

## **Basingstoke Right to Ride**

News from Right to Ride Representative Heather Rainbow

At the moment it is a difficult climate in which to campaign for improvements for cyclists. Hampshire County Council is our local Highways Authority, but the county is strapped for cash: the allocation from the government was much less than hoped for, and now the transport coffers have been raided to meet shortfalls elsewhere for the elderly and social services. As soon as we establish a good relationship with one officer he leaves and we have to start again. Nonetheless we will continue to demand better provision for cyclists. In particular we are asking for the following:

- Cycle training to the national standard, a cycle training programme suitable for people of all ages which equips you to cycle on to-day's roads. The more people who cycle the safer it will be. At present it is difficult to get even cycling efficiency training (not necessary to promote this I am told as cycle accident statistics are so low!!).
- Increase access to and across Basingstoke town centre and the station. We are hoping that there will either be contraflow cycling the whole length of New Road and New Street. Requests for cycling in the pedestrianised zone at the top of town are still being blocked although research shows that it is perfectly safe to mix cyclists and pedestrians in this context, and it is also recommended in Cycling guidelines. (Cycle Friendly Infrastructure). In 2001 we were promised that the bank on the north side of Alencon Link would be cut away to form a cycle lane from Victory roundabout to the station. It has not happened yet. Festival Place has even introduced a ban on pushing bikes through Festival Place from 1 July with little notice and no consultation. Last minute dialogue between influential people at Basingstoke Council and Festival Place has meant that this has now been lifted.
- 20 mile per hour zones. We wait to see how successful the blanket 20 mph zone in Portsmouth will be.
- Safe and attractive cycling facilities. In Basingstoke and Fleet they can be inaccessible (posts, barriers, awkward access), unsafe and not go anywhere useful. (latest disaster is Greywell lane and my husband was severely injured entering Crabtree, nearly 6 weeks before he could ride a bike again, only just in time for a cycling holiday in France.).
- Lifting the unofficial ban on cycling roads with speed limits above 40 mph. At present we are not consulted on any traffic schemes in these areas and measures introduced deliberately make such roads more dangerous for cycling (A30 the Hatch and elsewhere on the A30). We were told that on B2150 that it was unnecessary to involve cyclists or provide for them even though there had been cyclist injuries and deaths here!

The above form the main emphasis of our campaigning, but that does not stop us from commenting on planning applications and in particular the developments along

Churchill Way West at Brook House, the allotment site and the new Wickes between Morrisons and Thorneycroft roundabout. We are also networking to try and achieve our aims with people such as Friend of the Earth and have even managed to get a voice on the Climate Change Panel at the council.

If you wish to learn more or report problems, please do not hesitate to contact me:  
[heather@rainbowramsey.plus.com](mailto:heather@rainbowramsey.plus.com).

Heather Rainbow  
July 2007