of two petitions has been received as set out below. Full copies of both petitions, including any additional comments submitted, have been placed in the Cabinet Members' office at County Hall.

1. "Surrey County Council: Stop Surrey being turned into a cycle track"

Presented by Mr Ian Huggins, Esher

Further details from the petition

"Apart from the obvious dangers to cyclists, Surrey roads are not suitable. Surrey County Council have, without consultation, decided it would be a great idea to use Surrey as a race track. This in itself is a thoughtless act but far more importantly residents and numerous businesses are being effected by road closures. This prevents residents of Surrey from leaving their own property and going about their normal business. The road closures were a necessary inconvenience during the Olympic Games but now it looks like Surrey County Council are to make this an annual event. This is all very well but residents of Surrey are pestered and annoyed by cyclists (practising months in advance of the event) who ride the route in very large numbers from very early in the morning shouting at each other (have you tried talking whilst riding your bike?) and riding in large groups sometimes three and four abreast or in strings of riders making it virtually impossible for the poor old motorist, many of whom are elderly, to overtake. Traffic violations are common and it is only a matter of time before there is a major accident with the possibility of the loss of life. It will of course be the motorists fault. Have Surrey County Council considered the number of heavy goods vehicles using the roads. The route chosen is all enclosing and no provision has been made for vehicular crossing points. So to facilitate a bike ride many Surrey residents are to be confined to their homes from 5 am until 9 pm."

Signatures: 3,082 (approx. - online petition).

2. "Surrey County Council: Interact and give knowledge to those you represent."

Presented by Mr Michael Blann, Walton on Thames

Further details from the petition

"This petition is a direct response to Mr Ian Huggins petition, entitled "Stop Surrey being turned into a cycle track"<http://www.change.org/en-GB/petitions/surrey-county-council-stop-surrey-being-turned-into-a-cycle-track>

I really think that the County Council should interact with those whom may be affected by the Ride London 100 and also the UCI races held in the area.

The residents should be informed and brought into discussions about routes and road closures that may come into effect during such high profile events.

Although it may not be interesting to local residents effected by road closures. Cycling is a popular and ever growing pass-time, with thousands of people taking to their bicycle ever day, whether that be for pleasure or as part of their daily commute. The bicycle is a great vehicle to get around.

The comments in Mr Huggins petition worry me slightly that the Council do not keep their communities informed, especially in how their taxes are spent. Everyone who pay's tax in the UK, pays for road maintenance all over the country, the people of Surrey seem to think that their tax is solely spend on the roads of their county for the sole purpose of using their car's to get about and many seem to think that cyclist's should not be using the road, because they do not pay "Road Tax", maybe they do not understand that "Road Tax" was abolished in 1937 as laid out here <http://www.politics.co.uk/reference/vehicle-excise-duty>

They may also wish to read this article <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-23694438>

Now to focus on Mr Huggins statements in quote marks

"Apart from the obvious dangers to cyclists, Surrey roads are not suitable."

Any road is suitable to be cycled on apart from Motorways, as laid out in the Highway Code.

"Surrey County Council have, without consultation, decided it would be a great idea to use Surrey as a race track."

The Ride London 100 is NOT a race, but a cyclo sportive, the ride is a 100 mile, organised, mass-participation cycling event, to be held annually. It is a challenge rather than a race.

"This prevents residents of Surrey from leaving their own property and going about their normal business."

This needs to be discussed with the residents affected, as a cyclist from a small village myself, I understand both sides to the argument for and against closing all the roads in and out.

"The road closures were a necessary inconvenience during the Olympic Games but now it looks like Surrey County Council are to make this an annual event. "

This is all part of the Government's "legacy" where events should be held annually, following the huge success for the Olympics in 2012.

"This is all very well but residents of Surrey are pestered and annoyed by cyclists (practising months in advance of the event) who ride the route in very large numbers from very early in the morning shouting at each other (have you tried talking whilst riding your bike?) and riding in large groups sometimes three and four abreast or in strings of riders making it virtually impossible for the poor old motorist, many of whom are elderly, to overtake."

Cyclists are encouraged to "take the lane" and not ride in the gutter, also riding abreast of each other is quite legal and even suggested in the highway code. It may

be a nuisance to some of the residents on the route, but have they thought about the money that people bring into the area, those of us who are not local need somewhere to stay, also food and drink. The numbers of entries were past 55,000 in the ballot for Ride London 100 within two days, proving that it's a very popular event.

"Traffic violations are common and it is only a matter of time before there is a major accident with the possibility of the loss of life. It will of course be the motorists fault. "

Yes, it will be the motorists fault if it turns out to be they are the violator of the law.

"Have Surrey County Council considered the number of heavy goods vehicles using the roads. The route chosen is all enclosing and no provision has been made for vehicular crossing points. So to facilitate a bike ride many Surrey residents are to be confined to their homes from 5 am until 9 pm."

With it being a mass participation event, the need for such a long closure is clear, with cyclists being sent off in "waves" and riding at different speeds, a rolling road block is not feasible for such a large event.

When this petition reaches the required signatures, I shall put it to Surrey County Council in opposition to any petition submitted by Mr Huggins against the Ride London 100 event going ahead and its riders being kept safe by closing certain roads for the day, I do understand that Ride London are holding a review of everything that happened in 2013 and as part of that, are reviewing the route. Maybe Mr Huggins would be better served consulting with Ride London over the matter of road closures, rather than trying to put pressure on the county council to stop this well supported event from taking place.

When you sign this petition, you have the option of adding a comment; I will include all these when submitting to the council. So anything you feel should be included, by all means put this in your comment."

Signatures: 3,920 (approx. - online petition).

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