

Campaigns

The main purpose of the Tower Hamlets Wheelers is to campaign for better cycling conditions and to get more people cycling, promoting cycling as a healthy, environmentally-friendly and convenient way to get about town that doesn't cause congestion.

We have undertaken *direct* campaigns to improve cycling facilities, such as Cable Street, and *indirect* campaigns to get more people on bikes through events -such as Car Free Day - and promotions - such as our congestion charge T-shirt, covered later.



Cable Street

We have campaigned to reverse the priority scheme along the two-way cycle track on Cable Street. Currently vehicles crossing the cycle track have priority over cyclists. Over the summer we compiled a petition which was submitted to the council at a meeting with them, the Department for Transport and Transport for London. We also made a deputiation to the council where we were supported by councillors. However the situation has not changed and more work needs to be done. Even the give way markings on to a car wash remain.



Pot-holes

Our survey 'gripes about cycling in Tower Hamlets' revealed that the state of road surfaces was a major con-

cern. At Christmas time a specific email survey found that 85% of respondents had been caught by surprise and 40% had suffered damage to their bike. We 'planted' a Christmas tree in a pot-hole as a media stunt to highlight the problem. Our pot-hole reporting webpage is www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk/potholes and now Transport for London has its own road fault reporting webpage www.tfl.gov.uk/streetfaults

Aldgate

We are targeting the Aldgate gyratory to revert it to two-way operation, as the Shoreditch gyratory has been altered and is now much more cycle-friendly. Cycle counts that we did in summer and winter showed that the cycle-crossing facilities put in with no consultation with us do not cater for the vast majority of cyclists using the junction. We wrote to the head of Transport for London, Derek Turner, asking what is being done to improve conditions. The reply stated that a long-term aspiration was indeed to change Whitechapel High Street to two-way operation. We will continue the counts to see whether cycling levels change.



Congestion charge

With the advent of congestion charging we thought we'd highlight the financial advantage of cycling in central London. A brilliant team effort resulted in our very professional-looking banner (above) raised on the Green Bridge spanning Mile End Road at 7am on 17th February - the start of the charge. This gained local paper coverage and we were filmed by the BBC and shown on London and Manchester evening news! We've also successfully campaigned for cycling flows to be considered in the changes to council-run roads next to the charge zone, preventing the loss of two-way cycle access.

Bicycling Buses

We ran cycling convoys to escort people to work when the Central Line was down due to striking staff and after the Chancery Lane derailment. At first no-one new joined us but persistence with publicity paid off and new cyclists joined in. We teamed up with other LCC groups, and gained much media coverage - even in the *Daily Mirror*!

Rides, Socials & Media

Socials & meetings

We've met in various pubs around the borough once a month but suggestions for other social events - perhaps not involving drinking - are always welcome. Our monthly meetings have become more popular with 13 people coming along in February (the yearly average was 5). The Ecology Centre in Mile End Park and the Sundial Centre in Shipton Street were used and now Limehouse Town Hall, Commercial Road is our regular venue. We think that the newly-opened workshop in Limehouse Town Hall will be an excellent socialising opportunity as well as a great place to fix your bike. Our new year's meal was held in Meds on Burdett Road and great fun was had by all.



Bike rides

We have held a bike ride roughly once a month and mostly these have been in the range 20-30 miles. We went round Chelmsford countryside, along the Thames out east, and off-road in Epping Forest to name but a few. A longer day-trip to Cambridge - 65 miles - resulted in our highest ever number of people attending and on average 5 people come on the rides - a nice cosy friendly amount but more would be good! We will be trying to cater for all abilities in the coming months with shorter rides e.g. Treasure Hunt round the borough. We will also repeat the excellent mountain-biking weekend trip to Derbyshire.



Partners & Networking

We've teamed up with the following groups to promote cycling: Family Welfare Association, London Borough of Tower Hamlets council, Metropolitan police, Youth Action UK, Rick Sure's Rickshaws, the Boxing Club, Bicycle Magic, DHL, Trikes 4 Transport, Tower Hamlets Accessible Transport Consultative Forum, Be Safe Be Seen, other LCC groups: Newham, Redbridge, Hackney, City, Greenwich **and more.**

Membership

London Cycling Campaign membership in Tower Hamlets has risen from 230 to nearly 280 in the year - a 22% rise. This could be due to the fact that we have been attaching newsletters to parked bikes and handing them out to passing cyclists; plus the success of the LCC/TfL cycle maps. Over 10% of the membership has actively volunteered in one way or another, which is an excellent figure, and there is a core of 10 regular volunteers. Since September 2002 the newsletter has gone monthly and is often A3 size! We are building up a list of direct subscribers and if you would like to subscribe please send a cheque/PO for £5 or more payable to 'Tower Hamlets LCC' to Alix Stredwick, 109b Roman Rd, E2 0QN.



Media
We did 22 news releases during the year - nearly two per month! Every single one got coverage in the local papers and we have also been on BBC TV news, BBC local radio in London and Essex, Sunrise - a national Asian radio station, the CTC and rafting bike websites, national cycling magazine *Cycling Plus* and *The Daily Mirror* newspaper!

Events

Events inspire people to cycle, promote cycling, help build our team-work and are frankly just fun! So next time, join in!

Bike Week

We held 6 events and took part in 2 other LCC events - something was going on almost every day. The Beigal Race on the first day resulted in a taxi winning - oops! (We blamed deserted roads on a key World Cup match.) The bikes were in hot pursuit however and great fun was had by all. We finished the week with a Family Cycling Fun Day in Victoria Park with Rick Sure's Rickshaws giving free rides, Dr Bike checking over lots of kids' bikes, an obstacle course for kids, police security-marking bikes and plenty of great publicity photos being snapped.

Cycling Fun Day

This was held with the family Welfare Association,

using Cycle Training Ltd, and loads of kids learned to ride a bike or improved their skills. We hope to repeat this excellent experience this year.

Car Free Day

We held a 'bicycling bus' with rickshaws and custom-made trikes, cycling through the borough down to Tower Bridge on 22nd September, helping to spread the word about cycling and car-free living.

Give or Take

This 'free jumble sale' event at Malmesbury School in Bow saw yet another time when our Dr Bike services proved invaluable to hordes of local kids.



Finances

£900 came into our account and consisted of £150 grant from LCC, £250 recycled bike sales, £50 newsletter subscriptions, £50 collected during Bike Week, £100 from taking part in research, £100 for handing out TfL HGV warning booklets and £200 grant from the council.

Now we are applying for funding from various places and the council has pledged us £1,200 for the workshop, bike buddying scheme and publicity postcards. Our congestion charge T-shirt sales have broken even and we expect to make at least £250 from this.

Tower Hamlets Wheelers

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The Future

We need YOU!

It's been a fantastic year but next year could be better. We need to encourage much more cycling in the borough and beyond and campaign for safer conditions to achieve this. Our best resource is PEOPLE so please join in! We're a friendly bunch with plenty of different talents. So whether tinkering with bikes is your thing, or helping with the newsletter or media work, organising events or letter-writing: get involved. You won't regret it!

Hope to see you soon....

EAST London Cycling



**Tower
Hamlets
London
Cycling
Campaign**

**April
2003**

**for large
print tel 020
8880 6873**

Cycling in Tower Hamlets 2002-2003

It's been a very busy year since April 2002. This edition of the newsletter is a brief overview summarising our success.

The Tower Hamlets Wheelers has certainly increased in membership size, and more people have become actively involved in the group, bringing more skills to our activities and more ideas for action. Last summer was a catalyst for bringing people together to really revive the 'new' active group, especially during Bike Week and monthly bike rides. We cut our teeth organising events and developed relations with the council.

But how successful have our campaigns been to improve cycling conditions in Tower Hamlets? How have our finances fared? How many people are 'automatic'?



Wheelers - London Cycling Campaign members in Tower Hamlets - how many people have subscribed to our 'extra' newsletters and email group and how many are actively involved in our campaigns? Where have rides taken brave Wheelers and how many people have taken part? How good are we at publicity; how much coverage do we get in local papers? Hopefully this summary will inspire folk to join the group to actively improve cycling in Tower Hamlets.



Make it happen 2003-2004

Our AGM is on **9th April** from 7pm at Limehouse Town Hall, 646 Commercial Road. Come and join in! Help to shape our next year of activity and vote for positions on the committee.

www.towerhamletswheelers.org.uk