

# WINCHESTER CYCLIST COUNT: SUMMER 2025

carried out by Cycle Winchester.

## KEY FACTS

- *Cycle Winchester counted cyclists at 10 locations around the city between 08:00 and 09:00, in effect on a single, summer weekday morning - replicating similar counts each summer from 2022.*
- *A total of 300 cycle movements were counted, compared to 301 in the summer of 2022.*
- *Where possible (and relevant) estimates of car movements were also made.*  
*On average cycle movements represented just over 3% of the combined journeys and in the worst case (Upper Romsey Road) less than 1%.*
- *Overall results have been remarkably static over the four years, with a slight uplift in 2024 which was reversed this year.*

## INTRODUCTION

In 2022 and 2023 cycle counts were carried out both in winter and summer and for two hours from 8am to 10am. The increase in numbers from winter to summer and the decrease from pre-9am to post-9am was almost identical each year so it was decided that going forward a one-hour summer count was sufficient to show trends.

The only significant change to the cycling infrastructure in and around Winchester in the last twelve months is the new crossing on Worthy Road.

As a side note, Cycle Winchester was somewhat surprised when we talked to West Berkshire Spokes and learnt that they are *paid* by West Berkshire Council to carry out similar counts to our own. It seems that a different culture exists just to the north.

## METHODOLOGY

The ten counts were spread out over a fortnight in late June / early July and were carried out on mornings that were forecast to be generally dry.

The count locations are listed in the table below.

1	Worthy Road (Stoke Rd / Dyson Drive)	6	City Bridge (NCN 23)
2	Andover Road (Bereweke Road)	7	Kingsgate Street (College Street)
3	Stockbridge Road (Western Road / St Paul's Hill)	8	St Cross Road (Canon Street / St James Lane)
4	North Walls (Park Avenue / Middle Brook Street)	9	Upper Romsey Road (Battery Hill)
5	Lower Romsey Road (Clifton Terrace)	10	NCN 23 (5 Bridges Road)

**Table 1: Cycle count locations**

At each sampling point, up to twelve separate route options through a junction were recorded.

Previously this had been limited to five but it has been helpful when consulting on new cycle infrastructure, eg the crossing at Romsey Road, to have better resolution in the data to support our arguments about the routes that cyclists actually follow. It is a useful supplement to, for example, data from Strava Metro, which is far denser, but only represents cyclists who use the Strava app.

Supplementary observations were recorded where relevant.

Where possible (and relevant) motor-vehicle movements were estimated during the same period, typically by recording three, five-minute segments through the hour.

## RESULTS

The *total number of cycle movements* over the ten locations between 8am and 9am was 300.

Results for the equivalent period over preceding years are shown below.

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Cycle Movements	301	300	314	300

**Table 2: Total cycle movements at ten locations between 8am and 9am on a midweek summer's day**

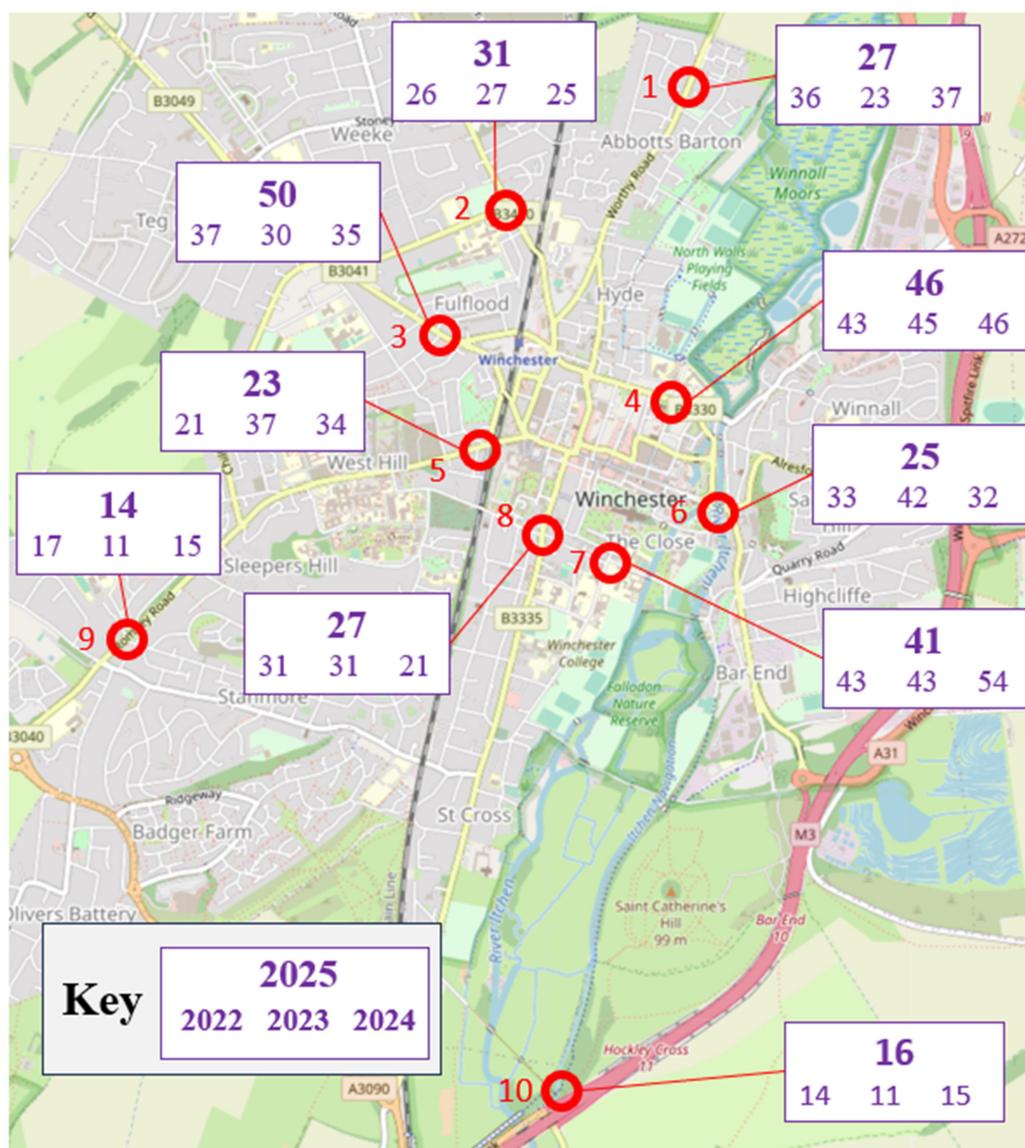
A small rise in 2024 gave some indication that there might be the beginning of an upward trend in journeys made by bicycle, but the latest results don't support this.

The data suggests that, over the last three years, there has been no increase in the number of people cycling around our city.

Annual counts at individual locations can be seen in the map below.

Half the sites reflect the same (static) picture as seen overall.

Other sites show local variations, which - as seen above - balance each other out.



**Map 1: Cycle movements per hour at ten locations over four consecutive years**

## DISCUSSION

### Locations with consistent levels of cycling

**North Walls** is the clearest example of consistency with almost identical, high numbers over all four years. What is also consistent about North Walls is the number of cyclists recorded who use the pavement to travel west *against the traffic*. With new thinking around the old police station site, Cycle Winchester has renewed its push for cycle access through to Park Avenue.

North Walls is often quoted as one of the blackest spots for cycling in the city so it's worth noting that although the numbers here are high only about 40% of the cycle movements are heading east on the one-way system.

**Upper Romsey Road**, by contrast, has *consistently low* numbers of cyclists. One only has to stand and watch here for an hour to understand why. There is little to encourage someone to venture out on a bicycle. For the last two years there has been approximately 1900 car movements in a single hour ie a car passing *every two seconds*. The traffic lights here are also very unhelpfully sequenced for cyclists wishing to push their bike across the road.

**St Cross Road** is a third location with reasonably stable numbers over the four years, at a level midway between the highs of North Walls and the lows of Upper Romsey Road. There are the usual behaviours seen here, as elsewhere, such as cycling on pavements, difficulty crossing traffic (~800 movements per hour) and unwelcome dismounts. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DLkgZo4NjO/> is useful viewing to give a picture behind the numbers here. The clip of two young children being shepherded along the pavement whilst pushing their bikes speaks for itself.

**Kingsgate Street** has a consistently high level of bike movements, although this year dropping back from a peak of fifty-four, the highest hourly rate yet to be recorded at any location.

Kingsgate Street benefits from the low traffic levels and is the clearest indication of how transformational that simple factor can be. However, even here the experience is not what it might be for cyclists. There is serious congestion around school drop-off time. This year in the single recording hour there was: one near miss with a taxi; several minutes when Kingsgate Street was completely blocked by a truck and cyclists had to divert up Canon Street; additional time when Kingsgate arch was blocked by cars and cyclists had to dismount and push their bikes through the arch.

**NCN23** has consistently low numbers using it. It is a cycling route that just stops. The options for continuing southwards to Twyford or to Otterbourne are very unpleasant - while cyclists are obliged to use the B3335 and until the NCN23 route is upgraded beyond South Winchester Park and Ride. And although this section is a wide, well-surfaced section of cycling infrastructure, it is a shared use path where pedestrians and dogwalkers are not usually very accommodating of cyclists.

### Locations with notable drop-offs in numbers ...

**City Bridge** is another location with a very large number of cars movements - around a thousand per hour – especially considering how narrow this section of road is. In the previous count it was noted that nearly half of all riders whose journey crossed the bridge, elected to get off and push. No wonder perhaps that the number of cyclists has gone down.

**Lower Romsey Road** is the site of an experimental new crossing which was already in place during the previous count. It's somewhat surprising to see numbers fall at a junction where specific improvements have been made with the aim of making cycling safer and more attractive. However, the design leaves a lot to be desired from a cycling point of view, as Cycle Winchester has continually pointed out. Last year a cyclist was seen to fall off their bike during the one-hour count period whilst trying to navigate the junction. This year only two riders used the segregated cycle lane ... although one of them went along it in the wrong direction which could have had serious consequences.

### Locations with notable increases in numbers.

Increases related to an average of the previous three years shows **Andover Road** movements up by nearly 20% and **Stockbridge Road** up by nearly 50%. There is no obvious explanation in either case. At Stockbridge Road there was a noticeable number of young cyclists going to school, some of them unaccompanied. They generally used pavements and unorthodox manoeuvres to minimise contact with traffic. A significant number of cyclists weren't wearing helmets, including some of the school children. There were one or two extremely stylishly dressed men and women who subverted the usual notion of what to wear when riding a bike. For brief moments during the recording hour, cycling seemed the most natural, enjoyable way to get around, not a matter of survival in a hostile environment. These isolated moments could truly be the norm with proper investment in cycling infrastructure and quieter roads.

### Locations with no clear pattern to the data...

Data at **Worthy Road** shows no obvious trend. The numbers are up and down.

Worthy Road is a popular route for leisure cyclists heading out of town. There wasn't a single cycle movement recorded this year from that direction. Perhaps leisure cyclists are less regular in their habits than commuters.

As noted in the introduction Worthy Road is the location of the only new cycling infrastructure in the city since the last cycling count. Optimistically one might have hoped to see an increase in people cycling through this location this year, not a decrease. On the other hand, the majority of the fall in numbers relates to journeys *along* Worthy Road rather than *across* it.

## CONCLUSION

Our cyclist count indicates that *there has been no increase in the number of people cycling in our city over the last three years.*

The conclusion is based on limited data. But Cycle Winchester believes it tells us enough to be worried. If there are better data and a more positive picture painted, we would be glad to see it.

This is a serious matter for anyone concerned about high levels of pollution, concerned about severely congested streets, concerned about the physical and mental well-being of those who live and work here and not least concerned about how attractive Winchester is as a city. It should be of particular concern to local authorities, aiming to increase the levels of active travel.

It is good to see a new cycle crossing on Worthy Road. The lack of an immediate increase in cycle movements there shouldn't be an argument against spending money on such infrastructure - people's travel habits take time to evolve.

But the infrastructure needs to form part of a coherent whole and people need to know about it. To that end Cycle Winchester is currently working with local councillors to launch what we are calling the *Barton Line*, a cycle friendly route into town from Barton Farm, via the new crossing. The aim is to increase awareness and hence use of the route. But as important, the parallel aim is to leverage crucial improvements at key points, so that the crossing forms part of a complete, safe and attractive route into the city for cyclists.

Although this report tells a story, anecdotally there do seem to be increasing numbers of very young cyclists out and about, mainly on pavements, learning to ride on routes and at times that wouldn't be captured by our survey. Cycle Winchester itself has played a large part in pushing the growth of school bikes buses, most of which run on a Friday, and similarly wouldn't be recorded.

So, there is some cause for hope. But the conditions need to be made right so that as they gain in confidence these new riders can take their rightful place on the road. Aside from specific provision for cyclists, steps to reduce the speed and quantity of motor vehicles on our streets should be a very high priority.

## AFTERWORD

Are the results in Winchester typical?

It's difficult to make easy comparisons. There is not a lot of accessible, up-to-date and like-for-like data. The recent covid lockdown is a complicating factor. And any location has its own unique characteristics. That said it is worth looking at a few success stories.

In the UK, London is at the forefront of investing in active travel. The last six years has seen what amounts to a *5% rise every year* in the number of cycle trips.

The table below shows what a 5% annual rise would look like for Winchester.

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025
Actual Cycle Movements	301	300	314	300
<i>Cycle Movements with 5% increase p.a.</i>	301	316	332	348

**Table 3: Comparison of actual cycle count against theoretical annual increase of 5%**

In Leeds District, monthly totals from 28 locations around the district showed an overall increase of 23% cycle trips from June 24 to June 25. It's probably no coincidence that over 20 of those locations are listed as a cycle-superhighway, cycle-lane, cycle-path or cycle-route ie places where cyclists feel welcome and safe.

A recent Cycling Scotland report reveals in their words “the continuing impact of new infrastructure to support everyday cycling”. Highlights include a recent rush-hour period in Glasgow when on one route *more journeys were cycled than driven* and in Edinburgh a protected cycle lane route showed an increase in bike journeys of 90% since last year.

In Manchester the Oxford Road cycling corridor has increased usage every year since counts began in 2016 (covid years excepted) and in the year 2024 had recorded a million cycle trips by September.

Cambridge is a city more comparable in size and nature to Winchester. Records show that in the ten years from 2001 cycle journeys grew by the equivalent of over 3% annually and for the next six years by the equivalent of over 4% annually.

Closer to home, West Berkshire Spokes carries out counts of passing cyclists at seventeen locations in Newbury, Thatcham, Tilehurst, Purley, Theale and Hungerford on behalf of West Berkshire Council. Their latest report shows an average annual increase in total cycle trips of 5% between 2021 and 2024.

For all the good news stories there will be many more cases where cycling numbers are not going up. It isn't easy to know what differentiates success and failure and individual situations are nuanced. It isn't just about money. Many schemes around Winchester have had ATF funding but reasons for not proceeding almost always trump the imperative to see them through.

The difference seems to be between authorities that say “this is what we'd like to do” and those who say “this is what we're going to do”.

In simple terms: **where there's a will, there's a (cycle)way**.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2024/november/new-tfl-data-shows-cycling-journeys-in-london-are-up-by-26-per-cent-compared-to-2019-levels>

<https://datamillnorth.org/dataset/leeds-annual-cycle-growth-e1dmk>

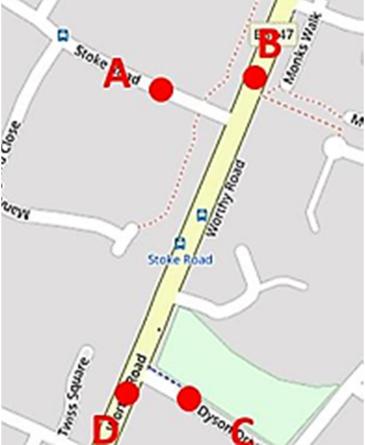
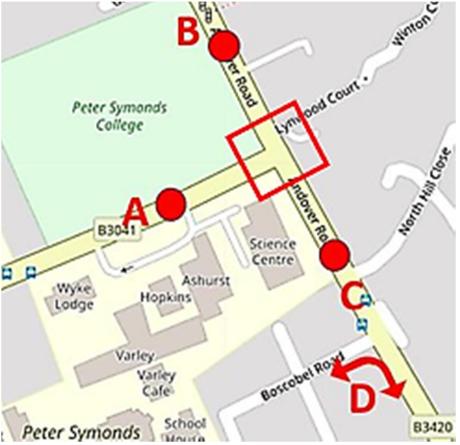
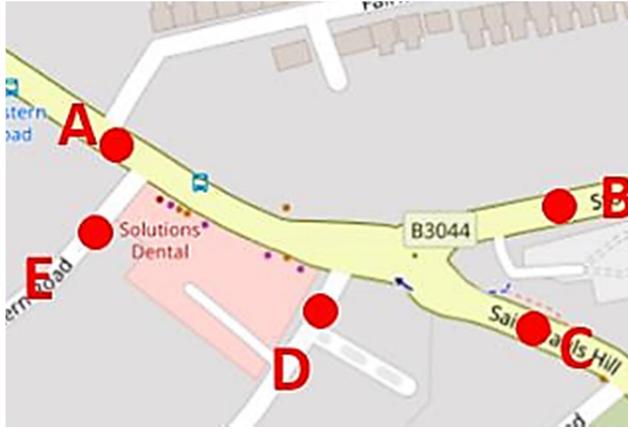
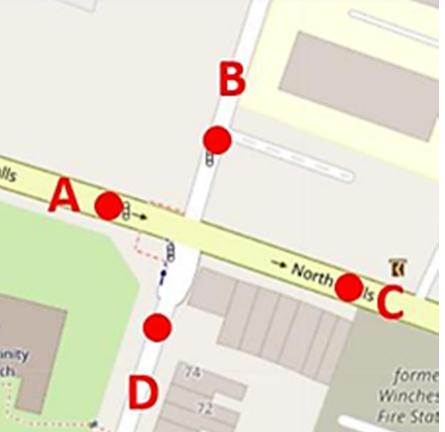
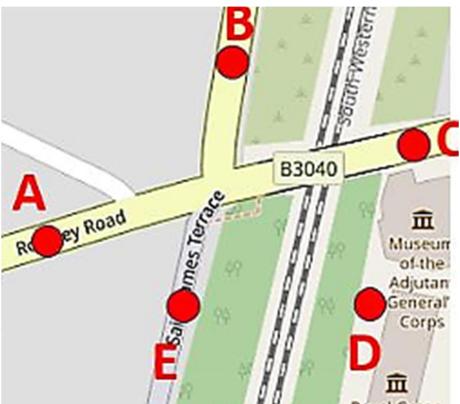
<https://cycling.scot/news/may-2025-traffic-surveys-show-continued-growth-in-cycling-in-scotland>

<https://oxfordroadcorridor.com/a-record-breaking-million-bike-rides-on-oxford-road/>

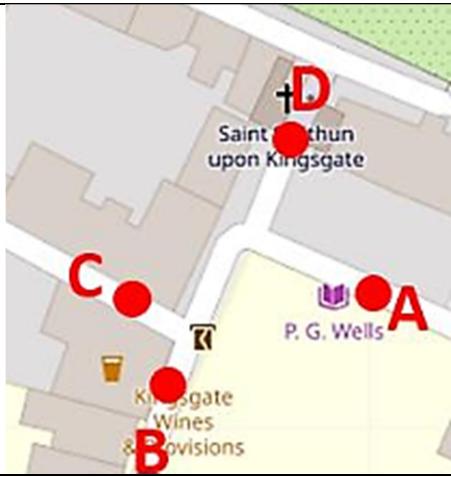
<https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/roads-transport-and-active-travel/transport-data-insights/annual-traffic-monitoring-reports/>

<https://www.westberkshirespokes.org/spokes-cycle-counts/>

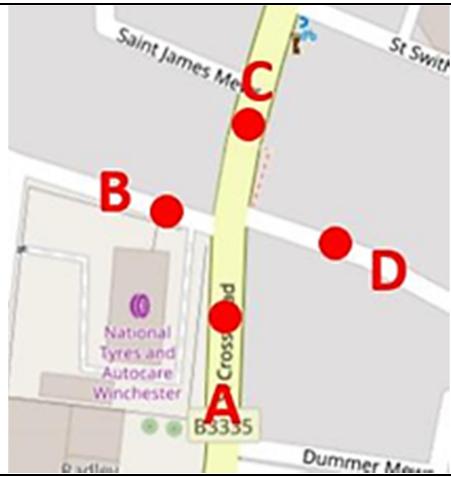
## APPENDIX

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7 Kingsgate Street



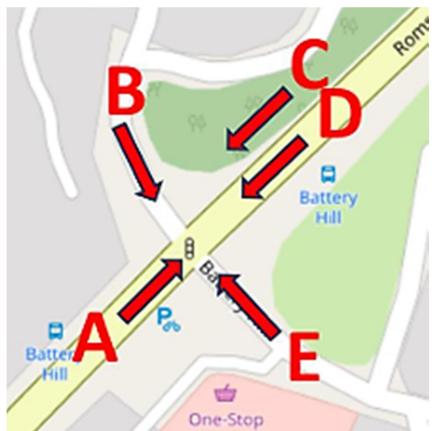
8 St Cross Road



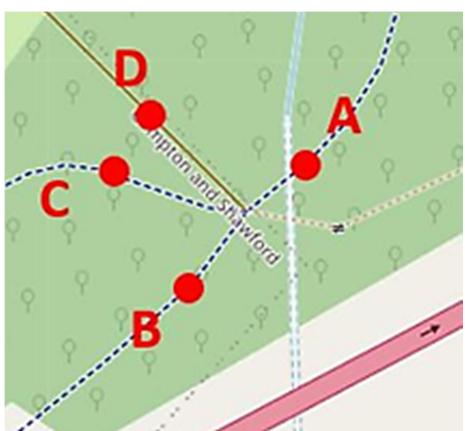
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9 Upper Romsey Road



10 NCN 23 (5 Bridges Rd)



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3	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0		

from A			from B			from C			from D			
Exit B	Exit C	Exit D	Exit A	Exit C	Exit D	Exit A	Exit B	Exit D	Exit A	Exit B	Exit C	
4	1	0	8	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	