

Restricting Cycling in Town Centre Pedestrianised Area PSPO

The Borough Council In 2016 introduced a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to restrict cycling in the pedestrianised area of Bedford town centre. The order came into effect on 16 May 2016 for a three year period. This expired on 16 May 2019.

The Council proposed to extend the PSPO for a further three years but before taking a decision decided to carry out a public consultation between 22 March and 26 April 2019.

Two questions were posed:

- Have you witnessed anyone cycling in Bedford Town Centre (between the designated times (9:00hrs and 18:00hrs) in the last 12 months?
- To what extent do you support or oppose the proposal for the extension of the PSPO for Town Centre Cycling restrictions for a further three years

A box was included to supply comments, ideas or alternative ideas you may have in relation to cycling in the Town Centre.

The consultation attracted 209 responses.

The first question elicited 134 (64.4%) respondents stating they had seen cyclists riding through the town centre over the previous 12 months.

The second question resulted in 108 (51.7%) responses supporting the extension and 90 (43.1%) against.

Comments were received from more than 142 respondents.

CCNB has analysed the results and categorised them into the following top ten top items:

1 - Aggressive and dangerous cycling - 41

The majority believed that only the responsible and careful slow cyclists were fined while the fast, aggressive and dangerous, mainly young, cyclists, some doing wheelies, were regularly ignored.

2 - Encourage not discriminate cycling - 31

Cycling should be actively encouraged for health, congestion easing, air pollution and climate reasons as well as helping the town's economy and not treated as an anti-social activity.

3 - Clearer signage required - 16

Many commented on the confusing or difficult to see signage informing the PSPO.

4 - Safe cycle routes required - 13

Forcing cyclists onto the congested and fast perimeter roads is less safe.

5 - Extend the area to all parts of the town - 10

Dangerous pavement cycling by fast cyclists was seen all around the town.

6 - Enforcement Officers attitude, etc - 9

The bullying attitude, aggressive manner, and scruffiness of officers were cited as not being suitable to Bedford.

7 - Bike thefts - 7

Officers would be best employed to help reduce bike theft in the town.

8 - PSPO for cars - 7

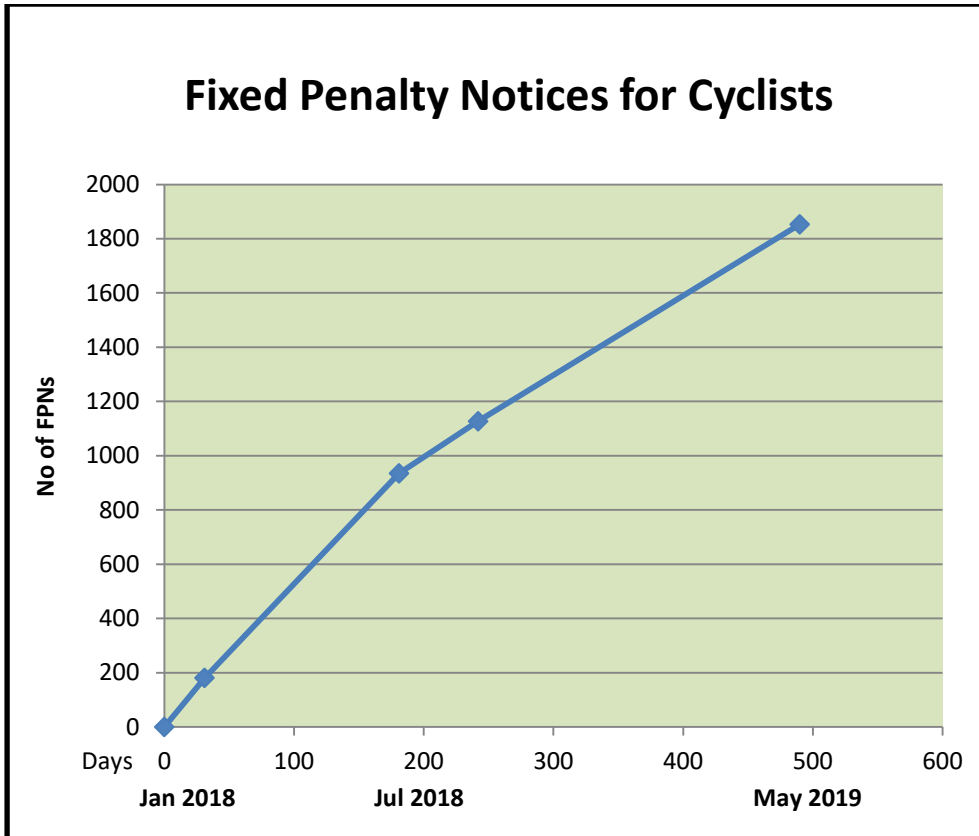
Motor vehicles cause significantly more/more serious accidents.

9 - First timers should not be fined - 5

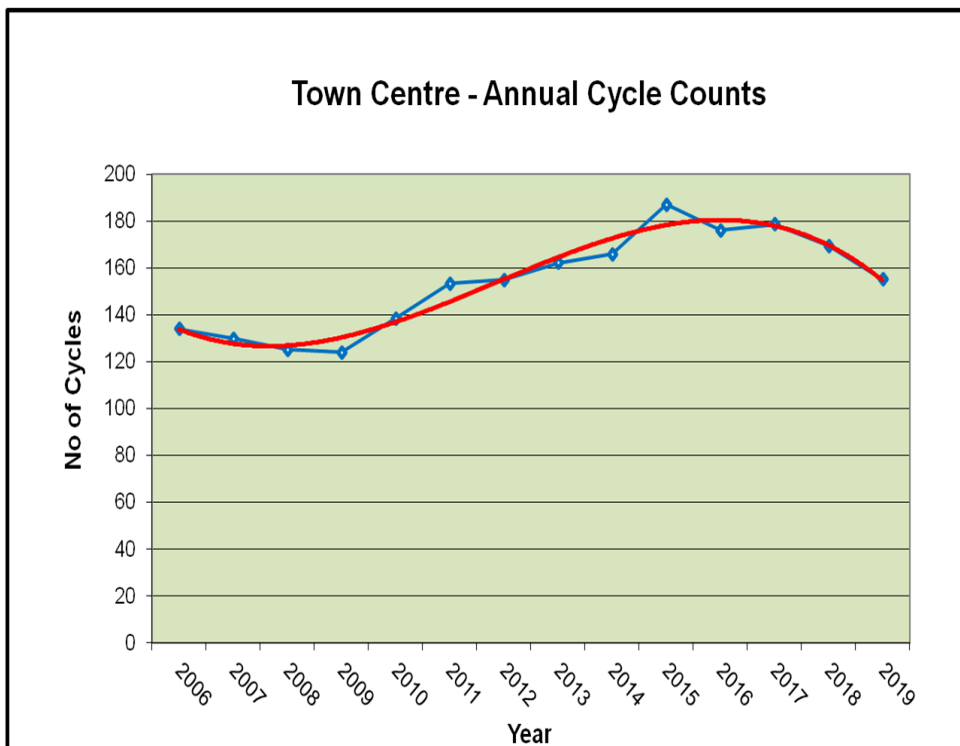
10 - Skateboarders/scooters include - 4

Other items recorded were mobility scooters hazards, times of ban (should be shorter) and pedestrians on phones.

The figure below shows that nearly 2000 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) have been issued since enforcement was contracted out to Kingdom Securities in January 2018.



The figure below shows counts carried out by CCNB in the town centre since 2006 to the present time. The number peaked in 2015 and up to June 2019 had dropped by 10%. CCNB believes this has been due to the introduction of the PSPO in May 2016 and accelerated by the arrival of Kingdom who keep £42.50 from each FPN issued.



CCNB has been concerned about the number of elderly and disabled people who use a bicycle or tricycle as a mobility aid that have been fined.

In meetings with the borough before the introduction of the PSPO CCNB was assured that the police had a long practiced discretionary process around disabled persons and this would be continued by the enforcement officers. A flow chart similar to the one used by the police would be drawn up and given to the enforcement officers for this purpose. CCNB believes this has not been followed by Kingdom Securities.

A second concern has been whether or not the signage at the entrances to the pedestrian zone are legal and fully visible to everybody.

Ambiguous signage at the southern end of Harpur Street



The most prominent sign in the photo above is the one showing that no motor vehicles or motor cycles are allowed in the area. Less prominent is the official 'No Cycling' sign but next to it an illegal sign where no cycling has been crossed out by a red diagonal causing confusion and ambiguity.



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