



WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 4 MAR 2020
SUBJECT: WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS
DIVISION: WOKING

Question 1: Will Harnden, local resident

My children currently commute to school on their bicycles along the footpath from the top of Broomhall Road (between the Wheatsheaf Pub and the Methodist Church), along the dedicated cycleway to Horsell Park and then along the footpath alongside the St Andrews playing fields.

Some new signs, along with aggressive (and some may say bullying - particularly children) local residents defending the signs' message, have appeared to say no cycling along these paths. In my humble opinion there is no other safe route for a 7 and 12 year old to cycle to school not to mention the other many 100s of students attending these schools. The road route via Chobham Road is far from ideal due to the semi-permanent traffic jams heading towards town and excessive speed of cars away from the town. Obviously there are also all of the environmental and health arguments for why the children should be commuting by bicycle rather than car.

Who do I need to speak to get these signs removed and a more tolerant and shared approach to the path usage adopted, and making us a greener town?

Answer

The "cycling prohibited" signs were recently erected by the Local Highways Team in response to a Member request for them to be put up to indicate the existence of a prohibition of cycling over certain sections of footpaths between Ridgeway, Wilson Way, Horsell Park and Church Road; these sections are particularly narrow.

At the Woking Joint Committee meeting on 6 December 2017 a report was presented in response to a petition that was submitted regarding a cycle route between Chobham and Woking, which included one of the paths mentioned in this current question and we would refer Members to that report for background information (attached).

In that report, it was explained that this route had previously been considered but that, for various reasons, only the section of Footpath 19 between Horsell Park and Brewery Road could be upgraded to a shared cycle/footway. It is this section that is referred to in the current question and which can be

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accessed from Broomhall Road. However, beyond that the footpaths are too narrow to permit them to be designated as cycle/footways and because they are bounded by private property, there is no scope to widen them.

The petition response in December 2017 went on to state, “The Department for Transport’s Local Transport Note 1/12, “Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists” suggests a minimum *effective* width of 3m for an unsegregated route. Where the route is bounded by vertical features such as walls, fences and hedges, the actual width should be wider in order to achieve this “effective” dimension because cyclists in particular do not like to cycle too close to such features. There are significant lengths of this route where even 3m *actual* width is unachievable due to physical constraints.”

The paths that run from Horsell Park, on either side of St Andrew’s School playing field, to Wilson Way, vary in width from 0.96m to 2.2m. These are actual widths and in many places the paths are bounded by vertical fences or hedges and any cyclist would naturally cycle away from these vertical faces in order not to clip them with their handle bars or pedals etc and so the effective width would be even less. At the narrowest points measured, it is unlikely that a pedestrian could be safely passed unless the cyclist came to a halt.

Consequently, it would not be appropriate to designate these paths as shared cycle/footways. Whilst it is acknowledged that under parental guidance, these two children are using the route safely and courteously, there are undoubtedly other cyclists who are already using the route unlawfully and far less safely. Re-designation of the route and removal of the signs would open it up to legitimate use that would very likely lead to conflict between cyclists and pedestrians that would probably result in injury to one or other user.

Supplementary discussion / questions on this issue

Will Harnden attended the meeting and addressed the Committee. The following points were noted:-

The Highways Manager clarified that it was not a case of not wanting to facilitate cycling, but a fact that the pathway was not wide enough to make into a shared facility.

Children cannot legally cycle on pathways, but people usually did not object to supervised children cycling safely.

Concerns over the verbal abuse of children were raised and it was noted that SCC would not normally take any enforcement action against children cycling safely – but the Police could patrol the area to stop the unacceptable verbal abuse.

It was agreed that this topic would be included on the forward plan for a future meeting.

Question 2: Marianne Meinke, local resident

Over the years I have contacted both Surrey and Woking Councils regarding the thoughtless and dangerous parking of collection and delivery vehicles to Enterprise cars. It seems Enterprise operate practices that show no regard for pedestrian crossing points and safety. Neither is concern shown for traffic entering/exiting roundabouts. Cars driven off huge transporters into oncoming traffic is a regular occurrence. I have forwarded a number of photographs to the Highways Department of Surrey County Council, and also added the issue to the FixMyStreet site.

Double yellow lines and yellow lines at right angles to Oriental Road stopped car transporters parking between the two roundabouts, beside Lion Retail Park. Transporter drivers have sought other areas. They have parked in Little Riding (a narrow cul-de-sac in a residential area) and this is highly dangerous for residents. Parking in residential roads indicates no thought for the safety of pedestrians, or for the children who play there. It blocks in cars where spaces face homes.

The attached photograph shows the new modus operandi. It is to park in College Road, adding to congestion and causing pedestrian safety issues.



Pollution increases as vehicles stop and start when trying to get by. Pedestrian crossing points are at each roundabout.

I saw a transporter parking on the pavement at the College Road roundabout on one occasion. In College Road are the Friends of the Elderly Home and also a Doctor's surgery. People are not considered.

The site appears too small. Formerly it was a small garage. As the organisation shows no understanding of the issue, are yellow lines at right angles the answer here? It is surely possible for the collection/delivery team to park in an industrial area and for Enterprise staff to deliver the vehicles individually to a meeting point?

As the 2019 parking review is underway I should appreciate this being brought to the attention of the committee quickly.

Answer

It was in the last review (2018) that we advertised and subsequently extended the double yellow lines on the north side of College Road heading away from the mini roundabouts, across Orchard Close and in front of house No.3. At the same time we also got the existing yellow lines refreshed all around the junction area. (College Road, Maybury Hill and Oriental Road).

Additionally we advertised and subsequently extended the 'No Loading At Any Time' restriction on both sides of Oriental Road in front of the Lion Retail Park. We also got all of the new and the existing loading restrictions correctly signed in the area.

Any new, additional restrictions beyond what is already on College Road can be considered in the 2020 review and the questioner would need to submit a request for the area to be assessed.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/parking/reviews>

Subsequent information received

Peter Wells and I communicated in 2018 and I am grateful that the no unloading lines were put in place in Oriental Road. The stays there were often long as drivers took advantage of facilities and refreshments at the Lion Retail Park. Also, it also took a long time for vehicles to be driven off low loaders to Enterprise Car, and cars were reversed off the low loaders into traffic emerging from the Lion Retail Park.

I have provided photographs showing low loaders delivering vehicles in front of the garage in College Road, and advised that these large vehicles also stop to unload at the small roundabouts in Maybury Hill and College Road. I think it is "no unloading at any time" lines that are needed to dissuade these operational practices. "No unloading at any time" notices helped in Oriental Road. Similar lines at right angles to the kerb, outside the doctors' surgery and garage in College Road, would make College Road safer. After all, people are driving into the road from the roundabout, and out of the garage, all of the time. The low loaders cause difficulties for both drivers and

pedestrians. College Road is narrow. I suggested a changed practice from Enterprise cars. It was that cars could be driven to a safe point locally for collection on a low loader. This would be less dangerous than the current practices. Sometimes low loaders are driven into Little Riding, which is not intended to take that weight/size of vehicle. If they pull in, we can't get out!

I would like the congestion and odd operational practices to which I referred brought to the attention of councillors. This may be the only way that they will understand the danger and congestion created by a thoughtless operational practice for collecting and delivering vehicles to Enterprise car hire. Some of the objections to planning application plan/2019/1120 reflect the feelings of people who live near this road, including one from College Road. The congestion at the junction of Maybury Hill, Oriental Road and College Roads is often reflected in social media posts.



Another example of the problem regarding congestion caused by Enterprise Car and Van Rental. As I approached a driver was trying to pull out of the garage forecourt and turn right. A string of cars were passing towards Lion

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Retail Park. I and other drivers were queueing at the roundabout. If there are more lines, they are not being observed. Pedestrians stand not a chance of seeing what is coming towards them. This clearly demonstrates an unsafe practice that has been going on for far too long.

Supplementary discussion / questions on this issue

Marianne Meinke attended the meeting and addressed the Committee. The following points were noted:-

Marianne clarified that she would like the lines extended in College Road under the next parking review.

The Area Highways Manager noted that this was not just a parking issue and that it could be looked at with the Road Safety Team and could also look to link with Enterprise Cars on this. It might also be a Police issue if it was causing the highway to be unsafe.

Cllr David Bittleston agreed to take this forward and have an initial conversation with Enterprise Cars.

Question 3 – Norman Johns, Local resident

Request to the Woking Joint Committee that they consider lifting the Town Centre cycling ban, prohibiting cycles between the hours of 10.00 & 16.00.

In 2010/2011 the local committee voted to ban cycling through the Town Centre and later along Commercial Way between Chaple Street and Chobham Road.

Now in 2020 with a climate emergency crisis declared by Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council, will the joint committee reconsider that decision on account of the urgent need to encourage the public to massively reduce its use of private cars and take up cycling.

The present ban means that children can cycle across the Town Centre to school but need to break the law in order to return home and local cyclists are being discouraged from cycling into and across Woking by the threat of prosecution.

Answer

There are limited areas within the Town Centre where cyclists are asked to dismount from their cycles, walk a short distance before cycling once more.

The ongoing issue will always be those cyclists that travel at speed, inconsiderately or carelessly in busy pedestrian areas and whilst noting the comments, officers feel it would be prudent to retain the current arrangements in order to encourage responsible behaviour and reserve the right to deal proactively with the minority of cyclists who potentially endanger others.

Work to provide further designated cycle lanes in the Town is ongoing which should provide improvements for cyclists in the future.

Supplementary discussion / questions on this issue

Norman Johns attended the meeting and addressed the Committee. The following points were noted:-

What evidence is there of cyclists speeding through the Town? In Horsell, you cannot cycle to the Station. Goldsworth Road is now blocked off. Market Walk is now a market and not a cycle route. As part of the Climate Change agenda, there was a real need to get people out of cars and cycling.

The Area Highways Manager noted that from previous debates there were strong feelings on both sides regarding changing the arrangements and had to balance the needs of everyone concerned. Although there had not necessarily been any recorded accidents, there may have been near misses – or the perception of being unsafe with cyclists riding through pedestrianised areas.

Cllrs did not want to revisit the Town Centre debate – but could review Town Centre cycle routes in light of the new developments. It was also noted that the cycle group needed to be included in these discussions.

This topic would be included on the forward plan if appropriate.

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