

# BIRMINGHAM Cyclist

The newsletter for

push  bikes

**Phew! It's been a busy summer!**



**Nine days of Bike Fix!**



**Five Bike Trains run again!**



**Dr Bike goes monthly!**



Push Bikes and Founder member John Pitcock are at the University for SkyRide



*Cllrs Lisa Trickett and Victoria Quinn ride with a Bike Train!*

***City Centre Cycle Strategy -***  
Scrutiny Committee calls for evidence.  
Push Bikes will give input from SkyRide and Dr Bike to  
Cycling Forum.

***Sustainable Transport -***  
Centro receives funding.

**Birmingham City Council is 'waking up' to cycling -  
and Push Bikes is going to keep on pushing!**

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## View from the Chair: Chris Lowe

In many ways this is both an ideal time and the worst time to become chair of a cycle campaigning group. British cycling has had some amazing successes with both the Tour de France and the Olympics and Paralympics, we have seen a national newspaper, The Times, launch a pro-cycling campaign, and the London Cycling Campaign got all the major mayoral candidates to sign up to their 'Love London, Go Dutch' campaign. But on the other hand, the British economy is stalled, and the coalition government is slashing budgets left, right and centre, so that there is hardly any money to spend. I am, however, an optimist, and don't believe that the poor economy is a barrier to encouraging cycling.

The biggest barrier, I believe, to encouraging cycling is a lack of faith in cycling. Most of Birmingham's councillors, and the wider public, do not see cycling as anything other than a hobby. That cycling could be the first choice for visiting friends, going to the shops and commuting is an alien concept.

Push Bikes' task, as I see it, is to change this. We need to convince Birmingham's establishment – politicians, council officials, transport organisations and businesses – that cycling is a practical solution for everyday transport, and that money spent on cycling will be returned, with interest, from savings elsewhere.

We have, I think, the most bicycle-friendly BCC administration ever. To name just two voices, Cllr James McKay, Cabinet Member for a Green, Safe and Smart City, is a keen cyclist and Cllr Victoria Quinn, Chair of the Transport Connectivity and Sustainability overview committee, has lived in Northern Europe for many years, and was involved in the process of setting up the 'Boris Bikes' (official title Barclays' Cycle Hire Scheme - Ed) in London.

We have an opportunity to get cycling engrained into the thinking of BCC, but to do that we can not sit back and hope that voices inside BCC, like Cllr McKay and Cllr Quinn, can do all the heavy lifting. Push Bikes has a serious role in engaging with our local councillors and helping them to understand cycling. Now is our opportunity to push for a change in attitude and ideas – and we must grab it with both hands.

**So, this is a 'call to arms' – there are 120 councillors in Birmingham, and Push Bikes needs to reach them all. Your help is needed to do this.**

## Nine Days of Bike Fix



We opened with two days at Aston Villa FC's Kit Launch Festival. Saw a few bikes - will never forget one kid who turned up with a BMX with NO brakes! He was entirely unconcerned! The AVFC weekend was useful 'rehearsal' for.....

### Seven days at Tesco New Oscott Extra!



- 140 visitors to our Dr Bike table.
- Many tyres inflated - yes, just deflations, NO punctures! Plus brakes adjusted and advice.
- "More cycle lanes" the consistent single demand from near-market or new cyclists.
- Full report sent to Birmingham City Council, the Bike Week company, Cyclenation Board.

## TWO FINGERS TO YOU!!

If you wear a helmet test it frequently as the straps can work loose.

**You should only be able to put two fingers under the chin strap. Not four.!**

The point of the 'v' formed by the straps should be just under your ears..ie about level with the top of Wiggo's 'sideboards'.

Kate Fox.

## Cycle Confidently and more Safely



Cycle training is a proven way of improving your cycling confidence on the road. It's also an effective way for non-cycling adults and children to get cycling easily and quickly. We offer:

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The new chair of the Transport Connectivity and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Victoria Quinn, offered to accompany me on a bicycle ride around Ladywood. While as a voter in Ladywood Ward, I was a little disappointed that my local councillors were not there, as Chair of Push Bikes, this was a fortuitous substitution. Cllr Quinn's committee will shortly be gathering evidence for an Inquiry into Sustainable Urban Mobility, which Push Bikes is very interested in.

I had prepared a route around Ladywood that highlighted obstacles to cycling, as well as the potential gains to be made from cycling. In the event, I found that I was preaching to the converted – Cllr Quinn has spent many years living in Northern Europe, including Amsterdam, and already knows what a mass cycling culture looks like. She told me that she took part in the first stages of planning the 'Boris' bikes in London – based on her experiences of similar schemes in Europe.

The main points that I took away from my discussion with Cllr Quinn were that:

There needs to be a plan of what cycling routes in Birmingham should look like in 20 or 30 years time. This is not just the task of Birmingham City Council – Cllr Quinn was very interested in the mapping project that Robert Latham has started, and is keen to see Push Bikes members approaching their local councillors with proposals for cycling routes in their wards.

There is not yet the political environment for spending large sums of money on cycling infrastructure. Targetted spending of small sums locally, which show the gains that can be achieved, is needed to change the political environment. In some ways there needs to be two plans – one for achievable changes in the next 5 to 10 years, and one for bigger changes in 20 to 30 years time.

Localism may be the key. Local ward and constituency committees already have some discretionary funds that can be spent on small projects, and their power to spend may rise more in coming years. Push Bikes members can bring proposals to those committees for measures to improve cycling locally, and may achieve some success. This makes it all the more important to engage with our local councillors.

Push Bikes has a key role to play in promoting cycling in Birmingham. We have the freedom to present radical ideas and fight cycling's corner without having to be politically neutral in some of the ways that BCC officers and councillors do. Even when there are councillors such as Cllr Quinn who understand the needs of cyclists, there is still the need to push and campaign for better conditions.

Chris Lowe.



### Feedback from SkyRide

On the Push Bikes stand we had a large map for posted comments. Not surprisingly there were more bad than good items on the final list. Here is a summary.

**Cycle Paths.** Overgrown areas on the River Rea Path, north Birmingham Route, Cole Valley (near Ackers) and Galton Bridge on NCN5. Unsuitable gates and barriers for people with disabilities; barriers too narrow for bikes. Poor surfaces.

**Canal towpaths:** waterlogged, in need of repair and widening.

**Cycle Lanes:** parked cars blocking lanes; more lanes that 'protect' cyclists. Discontinuity and 'rejoin the carriage-way' signs.

**Roundabouts.** Problems with large ones with multiple lanes and those on the middle ring road where cyclists are exposed to fast moving traffic.

**Poor facilities:** QEHB outside the main entrance there is confusion between pedestrian and cycling paths. Routes to the hospital are not continuous or easy to use. Cycle parking and lift access at New Street station. Access to canal at Birmingham University station.

**Conclusions.** Most recognised that resources are limited but feel that the growth in cycling in Birmingham is being held back by the lack of investment; cyclists' needs are not understood, poor enforcement of regulations.

**Push Bikes will continue to take up the challenge on behalf of all cyclists – in our discussions with the BCC, and other authorities- Hospitals, Waterways, Centro, etc.**



## Bike Trains 2012!



Bike Trains are part of International In Town Without My Car Day. After the successful Trains of 2011, we were determined to do it again - Push Bikes believes that encouraging commuters to ride bikes during the **'rush hour' road network** - which is the 'point' - is essential for building mass cycling in the UK and improving conditions for cyclists.

After sending emails to Push Bikes members, the Cycle-iseWM circulation, plus support from Birmingham Friends of the Earth and Sustrans Midlands, Birmingham again ran five Bike Trains from surrounding districts into Victoria Square. Around 50 riders from Fox Hollies (Pic. above left) Cotteridge (above right), Sutton Coldfield, Quinton and Kings Heath arrived in the city centre in time for a breakfast of cakes and juice, courtesy of Sustrans and coffees from Eat, New Street.

What was particularly satisfying was that two cycling councillors joined the Trains; shown holding their coffees are Cllr Lisa Trickett (light jacket) and Cllr Victoria Quinn. Extreme right of picture, Yvonne Gilligan, Sustrans Regional Manager, Midlands.

My grateful thanks to everyone involved in the organisation, all riders who took part **and** those who couldn't make it on the day. We already have possible organisers for Bike Train 2013! GH.



## Sprocket Cycles

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# Campaign - the Pain of Pinch Points!



We've all been there! Cycling towards a central refuge with a vehicle rapidly approaching from behind. Will they wait or will they try to get past? Is there room? How should I react? It can be very frightening. On several occasions I've seen the driver divert round the opposite side of the refuge, and on one occasion go straight over the refuge –shattering his engine sump! How can this danger to cyclists be avoided? What should be the minimum width at the pinch point?

The Department for Transport's Cycling Infrastructure Design guide gives the following advice:

*Refuges and islands can create hazardous pinch points for cyclists. If they are introduced and it is not possible to provide a cycle bypass, the width available should either be **sufficient to allow vehicles to overtake cyclists safely, or narrow enough to discourage overtaking altogether**. Gaps of between **2.75 metres and 3.25 metres over any distance should be avoided**, as car drivers may attempt to overtake even though there is insufficient room to do so safely. Conditions at roadworks (and other longer length restrictions eg bridges) require **a minimum gap of 4 metres**.*

BCC policy seems to support the installation of more pedestrian refuges (often with the intention of providing traffic calming. Some are on relatively narrow roads which reduce the single lane width to between 2.75 and 3.25metres – the width to be avoided according to the DfT advice.

Here are some examples of local designs to tackle this occurrence.

**1 Do nothing. Ignore the advice and expect cyclists to look after their own safety. This seems to be BCC's current thinking at the majority of Pinch Points!**

**2 Paint a hatched area to indicate a reduced width, encouraging the cyclist to take a wider position (pictured right) However, because the hatched area is at the kerb side not at the refuge side it does not indicate to drivers that they should not overtake.**

**3 Put in a short cycle lane off the carriageway to (nominally) by-pass the restriction.** This involves construction costs and, unless carefully designed, the deviation requires the cyclist to do a complicated manoeuvre and give way before re-joining the carriageway –so it is unlikely to be used by most cyclists.

**4 Construct an inline bypass that gives the cyclist a safe and continuous route.** DfT Research shows that this is cyclists' preferred option provided it is well constructed and maintained/cleaned. However they are (relatively) expensive and consequently rare.

## Highway Code: Advice to drivers

*Paragraph 153. Traffic-calming measures. On some roads there are features such as.... narrowings which are intended to slow you down. When you approach reduce your speed. Allow cyclists... room to pass through them. Maintain a reduced speed along the whole of the stretch of road within the calming measures. Give way to oncoming road users if directed to do so by signs. You should not overtake other moving road users while in these areas.*

*163 Overtaking. Give ... cyclists ... at least as much room as you would when overtaking a car.*

*167. DO NOT overtake where you might come into conflict with other road users where the road narrows.*

## What policy should Push Bikes adopt when advising the Council?

**Refuges are not suitable as traffic calming measures.**

**Where new refuges are needed as pedestrian crossing points they should ALWAYS be designed to meet the Cycling Infrastructure design criteria.**

**Existing refuges must be assessed and prioritised to bring up to these standards.**

**They must incorporate either a cycle lane or cycle bypass.**

## How should cyclists behave when cycling towards a restriction?

It is the cyclist's responsibility to ride safely at all times so, the line of approach to a pinch point should be no different. You may take advantage of any designed features for the benefit of cyclists but you are not obliged to do so. **If you feel in any additional danger from following vehicles you should indicate that you will be moving further toward the centre of the narrowing – 'the primary cycling position' and that the vehicle should not overtake. Once clear of the narrowing immediately move to a normal cycling position.**

**(A BCC quote from three years ago: "Cyclists should adopt the Primary Position". National Standard Cycle Training: the Primary Position is to ride in the centre of a narrow lane or through the centre of any narrow gap. Ok, but most cyclists have never HEARD of the Primary Position; those who have are very reluctant to use it! Pinch Points will be raised by Push Bikes at the next Cyclists' Forum- Ed) Also see lower half of next page!**

## Councillors Get On Their Bikes!



### *Councillors at the ready!*

All in all quite revealing! One councillor remarked “All the changes in road layout for the new bus routes but no improvement in places to cycle.” Another said “This road has just been re-surfaced; an opportunity for a cycle lane has been missed.”

Summing up afterwards David Cox felt that the ride had greatly advanced the understanding of problems and the need for early intervention. He hoped that like the House of Commons, Birmingham councillors would form a cross-party cycling group to push forward some of these lessons.

The councillors’ ride included attending the launch of Cycle Chain's new floating bike workshop, Carina, at Cambrian Wharf in Birmingham City Centre. Carina will be a unique bike workshop where young adults with learning disabilities will learn mechanical and numeracy skills and self-confidence through learning about bike maintenance. Cycle Chain, founded in 2002, is a local social enterprise business that uses the bicycle and related products and services to improve health, social welfare, and the environment.

Through the initiative of David Cox (Push Bikes member) about 10 Birmingham councillors –including 4 Cabinet Members -took to the city centre streets on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September to see for themselves what cyclists have to put up with.

During an hour and a half they jostled with pedestrians and other cyclists on the towpath near the ICC, **walked up a One-Way street because of the absence of a contra-flow cycle lane (or signage - Ed)**, negotiated a right turn off busy Broad Street, got cut up by a bus when trying to cross the middle Ring Road into Hurst Street, had to abandon cycling due to congestion on Moor Street, and negotiate buses pulling in –and out- along Colmore Row.

**Press Interview:**  
**Cllr McKay (Cab.**  
**Mem. Green,**  
**Safe & Smart**  
**City)**



## MORE ON PINCH POINTS!



Left - a new Refuge on Shirley Road, Hall Green. JUST AFTER vehicles leave an island! BCC calls such placings ‘**desire lines**’ - placed where pedestrians want to cross.

Right - a car passes through the gap. Not much room for a cyclist through HERE!



What CAN be done? Left pic; short cycle lane to bypass the gap. Not liked by cyclists, who have to re-join the flow, or by BCC.

Right pic: In-line bypass (sometimes separated from traffic by a short kerb) Preferred by cyclists but can be expensive (although the example pictured should not be? A white line?)



**Pinch Points - a national problem? Push Bikes is an affiliated member of Cyclenation, the Federation of Cycle Campaign Groups. Push Bikes is asking Cyclenation to raise the problem of pinch points (which is shared by some other groups) with the government at national level.**



## Cycling with Centro - John Bennett

Centro is responsible for bus, rail and Midland Metro Tram transport in the West Midlands. It has recently been successful in securing £33.2m for 'Smart Network, Smarter Choices' through the government's Local Transport Sustainable Transport Fund. Further contributions from local authorities and private sector of £19m means that over £50m in total is available to enable them "to deliver a range of sustainable transport initiatives by March 2015."

*Centro says "It is recognised that walking, cycling and public transport have a crucial role to play in supporting local economic growth, reducing carbon emissions and creating a healthier society."*

The project involves carrying out a wide range of schemes along key corridors in the West Midlands and of influencing people's travel behaviour, especially in favour of green choices for short trips. Ten strategic corridors have been chosen for improvement

- Airport & NEC (A45)
- South Birmingham Technology Corridor (A38/A441)
- Warwick Road (A41 South)
- North Solihull Regeneration Corridor (A452)
- Walsall Road (A34 North)
- Black Country West (A4123/A459)
- Wolverhampton to West Bromwich Growth Corridor (A41 North)
- Corridor 404 (Walsall to Brierley Hill)
- Connecting Dudley with Birmingham (A457)
- Coventry North Corridors

A tailored package of integrated measures has been developed for each of the corridors, including:

New or improved walking and cycling routes  
Small scale road and junction improvements  
Better passenger waiting facilities  
Expert travel planning for families, companies and schools  
Free travel support for job seekers  
More mobile and real time transport information  
Smartcard technology for cashless travel

Centro intends to work closely with local groups to provide expert support and advice.

### Push Bikes' comments:

At first sight this successful bid should provide improved facilities for cycling and encouragement for increasing trips by bike. £50million is a lot of money. However there are clearly lots of other claims on its use so the 'cycling lobby' will have to fight its corner.

**At a meeting where the above details were explained, Push Bikes offered to assist with the practical input of ideas for cycling improvements by local members –which was accepted with enthusiasm by the Centro team. Push Bikes will be following up this initiative with Centro and contacting members for support.**

Last year there was a pilot scheme based on Kings Norton/Pershore Road Corridor costing (only) £0.5m. Much of this money was spent on advertising and a team of advisors offering 'smarter choices' to individuals and local employers, schools etc. So far no report analysing the effect of this project has been published so it is not clear how successful it has been. From personal observation it is not obvious that cycling has significantly increased; let's hope this is proved wrong. In any case there must be lessons learned that should lead to improvements.

In addition, Push Bikes will be campaigning to improve facilities; secure cycle parking and entrances/lifts at stations, adequate spaces on trains, bikes on Metro, etc, etc.

### Cycling Project wins award!

This project -one of four successful bids for support from Bournville Village Trust- will encourage local residents (but not only from Bournville) to participate in gentle cycling through parks, shopping centres and quiet roads.



The aim is to build better social contacts and to demonstrate the wealth of interest in the locality. A programme of rides will start in early spring 2013, preceded by wide-spread publicity. Push Bikes personnel will be involved in organising and leading rides.

**Congratulations to John Bennett for his winning Bid!**



## **Freedom of Information Act - a Push Bikes member questions the council!**

In February 2012 new PB member Alan Woodfield put five questions to BCC under the FoIA. Those relating to cycling are:

- How much has BCC spent on cycle lanes in each of the past 10 years?
- How many miles of lane were there in 2002, and how many are there now?
- What action has been taken after my complaints RE: the cycle lane joining the bus pull-in at Islington Row?

His letter was addressed to the then Lord Mayor, and a copy has recently been sent to the editor, who has sent a copy to Graham Lennard.

Alan is still waiting for answers from BCC. When he gets them, they will be put in this newsletter - maybe the Winter edition?

Our week of Bike Fix was so useful in terms of public contact - not to mention fixing bikes - that we thought, why wait another year?

After meeting the council's Head of Sport at the Bike North Birmingham Launch, within two HOURS she had sent an email to ALL 40 Leisure Centres in the city, 'asking' or more accurately requiring co-operation!

We chose Fox Hollies LC in the south, and Handsworth LC in the north, and have been holding Dr Bike sessions on alternate months at these two. My thanks to both managers for their unreserved co-operation. Dr Bike is now on holiday in sunny climes until Spring 2013!



Our first 'Fix' at Fox Hollies.

Customers at Handsworth.



Most Fixes? Deflations, brakes, occasional gear adjustments. Thanks to Chris Lowe for helping each time, cycling out on his folder!

My thanks also to managers Alun Hale at Handsworth and Andy Bradshaw at Fox Hollies. CU next year!

## Engaging with your local councillors - Chris Lowe

The image of Birmingham is one of the car. Birmingham was the first place to build houses with integrated garages, and the first city to authorise one-way streets. It is little wonder, then, that many people imagine Birmingham City Council to be servants of the car.

This may be unfair – in recent years, public transport appears to have been also central to BCC's transport strategy. The 'Big City Plan' claims to aspire to a 'walkable' city, but in reality it is a city based around public transport, with no home more than 10 minutes walk from a bus stop, that is aspired to. While public transport in many ways is better than private motor vehicles, Push Bikes aspires to a Birmingham where the bicycle is the natural choice of transport.

But how can we encourage Birmingham's councillors to buy into that aspiration? There are 40 wards in Birmingham, each with 3 councillors elected to represent them. While Push Bikes can contact these councillors, it is better if individual Push Bikes members build a good relationship with their local councillors. Councillors want to know what their local ward members are interested in – more so than what a campaign group, such as Push Bikes, wants. Moreover, you can ask your local councillors to take action on issues, whereas they can choose to ignore outside groups like Push Bikes.

Like much of the British population, many of Birmingham's councillors imagine that the bicycle is only a toy. The obstacles to bicycle use that we see immediately are invisible to them, and the potential of bicycles for transforming transport in Birmingham and delivering financial and health benefits are unknown. One of our most important tasks over the next few years is to open up the eyes of Birmingham's councillors.

How can we engage with our councillors? There are several ways and places in which you can contact your councillors. You can find out which council ward you live in on this website: [https://localview.birmingham.gov.uk/My\\_Local\\_Information/Sites/MyLocalInformation/](https://localview.birmingham.gov.uk/My_Local_Information/Sites/MyLocalInformation/) You can find a list of Birmingham's councillors here: <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/councillors>

Councillors hold advice bureaux, where you can meet them face-to-face to discuss issues. You can also contact them by email or letter, and there are also regular ward and constituency committee meetings, where you can raise cycling issues.

'Do's and 'don't's of contacting your councillors:

- DO tell them where you live – councillors do not have to listen to people who are outside their constituency.
- DO tell them that you belong to Push Bikes – having visible members increases Push Bikes' leverage with BCC. However, please don't present yourself as the definitive voice of Push Bikes.
- DO talk about the social, financial and health benefits of cycling – councillors care about these results, and the benefits for the wider population are perhaps more attractive than benefits for existing cyclists.
- DO present clear practical ideas – improvements for bicycles need not cost the earth, and councillors need to understand how money can be spent wisely to improve cycling conditions.
- DO be confident and persistent – don't give up at the first brush-off you receive. There are great benefits from being a persistent voice that cannot be ignored, but you can't achieve that immediately.
- DON'T be rude or offensive – cycle campaigners often feel that we are ignored by the powers that be, but persistent politeness will be more effective in the long run.
- DON'T expect instant wins – it takes time for ideas to turn into reality, and the infrastructure being built now may have been planned 4 or 5 years ago. The long term potential of engaging with your councillors is great, but in the short term you may not experience any benefit at all. Don't give up!



## Engaging with councillors - case study.

Last year, just before joining Push Bikes, I moved into Ladywood Ward. I first contacted one of my local councillors, Carl Rice, about cycling issues during the riots – to suggest that the promotion of cycling could help to alleviate the social exclusion and deprivation that contributed to the riots. In brief, transport poverty can exclude the population of certain areas from social activities and job opportunities.

My first experiences of contacting my local councillors was that they handed my questions over to Graham Lennard, one of Birmingham City Council's few cycling officers. I felt that there was not very much interest in cycling issues. Jump one year forward and now one of my local councillors, Albert Bore (Council Leader - Ed) has taken over a cycling issue that Graham Lennard was looking into, because I contacted Cllr Bore about the issue. I may not have been entirely happy with Cllr Bore's response, and he is considering points I made in response, but the simple fact that he has taken ownership of the problem is a great change from last year.

So, what has happened? Well, aside from the change in administration in BCC, which has greatly increased my local councillors' work loads? Since December last year, I have attended every ward committee meeting, and contributed in those meetings to highlight cycling issues that have arisen from other matters. As well as my own comments, Push Bikes has also raised proposals for changes in planning applications, such as the Icknield Port Loop development, to improve the situation for cyclists. At the last ward committee meeting in July, Cllr Kath Hartley pointedly asked a Centro representative to consult cycle campaign

groups, and directed them to Push Bikes. What a change from a year ago!

The battle is not over yet - I still hope to get my councillors out on bicycles themselves, and help them to experience the transport network from a cyclist's perspective – but there have been significant improvements, and only in 1 year. Engaging with councillors does work – ward committees may not be much fun, but attending them is a productive activity for cycle campaigners.

Chris Lowe.

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## Contacting your councillors - Chris Lowe



**Writing to your councillors – a tick list:**  
**So, you have an issue that you want to raise with your local councillors. Just what do you put in your letter?**

**Here is a simple tick-list to follow.**



**Open with your councillor's name. To begin with, be slightly formal: Dear Cllr xxx.**

**Paragraph 1:**

**Identify who you are, and that you live in their ward. Councillors are answerable to their voters, not people from outside their ward. Let them know that you are a member of Push Bikes. Briefly outline why you are writing to them. Do this at the start – don't make them read through 5 pages to get to the point of your letter.**

**Paragraph 2: Explain the background / situation / history of the issue. Keep this brief – remember that your councillors should be knowledgeable about your local area, but they are unlikely to be experts of cycling issues.**

**Paragraph 3: Explain how you feel about this issue – why is it important for you. Explain how this issue impacts others – and what benefits there could be to the local population of sorting out this issue.**

**Paragraph 4: State clearly what you want to happen. Even if you have made some demands earlier in the letter, make them again here. Keeping the most important information at the start and end of your letter makes it easier for your councillor to pick it out.**

**Thank your councillor for their time spent reading your letter, and say that you look forward to receiving their reply.**

**Finish off with 'Yours sincerely' and your name. In further correspondence you can be more informal, but keep the first contact polite.**

**Remember to include your address somewhere on the letter – so that your councillor can verify that you really live in their ward.**

**Also include a date – so that later on you can write, “In my letter to you, dated ....,”**

**If you have included all these things, then hopefully you will have written a letter that is clear and communicates your point to your councillor. You may not be confident writing letters at first, but, as the saying goes, 'practice makes perfect'. The more letters you write, the better they will become – as long as you keep in mind the points above.**

**See also - ‘Write to your councillor’ on the back page.**

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# CYCLING ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS

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## Push Bikes' Rides

Please see Push Bikes' web site for latest Wednesday evening and monthly rides; also the Push Bikes Facebook group.

*Remember to check the website for the latest details, especially before setting out to join a ride. One of the downsides of flexibility is changes happen!*

### Rides mailing list

If you want to join the Push Bikes rides' mailing list, email: [web99@pushbikes.org.uk](mailto:web99@pushbikes.org.uk) with subject "subscribe rides" and your name and email address in the body of the email.

STOP PRESS!

'Sheffield' cycle stands now re-installed in Congreve Passage, Chamberlain Square, outside library.  
Welcome back!



All Push Bikes rides are free, open to members and non-members and are undertaken at the rider's own risk. Please ensure that your bike is roadworthy, has good brakes and working lights.

Wearing high-visibility clothing will improve your safety by making you more conspicuous to other road users. If you have doubts about wearing a helmet, wear one. Ensure it is in good condition and is a proper fit. It may help protect your head should you have an unscheduled dismount. All participants are expected to take great care and observe the Highway Code. The organisers do not accept responsibility for loss or damage to personal property, for personal accident or injury, or for any public liability.

Further advice on ride participation and changes to the rides programme can be found on our web site at: <http://www.pushbikes.org.uk> Details can be obtained from Nick Wattison on 07837 414236 on the day of the ride.

## Committee

Chair	Chris Lowe
Secretary:	Graham Hankins
Campaigns:	Howard Boyd / John Bennett
Treasurer:	Sharon Baker
Rides Co-ordinators:	Simon Harrison, Nick Wattison
Committee members:	David Gaussen, Michael Groll
Webmaster:	David Little
Newsletter Editor:	Graham Hankins

## Standing Order Mandate

To (your bank)	_____
Address (inc. Post Code)	_____ _____
Please pay The Co-operative Bank, Birmingham Branch	
Sorting Code 08-90-01	
for the credit of Push Bikes account number 50011748	
the sum of (amount in figures) £ _____	
(amount in words) _____	
Commencing (date*) _____ / now* and thereafter every year on	
(date dd/mm) __/__/__ until you receive further notice from me/us* in writing	
quoting reference _____ and debit my/our* account accordingly:	
Name of account to be debited _____	
Account number _____	
Name _____	
Signature _____	
Date _____	
Please cancel any previous Standing Order in favour of Push Bikes under the reference given above.	
Please write clearly and send the forms to Push Bikes, 54-57 Allison Street, BIRMINGHAM, B5 5TH	
*Delete as applicable. <a href="http://www.pushbikes.org.uk">www.pushbikes.org.uk</a> Telephone: 0121 632 6753 Thank you.	

We are based In the Friends of the Earth building:

'The Warehouse'  
54-57 Allison Street  
Digbeth  
BIRMINGHAM  
B5 5TH

Telephone: 0121 632 6909 (this is Reception at FoE - leave a message with Reception staff)

E-mail: [secretary@pushbikes.org.uk](mailto:secretary@pushbikes.org.uk)

As we are a voluntary organisation, the office is not manned on a regular basis. The most effective means of contacting us is by e-mail.

We hold meetings on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 19:30 including: 19 August, 16 September, 21 October

## Useful Numbers

Birmingham Cycling Officer		0121 303 7485
Solihull Cycling Officer		0121 704 8291
Sandwell Cycling Officer		0121 569 4021
Sandwell Potholes		0121 569 4129
Birmingham Potholes		0121 303 6644
Smoky Diesels		0121 789 7999
Emergency Line		0121 303 4149

Beacon Road Club	John Hitchcock	0121 427 5590
CTC N. Birmingham	Harry Child	0121 353 5814
CTC S. Birmingham	John Bennett	0121 459 9319

## Write To Your Councillor!

One of the most effective ways that you as an individual member of Push Bikes can influence provision for cyclists in our area is to raise your concerns with your local councillors.



The web site: [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com) will identify who they are, what they are responsible for, give guidance about content and ensure it is delivered.

If you have a local problem with (say) a poor cycle path, blocked cycle lane, speeding traffic, lack of cycle parking, potholes, or any general cycling issue let the councillors know about it. It's your councillor's job to respond to you as a resident.

Please send a copy of any email to Push Bikes via: [secretary@pushbikes.org.uk](mailto:secretary@pushbikes.org.uk)

## Membership Application Form

I/we\* wish to join Push Bikes

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address (inc. Post Code) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

I/we\* enclose one year's subscription:

Individual, waged (£11) .....

Individual, unwaged (£5-50) .....

Joint/Family (£14-00) .....

Voluntary donation (optional) .....

TOTAL ..... £.....

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I heard about Push Bikes from \_\_\_\_\_

I/we\* would like to help by: (✓)

( ) Letter writing ( ) Helping on Push Bikes' stall ( ) Organising activities for Bike Week

( ) Reviewing plans ( ) Writing articles for Newsletter ( ) Setting up a Bicycle User Group

## Members' Discounts From:

Bike Shop	Location	Exceptions
Scott's Cycles (see advert )	Hall Green	bikes
Action Bikes	Rubery	bikes
Bike Pro	Northfield	bikes
Harborne Cycle Surgery	King's Heath	none
Red Kite Cycles	Harborne	none
Sprocket Cycles (see advert )	Shirley	bikes
	City Centre	none