

Safety issues

Sir — I read with interest that there is to be a clampdown on cyclists “endangering” pedestrians in Cornmarket Street. As someone whose preferred method of transport is a bike, I find it a great pity that Cornmarket was pedestrianised, as the alternative North-South cycle routes are problematic.

Nevertheless, I always walk rather than cycle through at the times when cycling is prohibited, and I have no objections to enforcement of the rules. However, will we also see effective enforcement of the restriction point in High Street or Turl Street?

These are both places where I would be prepared to bet 40 minutes of monitoring would show many more than six vehicles flouting the rules — among others I have seen a Control Plus person on a scooter going through Turl Street and a taxi going the wrong way (ie entering from High Street) along Turl Street. Can we hope to

see enforcement against pavement parking, or parking which blocks cycle lanes, or abuse of advanced stop lines?

These are things which clearly endanger cyclists and or pedestrians. A crackdown on excessive speed, “tailgating” or mobile phone use while driving would, of course, be too much to hope for, even though these are issues which are major safety issues.

Les Hitchins
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Respect cyclists

Sir — There would be much more force behind the campaign to stop illegal cycling in Cornmarket if at the same time pedestrians were urged to stop jay-walking in Turl and New Inn

Hall Streets — the only alternatives routes. Each day I have to navigate round hordes of pedestrians who act as if they have the right to wander into to the roadways there without even looking. Last year a pedestrian who was too engrossed in a mobile phone call to look almost knocked me off as she strode into my bike.

The fact that jay-walkers make it so dangerous for cyclists is one reason why some riders use Cornmarket.

There would also be much more force behind the clampdowns on cyclists if the authorities stopped buses from blocking the designated cycle route in Magdalen Street East.

This is now used as an illegal bus holding area with the connivance of the county council and there is no attempt to enforce the law even though it creates a very hazardous environment.

There is also no enforcement of the mandatory green bike routes particularly the “bikes only” boxes at traffic lights such as the ones at the Banbury/Parks Road and High Street/Longwall Street junctions where at least half of all drivers transgress. How many are prosecuted for this?

I would bet that the total each year is closer to zero than the number of fingers on my right hand. Do we have to wait for another cyclist to die on an Oxford street before anybody takes this seriously?

Four years ago I was seriously injured when a bus “clipped” me as it tried to overtake in a joint bus/cycle lane. The bus driver was charged, but when it came to court the prosecution had to withdraw the case because they had not got their evidence together.

I had not even been interviewed. Yes, enforce the law on cyclists by all means, but also enforce the laws that are supposed to protect us. Cyclists will start to respect the law in Oxford when the law starts to respect cyclists.

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