

Tooting Common: dangerous cycling: correspondance between Friends of Tooting Common and Councillor Paul White

----- Original Message -----

From: Cllr.P.White@wandsworth.gov.uk

To: peter.ramell

Sent: Monday, February 2nd 2026, 14:00

Subject: RE: RE: RE: Tooting Common: dangerous cycling

Official

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your follow up message.

I can confirm that any updates on timelines and specific interventions will be fed into the regular meetings you are already having with Enable, as this remains the primary route for engagement with all parks stakeholder groups. This will help ensure that all information is shared consistently and through the appropriate channels and any open questions are logged effectively.

Thank you,

Cllr. Paul White
Tooting Bec Ward

From: PETER RAMELL

Sent: 31 January 2026 21:27

To: White, Paul (Cllr) <Cllr.P.White@wandsworth.gov.uk>

Subject: Re: RE: RE: Tooting Common: dangerous cycling

Dear Paul

Thank you for your email of 12 January, and for again setting out the Council's position fully and clearly.

We are glad to hear that the Council do recognise that a small minority of riders, including some using e-bikes or adapted bikes, are creating unacceptable risks for other path users. However we have to say that the solutions that the Council intend and, particularly, any clear timescales for introducing them, are not sufficient. Our concerns remain, and we will be in contact further on this. The purpose of this email is mainly to acknowledge your helpful reply, but also to mention the following points:

We think you have misunderstood our earlier email in asking about timescales. We are certainly not asking to know the timing of specific enforcement exercises. We fully agree that that information needs of course to be kept in confidence within the Council and Parks Police for operational reasons, to help ensure effectiveness. We are though asking to know when the various pieces of consideration within the Council - as outlined in your earlier email - will be completed, and when this will result in actual enhanced and more effective enforcement. We have to say that we are disappointed that the timescales for completing this work, including exploring

physical traffic-calming measures on Tooting Common, are still unclear. We will though look forward to hearing in due course from the team about the traffic calming works. We will also certainly be glad to receive the feedback on our proposals about signage, by the middle of February.

On one specific point, I am afraid we have to disagree with your conclusion that the lack of serious incidents to date suggests that the Council's approach is currently effective. This does not follow. We think it's probably more that the Common has been lucky in avoiding a serious incident (so far). As we indicated earlier, we think the current position is a serious accident or fatality waiting to happen.

Thank you for indicating that the Council will inform us when you do a communications campaign about the issue in advance, so that we can use our channels to promote it. We will be glad to do this.

Thank you for saying that you have no objection to us sharing your earlier email (on our website and Facebook page). We assume that you would, similarly, have no objection to us sharing this second email.

Thank you again for helpfully setting out the Council's position.

Best wishes

Peter
(chair, FOTC)

----- Original Message -----

From: Clr.P.White@wandsworth.gov.uk

To: peter.ramell

Sent: Monday, January 12th 2026, 09:43

Subject: RE: RE: Tooting Common: dangerous cycling
Official

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your detailed email and for your continued engagement on behalf of Friends of Tooting Common. I appreciate both the urgency you convey and the constructive spirit in which you have set out your suggestions.

Where we are aligned:

- We agree that a small minority of riders, including some using e-bikes and adapted bikes, are creating unacceptable risks for other users on and around the shared paths. Tackling that behaviour is a priority and requires a blend of education, design, and enforcement rather than any single measure.
- Alongside recent high-visibility enforcement, the Parks Police will continue routine patrols and take enforcement action during those

patrols; this provides ongoing oversight rather than relying solely on one-off operations. These will be intelligence-led to ensure limited resources are used appropriately and are year-round.

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- We will continue working with shared e-bike operators to manage speeds, routes and riding behaviour as part of a borough-wide approach.

On resourcing and continuous presence:

You asked for a substantial and permanent increase in patrolling resources. Like all local authorities, we must balance finite budgets across many safety priorities. We are one of the few London boroughs with a dedicated Parks Police, but maintaining a constant, near-permanent presence across all parks and commons is not feasible within current resources. We therefore deploy based on evidence and need, and we encourage reporting so patrols can be directed where they will have the greatest impact.

Operational transparency (and its limits)

I understand the desire for specific timetables for enforcement actions. However, pre-announcing the timing and locations of targeted operations can undermine their effectiveness, and, in some instances, those timings are set or influenced by multi-agency partners such as the Metropolitan Police. In practice, we tend to do a mixture of both as our strategy balances educational interventions with enforcement.

We do not publish all operational schedules in advance, though we will continue to communicate outcomes and learning wherever appropriate. We do, however, regularly liaise with the Metropolitan Police to understand the effectiveness of interventions deployed, and some of our teams are constantly communicating rather than having set meetings to do so. In terms of escalation of the issue, that has already happened and, whilst I accept there may be more anti-social cycling reported, that doesn't mean there is more committed. We are not complacent but the enforcement in place and the lack of serious incidents to date suggests the approach is currently effective. Unfortunately, the rise in e-bikes and scooters is a significant challenge for all Councils.

Physical measures and design:

We continue to explore physical traffic-calming options to slow riders where risks are highest, ensuring any solutions are inclusive and compliant with LTN 1/20 (Cycle infrastructure design), the Equality Act and Council strategies. This work is underway with some footway/cycle route resurfacing works starting shortly. The LTN 1/20 and traffic calming works are early stage and so the team will be in touch to discuss in due course.

Signage and communications:

Officers are reviewing your signage suggestions and will provide feedback by the middle of February. In parallel, we continue to use Council channels to remind all

users to share space considerately, keep speeds down, and give way to pedestrians, especially on narrow sections and where visibility is limited.

Joint working:

Dangerous cycling on commons and open spaces remains a standing topic in cross-council discussions with Community Safety colleagues and the Metropolitan Police. We are already exploring opportunities to coordinate increasingly effective responses across services, learning from what has worked elsewhere (the Royal Parks charity ran a campaign last year, for example, which promoted different signage and a code of conduct. There is learning from that and similar initiatives that we are considering).

As you know, the Parks Police attend the joint Tooting Commons Management Advisory Committee and Friends of Tooting Common meetings where members help to determine local Policing priorities. They also provide a report and answer any questions by members and share a limited amount of enforcement data. We will review what else could be shared on this issue.

Next steps:

1. Officers will provide feedback on your suggestions for signage and contact regarding the speed reduction works.
2. The Parks Police Service will review what they are able to share with you in terms of incidents and responses to ensure we do not compromise any initiatives in place or planned.
3. We will inform you when we do a communications campaign about this issue in advance, so you are able to use your channels to promote. The timing of this will depend on advice from the Parks Police and Metropolitan Police.

Finally, you asked about sharing correspondence publicly. I have no objection to you sharing my earlier email but would be grateful if you avoid publishing any operational detail that could enable evasive behaviour by those riding irresponsibly.

Thank you again for your advocacy for Tooting Common and its users. Officers will contact you regarding your feedback on signage and the level of reporting that can be shared; in the meantime, please continue to encourage members to report incidents directly so patrols can be targeted where they are most needed.

Best wishes,

Cllr. Paul White

Wandsworth Council Environment Cabinet Member

Tooting Bec Ward

From: PETER RAMELL
Sent: 01 January 2026 21:31
To: White, Paul (Cllr) <Cllr.P.White@wandsworth.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: RE: Tooting Common: dangerous cycling
Dear Paul

Thank you for your email of 14 December and for helpfully setting out the Council's position.

However, we have to say that the action that the Council have in hand, though helpful, is insufficient to meet the current, urgent and serious problem. Specifically:

- 'one-off' pieces of targeted enforcement action, while they are welcome and may help to some extent, will not solve the problem as a whole. The relatively occasional issue of fines to some speeding cyclists will not deter the majority of those who cycle dangerously, particularly on adapted bikes. Previous similar exercises have not solved the problem. As we indicated, there needs to be a substantial and permanent increase in the patrolling resources of the Parks Police.
- improved signage, while it might help to reduce the problem (and as noted we have made specific proposals to the Council, and look forward to receiving a response), will not deter the majority of those who cycle dangerously.
- as we indicated, the intended arrangements for geofencing of Forest and Lime bikes, though certainly welcome, will not affect the majority of those who cycle dangerously, particularly on adapted bikes.

(Incidentally, your fourth bullet point "Communication on council channels reminding people of the need to" appears to be incomplete.)

Your email also describes several pieces of consideration being given within the Council to possible further action on dangerous cycling. We do though need to ask what specifically are the timescales for completing these pieces of consideration, and for resulting action - particularly since the problem of dangerous cycling has been apparent for a considerable time. Specifically:

- we note that the Council are "escalating dangerous cycling in joint tasking meeting with community safety and Metropolitan Police colleagues". While this as such is welcome, we do need to ask more specifically when these meetings will consider dangerous cycling and what will be the results of escalating the issue; and when resulting action will actually take place?
- can you say more specifically what is the timescale for exploring "innovative strategies to achieve more effective enforcement across Council services and the Metropolitan police", and when these are likely to result in specific more effective enforcement?.

- we note that the Council will be exploring how to use physical measures to make sites safer. We do need to ask what are the timescales for completion of this exploratory work, and for the commencement then of the implementation of (appropriate) physical barriers on Tooting Common (if a substantial increase in enforcement resources is not possible)? We recognize the financial constraints on local authorities, and realise that a staged implementation might well be needed given the probably substantial capital costs, but it would be helpful to know of specific plans and timescales for the project you refer to. We fully agree, of course, on the need for physical barriers not to discriminate against individuals who may be unable to navigate them. We think it should be possible to find creative ways to achieve this, since presumably this issue also arises in most other greenspaces in London and throughout the country. As before, we recognize that physical barriers are certainly not ideal, but they are clearly strongly preferable to a serious accident.

Could we ask for an action plan for completion of these pieces of consideration, and for resulting action?

In summary, we would stress that the problem of dangerous cycling on Tooting Common by a minority of cyclists remains real, and urgent. While we would agree that completely eliminating irresponsible bike use is not feasible, we think that more can be done and we have to say that we think that, to date, the Council are not doing enough to address the issue.

On a separate but related point, we think it would be helpful, in the interests of transparency, to indicate what we intend on the handling of our and your emails:

- we will be putting this email on our website, as we have also put our email to you of 28 November.
- we will also be sending this reply to FOTC members, and also intend to send them your email of 14 December: we trust that you will be OK with that. We would also intend to put your email of 14 December on our website (along with our two emails). However, we recognize that you might prefer that we did not do this latter: if so, could you let us know (ahead of a substantive reply to this email), and we will not do so
- as you may know, there was a considerable amount of recent media interest about the Parks Police issuing speeding fines, and we had a number of enquiries from the media about our position. Since our email of 28 November was an initial approach to you as Cabinet Member for the Environment (although we had of course raised the issue with the Council on a number of previous occasions), we decided not to engage actively with the media on these enquiries. We referred them to our email on our website, but did not go beyond that
- however, for the future, if there is media interest in FOTC's views on this subject, we would intend to engage with them actively and explain our position (including as in our two emails).

Thank you again for your email.
Best wishes

Peter (chair, FOTC)

----- Original Message -----

From: Cllr.P.White@wandsworth.gov.uk

To: peter.ramell

Sent: Sunday, December 14th 2025, 19:47

Subject: RE: Tooting Common: dangerous cycling
Official

Dear Peter

Thank you for attending the enforcement action. I'm pleased to hear that you appreciated our approach. I also want to thank you for raising your concerns once more. Please be assured that we are fully aware of these issues and are implementing a comprehensive range of actions to address them.

However, it is important to acknowledge that completely eliminating irresponsible bike use is not feasible, regardless of our collective efforts. There will always be a small minority who may endanger themselves and others. This is an unfortunate reality, but it is necessary to be honest about it.

Therefore, we must continue to implement various measures to minimise such behaviour and ensure safety for all.

Alongside high profile enforcement, we are taking the following action:

- Ongoing routine patrols and enforcement during those patrols
- Refreshed and added new signage to remind all park users of the rules
- Collaboration with e-bike operators to limit speeds, ensuring the safety of both pedestrians and cyclists
- Communication on council channels reminding people of the need to
- Escalating dangerous cycling in joint tasking meeting with community safety and Metropolitan Police colleagues as an issue that requires attention through joint action

Enhanced enforcement

As you are aware from previous communications, this current initiative is part of a broader approach to addressing the issue. Besides high-visibility enforcement, the parks police already conduct cycling enforcement during their routine patrols. They continue to do so. This ensures continuous oversight rather than limiting it to high-visibility actions. This combination of routine patrols and high-profile enforcement

has proven effective, as demonstrated by the practices of the Metropolitan Police and other enforcement bodies.

We understand that a more permanent presence might be desired. However, like all local authorities, we face financial constraints. The ideal scenario of maintaining a constant or near-constant presence of enforcement officers in parks, open spaces and commons across the borough is, unfortunately, not feasible with our current resources. We are proud to be one of the few London local authorities to have a dedicated parks police service, working to make parks, open spaces, and commons welcoming and safe for everyone. We deploy our parks police officers based on intelligence and data and it is therefore important that incidents are reported directly to the parks police. [Details of reporting channels](#) can be found on our website.

With this in mind, we are exploring innovative strategies to achieve more effective enforcement across council services and the Metropolitan Police, beyond our parks police service. Officers in the parks service have attended cross-council meetings to inform this work, and cycling in parks, commons, and open spaces has been identified as an area requiring particular attention.

Physical barriers

We will explore how we can use physical measures to make sites safer for everyone. We are committed to ensuring that our safety measures align with LTN 1/20, which provides guidance on designing cycle infrastructure that is safe and accessible for all users. This includes considerations for cyclists of all abilities, pedestrians, and those with disabilities. Adhering to the requirements of the Equality Act, we must ensure that any physical barriers do not discriminate against individuals who may be unable to navigate barriers. Our [Walking and Cycling Strategy](#) further emphasises the importance of creating an inclusive environment that encourages active travel while maintaining safety for all users.

Given the numerous sites with entrances, implementing these measures will require substantial capital investment and cannot be achieved in the short term. Our approach is framed within the Wandsworth Walking and Cycling Strategy, which guides our efforts in delivering such improvements. Officers are working diligently to balance safety with accessibility, ensuring that any solutions we implement consider the diverse needs of our community.

Historically, installing barriers has not always taken these into account, and while they may be seen as a solution, we are taking a more reflective approach now. Implementing these measures requires capital investment, and given the numerous sites with entrances, it is not a short-term project.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Cllr. Paul White

From: PETER RAMELL

Sent: 28 November 2025 10:00

To: White, Paul (Cllr) <Cllr.P.White@wandsworth.gov.uk>

Subject: Tooting Common: dangerous cycling

Dear Paul

You will know from previous exchanges and discussions of Friends of Tooting Common's strong concern about the problem of dangerous cycling on Tooting Common, particularly on the shared pedestrian/ cycle path. We need to raise this again with you, in view of the continuing, and increasing, strong likelihood of a serious accident, and possibly a fatality.

As you know, the problem arises from the minority of cyclists, particularly some with electric bikes, travelling far too fast (clearly well beyond the speed limit of 12 mph) and so endangering pedestrians and other cyclists, particularly on what is a fairly narrow path, with some sections having limited sightlines. There is a particular problem with delivery riders on e-bikes or e-scooters. The problem has grown more acute in the last few years with the significant increase in people using the Common - itself of course a very good development - and in the increasing use of adapted e-bikes (which should not be on the Common in any case).

A further point is that these e-bikes are considerably heavier than other bikes, and so there is a considerably increased risk of injury, either to the rider or to other people, from a collision.

While there is a particular problem on the shared pedestrian/ cycle path, there is also a similar problem on a number of other paths on the Common where cycling also occurs, although not permitted.

We think there are two solutions - substantially improved enforcement, or physical barriers, or a combination of the two.

On enforcement, we welcome the plans for further targeted action by the Parks Police, and were pleased to attend the event on Wednesday morning. However we have to say that 'one-off' pieces of enforcement action such as this (and any accompanying publicity to them), while they may help to some extent, will not solve the problem as a whole; and we would note that previous similar exercises have not solved the problem. For enforcement to be effective, there would need to be police available on the Common, at key points, most or all of the time, to deal with speeding, and also with the point that adapted e-bikes, and e-scooters, should not be on the Common in any case. There is also the practical problem that the police may not be able to stop speeding cyclists, unless they also have some form of vehicle.

There would therefore need to be a substantial and permanent increase in the patrolling resources of the Parks Police. Currently their staffing numbers are clearly not adequate to deal with the problem overall.

Unless there can be this substantial increase in police enforcement resources we consider that some form of physical barriers or other effective constraints are needed to slow down excessively speeding bikes. We note that physical barriers are in place in two places on Wandsworth Common (as attached photos). Similar barriers have also, for example, been installed on the bridges in Beddington Park.

It would of course be important to ensure that such measures still allow for disabled access (and also access by maintenance vehicles where required) but we think it should be possible to find creative ways to achieve this. We assume that this problem also arises in most other greenspaces in London - and throughout the country - and we are sure that appropriate solutions will have been developed.

Improved signage could be of some help in reducing the problem (and we have made specific proposals to the Council and look forward to receiving a response), but will not deter the majority of those who cycle dangerously.

Similarly, the intended arrangements for geofencing of Forest and Lime bikes, though certainly welcome, will not help in deterring the majority of those who cycle dangerously, particularly on adapted bikes.

We stress that we are, of course, not anti-cycling. There are strong environmental and health reasons to encourage cycling, and many of our members are cyclists. Cyclists are an important and valued group of users of the Common; and among other things we are concerned that a cyclist could well be seriously injured in a collision with a speeding cyclist. Traffic calming measures do not deter considerate cyclists - on the contrary.

We recognize that physical barriers are certainly not ideal, but they are clearly strongly preferable to a serious accident.

We note that - rightly - the Council fells diseased trees on greenspaces close to pathways and buildings where there is a risk of the tree falling, though the risk of the falling tree actually causing an injury to someone when it falls is, perhaps, relatively low. The risk of a serious accident involving a dangerously speeding bike is, we think, much higher and so requires appropriate action.

We feel we have to warn the Council that, as above, the current position is a serious accident or fatality waiting to happen.

We would welcome your comments

I am copying this to colleagues on Tooting Common MAC and other greenspace Friends groups and MACs, Jack Mayorcas, and Stephen Biggs.

Best wishes

Peter (Ramell)
(Chair, Friends of Tooting Common)