



Welcome to the New World

The decade started badly with Storm Brendan in January, closely followed by Ciara and Dennis in February. Cycle paths were flooded, avalanches blocked trails and strong winds scything across open fields presented a severe traffic hazard. Cycling into the wind made the homecoming stretch of the Darrington circuit seem twice as long.

Nevertheless, trails were bordered by primroses and celandines, with daffodils poking through. Birds sang and started nestbuilding. The weather was improving and the future looked good. Then came lockdown.

Our 2020 Guided Cycle Rides and Events Guide has had to be put on one side. The social distancing rules make our guided rides impossible. The events we were going to support have been cancelled. Working parties just don't work when workers are two metres apart.

Nevertheless, don't throw your guide away. We are determined that as soon as the restrictions are lifted, normal service will be resumed.

IN THIS EDITION

Welcome to the New World

Request for help from Cycling UK

Anglers and other parks

Field latest

Going Dutch

Cycling UK

Cycling UK has emailed asking for assistance. We are requested to ask local councils to create safe space for cycling and walking during lockdown. Although the volume of motor traffic has dropped, there is still risk for people cycling due to high speed vehicles. There are also problems where existing cycle infrastructure is not wide enough for more usage and doesn't allow people to keep 2m apart. This can be addressed by: (1) Introducing new mandatory cycle lanes (MCLs), MCLs are marked with solid white lines to prohibit other types of vehicle from being driven or ridden in them during their hours of operation (like bus lanes, which are also marked with solid white lines). It is possible to introduce MCLs without a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). As it is no longer an offence to park in these new MCLs, councils may prefer to make a TRO to introduce parking restrictions and a TRO will be needed if any existing parking bays are to be removed. Subsection 66(2) of the Highways Act 1980 enables highway authorities to introduce temporary infrastructure (e.g. cones, wands, planters or water-filled barriers) to prevent drivers from illegally entering these lanes. It is advisable though to have a documented risk assessment to ensure (and be able to demonstrate) that due consideration has been given to the safety and access needs of all road users, including disabled people. (2) Closing roads and streets to motor traffic – this will need a TRO of some form

An email to Denise Jeffrey using a proforma produced by Cycling UK brought the following response:

‘Thank you for your recent email in which you detail the opportunity for Councils to implement temporary measures to provide additional road space for cycling and walking and in doing so support the national efforts for social distancing.

Wakefield Council in partnership with West Yorkshire Combined Authority promotes cycling and walking and invest annually to improve infrastructure. The district has over 1400km of public highway and a comprehensive network of cycle routes both off street and on street measuring 150km.

It is noted that the impact of the government restrictions has seen a significant reduction in vehicular movements as compared to the normal flows - regional figures suggest a reduction to approximately 1/3 of normal traffic levels. Roads in Wakefield District remain very lightly trafficked and has resulted in improved opportunities for cycling and walking generally. I am pleased to see residents are taking the opportunity to cycle and walk whilst undertaking their daily exercise in line with government guidance.

The Council's own workforce is also working in line with government guidance in terms of social distancing and prioritising activities that keep road users - especially those involved in the Coronavirus response - safe when using our roads and that support the vulnerable residents and communities across our district.

Whilst it is difficult for the Council to resource a 'blanket response' in terms of reassigning road space to pedestrians and cyclists in all circumstances, **we will commit to give the request our full consideration if a specific request is made for a temporary amendment to road space allocation during this period of restriction.'**

Councillor Denise Jeffery, Leader of the Council, Tel: 01924 305300
email: djeffery@wakefield.gov.uk Web: www.wakefield.gov.uk

If you have any ideas that would help, please let your council know. I'm suggesting that while there is less traffic and fewer buses, bus lanes become cycle lanes and for the whole day rather than just during rush hours.

Anglers Country Park



Anglers Country Park is still open, although the car park and café are closed. The track across the field is now clearly visible, although at present it seems to have been used by more horse riders than cyclists and the top end is very rutted and bumpy. For much of its length it is not wide enough for two cyclists to pass, so use it with care.

Nostell is completely closed, as is Fairburn Ings. The car park at Pugneys is closed although people seem to be walking round the lake.

Taking to the roads avoids the problems of narrow paths and you can still admire the May blossoms in the hedgerow, purple honesty flowers, wild garlic, drifts of bluebells, bright buttercups and dandelions turning towards the sun. Just keep an eye open for passing traffic and pedestrians stepping into the road to avoid someone coming too close the other way.



Going Dutch



At this point, I had proposed to regale you with tales of four intrepid members of WDCF's trip to Hollands to cycle through the tulip fields.

Thanks to Corona, we didn't even get to tiptoe through them.

As consolation here are some pictures of the tulips in The Hepworth Gallery's gardens.

The gallery is closed but the gardens, small but full of spring colours and the occasional piece of sculpture, are open to view.





And to prove we were exercising and not merely visiting the art gallery, here's Nev and the tandem.

Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible but in the meantime stay safe and keep cycling!

