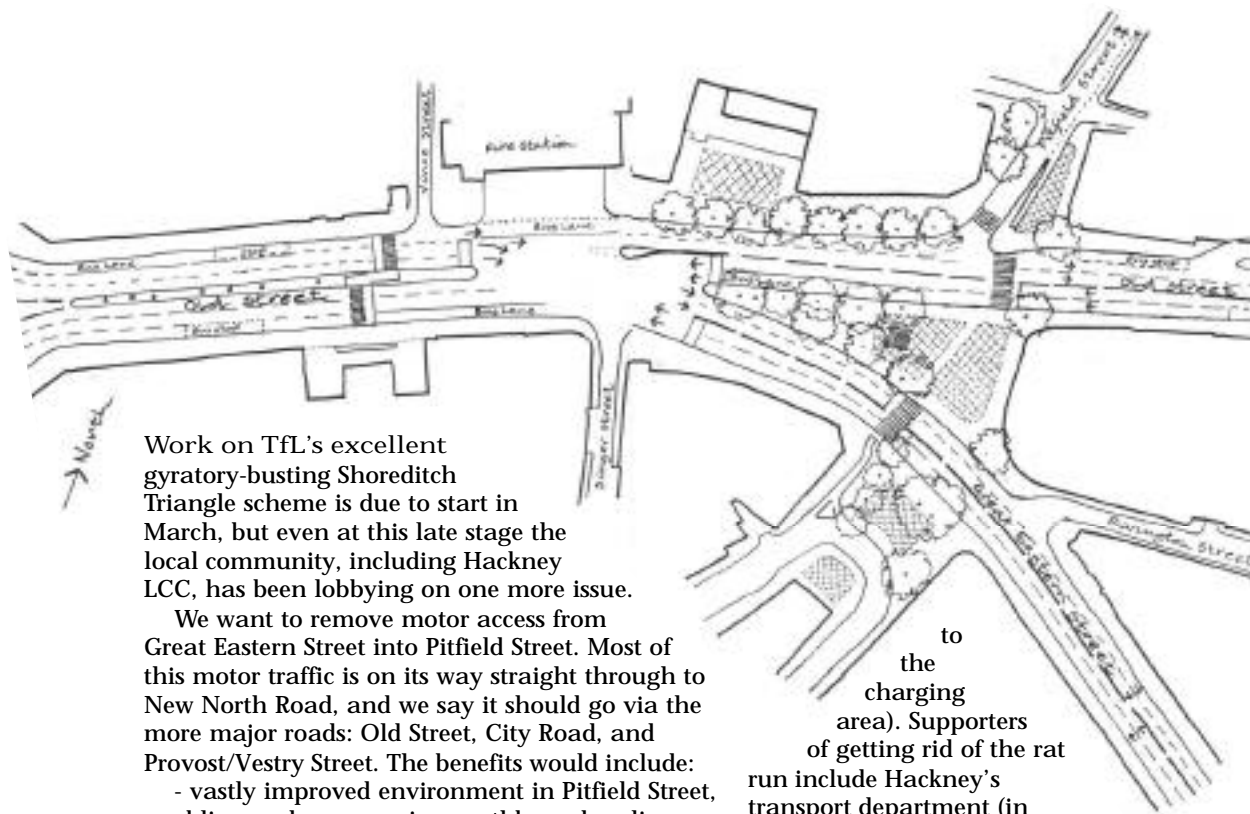


Plea to end City route rat run

City-Islington car and truck cut-through must go!



Work on TfL's excellent gyratory-busting Shoreditch Triangle scheme is due to start in March, but even at this late stage the local community, including Hackney LCC, has been lobbying on one more issue.

We want to remove motor access from Great Eastern Street into Pitfield Street. Most of this motor traffic is on its way straight through to New North Road, and we say it should go via the more major roads: Old Street, City Road, and Provost/Vestry Street. The benefits would include:

- vastly improved environment in Pitfield Street, enabling and encouraging southbound cycling
- simplified junction of Great Eastern Street and Old Street, with simplified routing of pedestrian crossings and more direct alignment of north-south London Cycle Network route between Pitfield Street and Tabernacle Square (the current plan takes it off desire line and across the footway)
- better civic space, leaving existing trees and siting of fountain, with an uninterrupted 'apex' forming an impressive gateway to the Triangle.

Pitfield Street has not always suffered its current rat run status. Residents remember through motor traffic being banned outside peak times even relatively recently, and of course it has not always been a one-way street, either.

TfL's engineers do concede that there is still time to change the plan. Keeping the rat run is a constraint imposed on them by the Congestion Charging Unit, which is resistant to reductions in vehicle capacity of the Inner Ring Road. (Great Eastern Street and Old Street form the boundary

to the charging area). Supporters of getting rid of the rat run include Hackney's transport department (in formal dialogue with TfL on the issue), Shoreditch Our Way (formerly Shoreditch New Deal), local councillors, chairs of tenants' associations in Pitfield Street, the local vicars, Shoreditch Town Hall Trust, Intelligent Space, Triangle Traders, South Shoreditch Residents Association, and of course Hackney LCC.

All see this as a valuable improvement to what is overall an excellent scheme. A well-attended meeting was held in mid-January with local GLA member Meg Hillier to brief her on the subject. She is seeking a meeting with TfL, and comments: "The danger is that Hackney loses again as Pitfield Street becomes a safety valve for extra congestion on the charging boundary."

Please write to: Derek Turner, Managing Director, TfL Street Management, Windsor House, 42-50 Victoria St, SW1H 0TL / derekturner@streetmanagement.org.uk politely but firmly asking him to remove this rat run. You might like to copy your correspondence to Ken Livingstone, Romney House, 43 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3PY / mayor@london.gov.uk



More than 500 people are members of the London Cycling Campaign in Hackney, and thousands more cycle in the borough every day.

Hackney LCC meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 8pm at the Pub on the Park, London Fields E8. Social from 7pm. Next meetings: Weds 6 February and Weds 6 March.

Join our email list today! Send a blank message to hackney-lcc@yahoo.com

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Robbery and harrassment incidents on the rise

Cycling is great for independent travel, and is usually an excellent way to avoid some of the more unpleasant confrontations of city living – that’s one of the reasons why so many people choose it over solo travel by public transport.

Sadly, though, there has recently been a spate of reports of robberies from and physical harrassment of people travelling by cycle in Camden, Islington and Hackney.

The robbers, often on powered two-wheelers, are usually after valuables in bags and panniers, as Claire Wilton confirmed to the Hackney LCC mailing list: “While cycling along the other night, I had my pannier wrenched from my bike by two guys on a motorbike (who almost knocked me off in the process).

“Fortunately they only got away with my smelly sports kit, but they wouldn’t have had anything at all if the pannier been

one of those with clips that fasten fully round the rack.”

Hackney LCC member Ben Webster, by no means an unimposing figure, had his rear pannier stolen at almost exactly the same spot: “I feel like an idiot for not heeding the recent warnings,” he admitted. “Two youths on a moped came up behind me as I had just exited an alley and was about to cross New North Road into Ecclesbourne Road at about 11.30pm. The plastic Altura pannier clips sheared off when one of the youths pulled hard on the bag and then jumped onto the moped driven by his mate.” When Ben reported the incident, Islington police told him they are getting 10-15 reports a day of attacks on cyclists.

Meanwhile Emma Krasinska reports that she has twice been assaulted going down Barnabas Street, near Homerton station. On the first occasion stones were thrown at her, hitting her arm and leaving her still in pain two months later; fortunately on the second occasion the missiles – glass bottles this time – narrowly missed. “I let the police know both times,” said Emma, “but as it’s rather minor until I go under a car or break something there’s not a lot they can do.”

Police have confirmed that they are responding to the robberies. PC Barry Leach of the Islington Community Contact Office said that police had recovered three stolen scooters which are suspected of having being used in the incidents against cyclists.

“Recently we ran an offensive against scooters,” he said, “resulting in the recovery of stolen scooters, reporting of riders for numerous traffic offences, information gained about who rides what [all these gangs of riders are linked] and a marked drop in the number of calls to police about scooter nuisance and offences committed. We intend to continue to run this offensive.”

Some police officers are apparently advising cyclists to avoid cycling on their own. Pleasant and reassuring as

it would be to have company on every journey, this is not really very practical advice for day-to-day life, and it probably also somewhat

overstates the risk of what is still the best travel choice for your health, happiness and personal safety.

It’s always a good idea to keep valuable or indispensable items on your person rather than in your panniers. But the best advice for safety after dark is the same as if you were walking: keep as much as possible to well-lit, busy streets where there are people around.

Back-street cycle routes can be relaxing and pleasant, especially during the day, but they also naturally have far less ‘passive surveillance’ (ie other people around on the street), giving opportunities for those with bad intentions to do their worst with nobody likely to see.

Counter-intuitive it may be, but in road safety terms cycling on main streets is generally as safe as using back streets, and you’re under much less risk of crime as you ride along.

We have invited Jan Jenkins of Hackney’s Community Safety Unit, which determines policing priorities, to our monthly meeting on 6 March. We want to raise the apparently increase in this type of incident, as well as dangerous driving and other vehicle-related crimes (see ‘War on all Car Crime’, *Cycling in Hackney News* Dec ‘01/Jan ‘02).

“Fortunately they only got away with my smelly sports kit”

Election fever!

A reminder: at our next meeting – Wednesday 6th February – we will be having our annual elections to Hackney LCC’s ‘executive’ positions.

If you have some time, energy and ideas, please do come and to put yourself forward to be borough co-ordinator, deputy co-ordinator, treasurer, membership secretary or communications co-ordinator – or feel free to suggest another role that you might be able to carry out on a regular basis this year.

Once again, that’s **Wednesday 6th February, 8pm, Pub on the Park, London Fields. See you there!**

City farm axe to hit workshop?

Hackney City Farm looks likely to lose its Council funding and close, leaving our weekly maintenance workshop homeless, reports workshop co-ordinator Ross Corben. We will be proud owners of tools and equipment, with nowhere to operate.

Pending confirmation of closure, the Thursday evening workshop sessions will be held on the following dates: 7, 14, 21 & 28 Feb, 14 & 28 Mar, and 11 & 25 April, starting at 6pm. “Come early if you have any major tasks to do,” says Ross.

Burns Night a roaring success again

Our sixth annual Burns Night event on 26 January was a wonderful evening, with over 150 people enjoying great food, drink, entertainment and dancing in excellent company. Many thanks to all who came along, and to all who volunteered their time and effort to make it happen – most especially to Sally Haywill, who co-ordinated the event.

We raised a record-breaking **£1500** for campaign funds.

Thanks to our sponsors

Many thanks to the businesses who donated prizes for our Burns Night raffle.

The first prize was a meal for two donated by **Little Georgia** of Broadway Market, described by The Independent as “great by any standards”. Little Georgia is open Tues-Sat 6.30pm-midnight, Sundays 1pm-4pm, tel: 020 7249 9070. (Proprietor Tony is keen for us to note that he makes his deliveries and pickups by bike trailer.)

London Fields Cycles of Mare Street (tel: 020 8525 0077), long-time LCC supporters, very generously gave a prize of a cycle computer. Thanks, Joe and co!