

# WINCHESTER CYCLIST COUNT: SUMMER 2026

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 counts each summer from 2022.
- A total of 358 cycle movements were recorded, compared to 300 the previous year.
- Unprecedentedly, two locations recorded more than one cycle-movement-a-minute.
- A bike training group at one location explains part of the rise but the change is still significant - the first real increase in cycle movements over a four-year period of counting.
- Where possible estimates of car movements were made.  
On average cycle movements represented around 3.4 % of the combined journeys with the worst cases being: City Bridge 1.8%, Andover Road 1.7% and Upper Romsey Road 1%.

## INTRODUCTION

Summer cycle counts during a single rush hour were carried out at ten locations.

This has been repeated each summer from 2022 onwards.

For the first two years the counts extended beyond rush-hour and were also duplicated in winter, but consistent patterns emerged that suggested a one-hour summer count was sufficient to show trends.

There have been no significant changes to the cycling infrastructure in Winchester in the last twelve months although work at M3 Junction 9 has been underway affecting traffic in the city.

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

**Table 1: Cycle count locations**

At each sampling point, up to twelve separate routes through a junction were recorded along with supplementary observations where relevant.

Knowing the number of people getting about on bikes is valuable. But it is just as important to understand the actual routes that cyclists follow - that can include notes of sections where many feel compelled to use pavements, dismount unnecessarily or go the wrong way up a street.

At some locations motorised traffic movements were estimated during the same period, typically by recording three, five-minute segments through the hour.

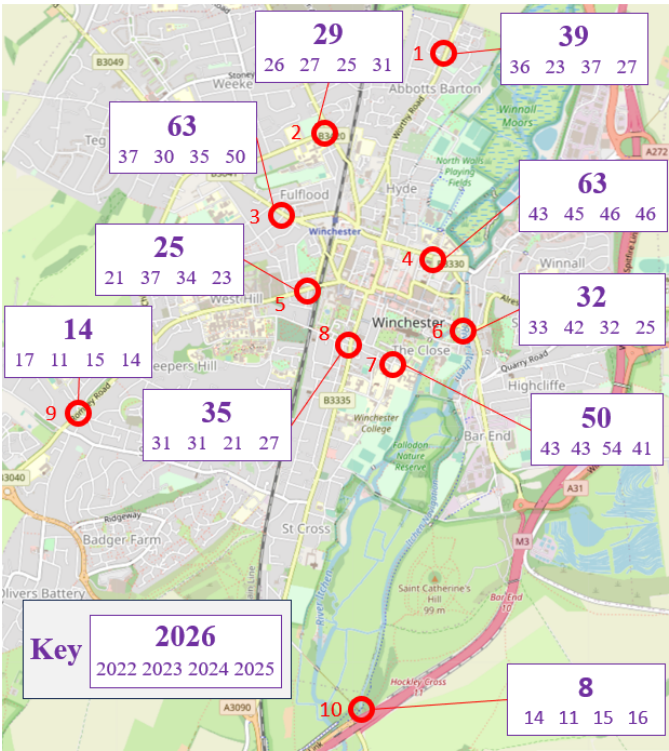
RESULTS

There were 358 *cycle movements in total* over the ten locations between 8am and 9am. Results for the equivalent period for preceding years are shown below.

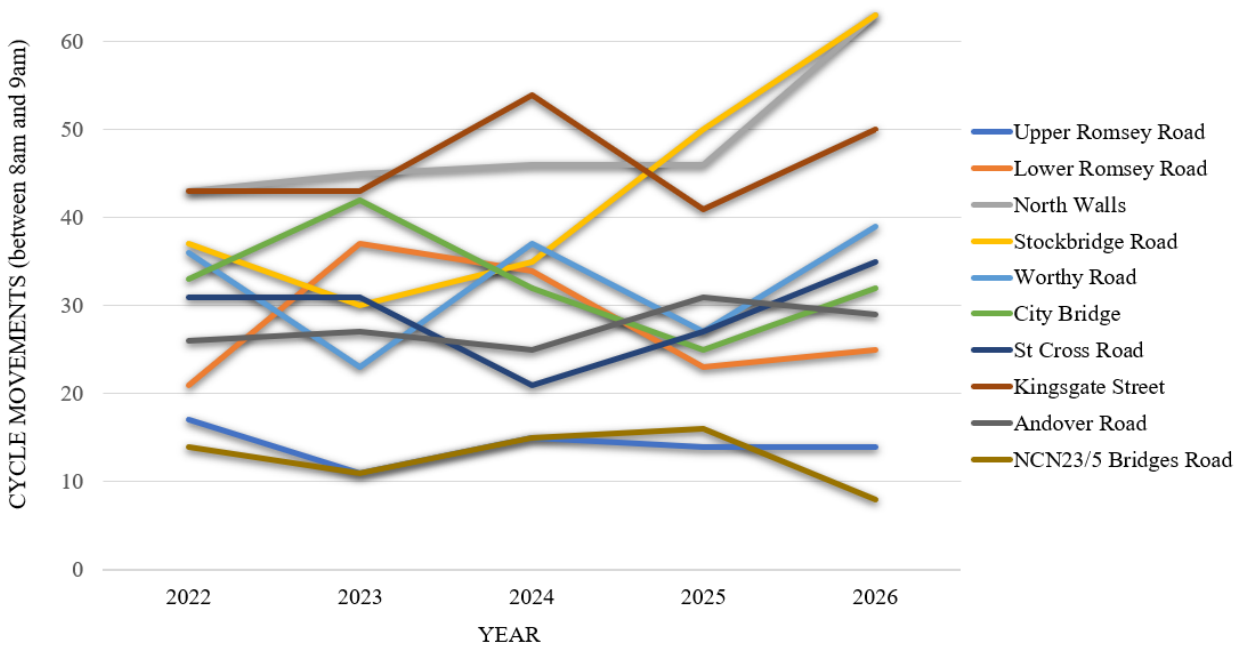
| Year                  | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Total Cycle Movements | 301  | 300  | 314  | 300  | 358  |

Table 2: Total cycle movements between 8am and 9am on a midweek summer’s day

There is an increase in cycle movements of 19% compared to last year (and 18% compared to the average of the last four years). Annual counts at individual locations can be seen in the map below.



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



Graph 1: Cycle movements per hour at ten locations over five consecutive years

## DISCUSSION

Prior to this year's count Cycle Winchester had a sense that there were more cyclists on the streets and various anecdotes seemed to support that. It's good to see that borne out in the results.

Although it is encouraging to see the numbers of cyclists rise, the first five sites discussed here are not part of that overall pattern.

### **Andover Road** (Berewecke Road)

was very slightly down on last year but in line with the average count there over five years: essentially no change. The numbers are very consistent *but low for a major entry road into the city which has been identified as a primary route within the LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan)*. Cycle Winchester has seen various proposals to improve parts of this route but they could be summarised as 'cosmetic' in the sense of being easy-wins that avoid tackling the main problem of an unpleasant, steep incline by Park Road with very high traffic flow. At our count site we estimated 1660 car movements in one-hour. In that period 4 large tractors with trailers were observed heading into the city along with 16 HGVs and 16 buses. A passing pedestrian registered their concern at the presence of so many heavy vehicles. On four occasions into-city traffic (mainly single occupancy cars) backed up all the way to the junction.

### **NCN23** (5 Bridges Road)

has always been at a consistently low level and this year saw even that low number reduced by almost a half. Ironically this junction lies on the National Cycle Network and provides one of the few sections of surfaced car-free cycling around the city. One issue for cyclists is the lack of onward safe cycling when reaching Hockley lights or Winchester South Park and Ride. There is a clear need to complete the NCN23 (or an equivalent route) southwards and to heed the calls of Twyford and Colden Common residents for a safe cycling route into the city, demand being regularly demonstrated by a secondary school and commuter bike bus. A second issue is that cyclists share this route with pedestrians and the relationship between the two user groups is not always an easy one. Each group tends to view the other as a nuisance and being in the minority means many cyclists don't see this as an attractive route. Cycle Winchester recently carried out a review of NCN23 from City Bridge to the Viaduct and will be putting forward proposals that it believes can improve the situation.

### **City Bridge** (NCN 23)

is another location with a very large number of car movements – nearly 1400 per hour – especially considering how narrow this section of road is.

Numbers were up from last year but only recovering back to the previous four-year average. Nearly 30% of all cycle movements here were observed to use the pavement, most of those electing to dismount. This has been a constant feature of every count here, cyclists cowed into defensive behaviour.

It is worth recalling a couple of sentences from our first ever report in the winter of 2022.

*“a cyclist emerged from the Viaduct Route, struggled to cross the road and pushed his bike along the pavement towards Water Lane. Unprompted and with no visible sign that our recorder was a cyclist the man shouted out a couple of times across the road, “it’s lethal, it’s lethal!” Crossing to talk to him it turned out he was returning home from an early shift. Going to work at 5am was fine. But every day when he thought about his journey home, he dreaded crossing City Bridge. It is incredibly busy and often drivers accelerated towards him to stop him getting across. He didn’t dare cycle the few yards to Water Lane on the road”.*

This year, a cyclist at another location stopped to share similar sentiments about City Bridge, which means he now takes a different, longer route around town. There is a pressing need to address the problems for cyclists and pedestrians at this gateway into the city.

City Bridge sounds rather grand: how dismal, dispiriting and dangerous is the reality. A bus-gate or similar radical solution can't come quick enough for cyclists.

### **Lower Romsey Road (Clifton Terrace)**

continues to be the site of an experimental new crossing. Although numbers were slightly up from last year, they are noticeably lower than have been seen previously - before the crossing was in place. We have had many conversations with the council and are hopeful that they will take on board our suggestions to address the short-comings of the current arrangement. It would be a tragedy if a new piece of active travel infrastructure ended up discouraging cycling.

### **Upper Romsey Road (Battery Hill)**

has had consistently very low numbers of cyclists which was replicated again this year. On average one has to wait four minutes to see a single cyclist. This is a damning statistic in itself but particularly when the recording location is directly outside the largest secondary school in Winchester. In the four minutes waiting to see a single cyclist, over 100 vehicles will have driven past on Romsey Road, not counting those on Battery Hill.

There are many issues to solve here not least reducing traffic and traffic speed overall and simple measures like changing the phasing of lights to prioritise pedestrians and dismounted cyclists. Cycle Winchester is aware of an initiative to start running a bike bus from Stanmore to Kings School and wishes it every success. It is hoped that the school will do all it can to support such ventures and seek ways to reduce car drop-offs to an absolute necessary minimum.

The remaining five locations showed more positive indications of being part of the overall rise in the number of cyclists. The table below shows both the increase from last year but also the increase in relation to the average of the previous four years which together give a better overall picture of what is going on.

| LOCATION         | % increase<br>(from 2025) | % increase<br>(from 2022-25 average) |
|------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Kingsgate Street | 22                        | 10                                   |
| St Cross Road    | 30                        | 27                                   |
| Worthy Road      | 44                        | 27                                   |
| Stockbridge Road | 26                        | 66                                   |
| North Walls      | 37                        | 40                                   |

***Table 3: Percentage increase in cycle movements at five selected locations***

### **Kingsgate Street (College Street)**

has a consistently high level of bike movements. This year it was close to its record of 54 movements per hour which previously was the highest hourly rate to be recorded anywhere. This location is on a no-through road. Even so, about 120 car movements were recorded between 8am and 9am and an estimated 90% of them in the first half of the period were school drop-offs. In general, this is a pleasant place to cycle but not the experience it could be due to the traffic levels which although relatively low are incompatible with narrow streets and restricted views.

### **St Cross Road (Canon Street / St James Lane)**

recorded its highest level of cycling since counting began. The increase is not quite as positive as the percentages above might suggest as the last two years saw a bit of a dip. This year indicates a recovery that has exceeded the first two years counts by 10%.

Once again the log here, notes instances of cyclists choosing to dismount and use the pedestrian crossings and repeated instances of pavement cycling when heading into the city.

### **Worthy Road** (Stoke Rd / Dyson Drive)

is a location of particular interest, lying as it does on the Barton Line, see

<https://cyclewinchester.org.uk/updates/all-aboard-the-barton-line/>.

It is also the site of a relatively new parallel crossing.

With the new crossing recently completed, it was surprising to see cycle movements last year were significantly down on some previous counts. This year however saw a record number, perhaps a sign that habits take time to change and benefits from new infrastructure take time to materialise.

And numbers don't tell the whole story. It is not easy to convey the contrast of observing the previous struggles of cyclists (and pedestrians) to brave Worthy Road traffic on the way to school with the sight this year of a mother and two young children all on bikes quietly and confidently assuming their right to cross.

### **Stockbridge Road** (Western Road / St Paul's Hill)

continues to see numbers growing. Last year's count was up 50% on the previous average. This year saw a new record, equating to more than one cycle movement per minute.

Some caution needs to be exercised as the count included three groups of cyclists that looked as if they were part of a *Bikeability* training session or similar: and it was unclear if they were different groups or the same cyclists on a circuit. Of course, they are all cycle movements and if it was young cyclists being trained then that's something to be celebrated.

Cyclists speeding down Stockbridge Road towards the city for the most part don't appear to have a care in the world: but those coming out of town often choose to use pavements or push their bikes for sections and look like second class citizens. Two cyclists rode the wrong way up Western Road. This is a very common occurrence: Cycle Winchester used the recent Fulflood Liveable Neighbourhood consultation to call for this to be made a legal route.

### **North Walls** (Park Avenue / Middle Brook Street)

achieved jointly with Stockbridge Road the highest hourly rate ever recorded.

It is the clearest example of a positive change because for the last four years numbers have been incredibly consistent, hardly differing from an average of 45.

This year the number jumped straight to 63.

It is ironic that if asked to name the worst place to cycle in Winchester, North Walls would probably come top of the list. So it's worth noting that roughly two-thirds of the cyclists here were *crossing* North Walls, on the final section of the Barton Line. And *all of the increase* in numbers was due to cyclists on this route. They would have enjoyed newly granted permission to cycle on the car-free section of Middle Brook Street as far as Silver Street and perhaps anticipated improvements for cyclists crossing Friarsgate to reach that section.

One or two cyclists are seen working their way up the narrow pavement against the one-way traffic highlighting the importance of the Winchester School of Art site providing the only feasible long-term solution to this issue, see <https://cyclewinchester.org.uk/updates/fighting-for-a-cycleway-through-winchester-school-of-art/>.

## CONCLUSION

Any conclusion must be read in the context of a small snapshot survey, but patterns in the data over five years give some confidence in its reliability and relevance - that it reflects to a reasonable degree what is happening on the ground.

An increase in cycle movements of 19% is something to celebrate.

However, half of that increase is down to just two locations, one of those having particular circumstances on the day. Ignore those results and it is a far more sober celebration.

What might account for any increase in cycling?

- Cycle Winchester would like to take a small share of credit, believing the Mass Ride plays a part in encouraging people to get on their bike and feel they are not alone on the streets.
- all the enthusiastic people running bike buses are helping create a buzz around cycling in their local communities.
- although immensely frustrated by the lack of progress in making our streets safer and more appealing to cyclists we want to acknowledge the positive changes that the councils *have* brought about in recent times: advanced stop lights on City Road; the Worthy Road cycle crossing; the upgraded crossing of Friarsgate; and the traffic order to allow cycling on Middle Brook Street. These are helpful rather than transformative, but they do send a positive message to cyclists that they are 'seen' and give hope that further change is on the way!

Beyond this there is a feeling – based on anecdotal evidence - that more young families and teenagers are simply deciding for whatever reason - economic, environmental, lifestyle - to get about by bike. This has been particular evident over the summer holidays, after our cycle count was completed.

Behind each number in our data is an individual cyclist and their experience on the road.

From observing on the ground our guess would be that for many of them their travel past the recording point wasn't the most pleasant of experiences, not one they would enthuse about to a friend or family member contemplating riding a bike. To borrow a sentiment from a previous report, many cyclists choose to ride in spite of everything that militates against it being a pleasant, safe, easy and obvious choice.

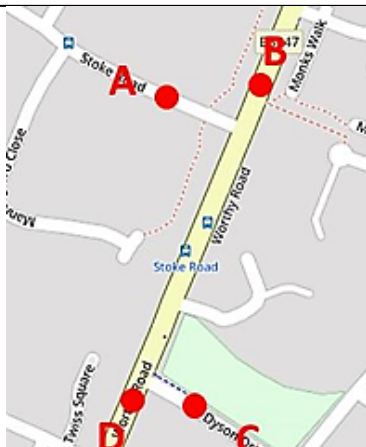
Cycle Winchester's overall conclusion is:

There are more cyclists on our streets this year than at any time in the last five years and signs that this growth could well continue.

Councils need to act now to make our streets safer – though more cycling infrastructure, less traffic and reduced speed limits - in order to maximise the potential uptake of cycling and ensure that as new (and younger) riders come onto the roads their experience is a positive one which ensures they keep cycling and which encourages others to follow suit.

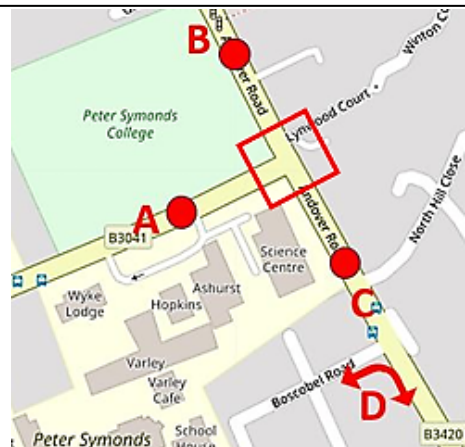
## APPENDIX: RESULTS FOR INDIVIDUAL ROUTES AT EACH LOCATION

1 Worthy Road



| 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 |
| 2      | 8      | 3      | 4      | 4      | 3      | 7      | 0      | 1      | 2      | 5      | 0      |

2 Andover Road



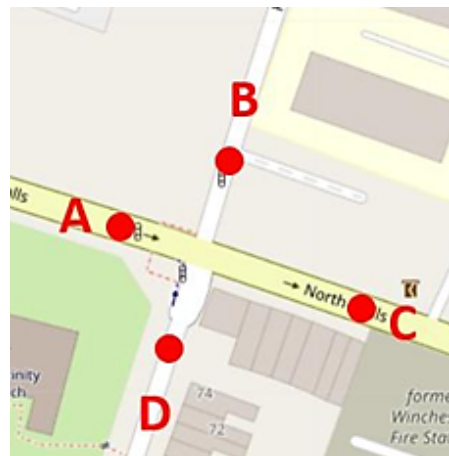
| from A |        | from B |        | from C |        | from D            |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------------|
| Exit B | Exit C | Exit A | Exit C | Exit A | Exit B | Journeys as arrow |
| 1      | 7      | 3      | 11     | 0      | 5      | 2                 |

3 Stockbridge Road



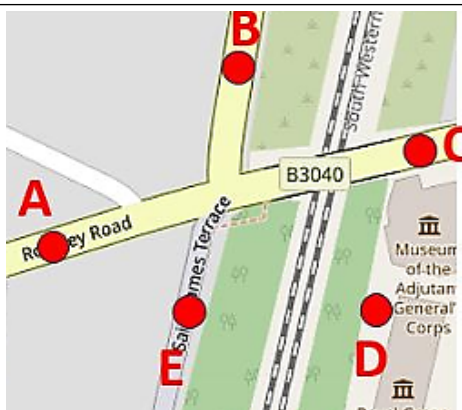
| from A |        |          | from B |        |          | from C     |            |          | from D   |        |            | from E |            |            |
|--------|--------|----------|--------|--------|----------|------------|------------|----------|----------|--------|------------|--------|------------|------------|
| Exit B | Exit C | Exit D/E | Exit C | Exit D | Exit A/E | Exit A/D/E | Exit B/Stn | Exit A/E | Exit B/C | Exit A | Exit B/C/D | Exit A | Exit B/C/D | Exit B/C/D |
| 9      | 4      | 1        | 1      | 2      | 2        | 34         | 4          | 0        | 3        | 0      | 3          | 0      | 3          | 3          |

4 North Walls



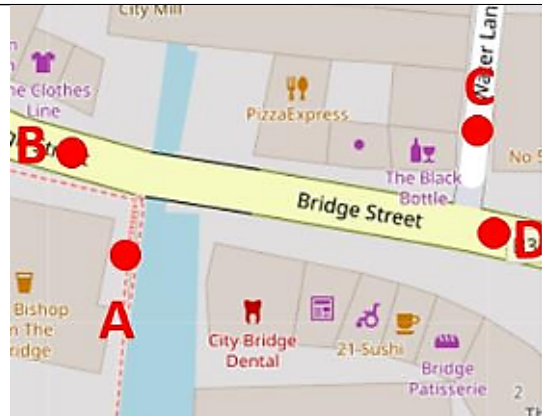
| from A |        |        | from B |        |        | from C |        |        | from D |        |        |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Exit B | Exit C | Exit D | Exit A | Exit C | Exit D | Exit A | Exit B | Exit D | Exit A | Exit B | Exit C |
| 0      | 14     | 5      | 0      | 16     | 14     | 1      | 1      | 0      | 1      | 11     | 0      |

5 Lower Romsey Road



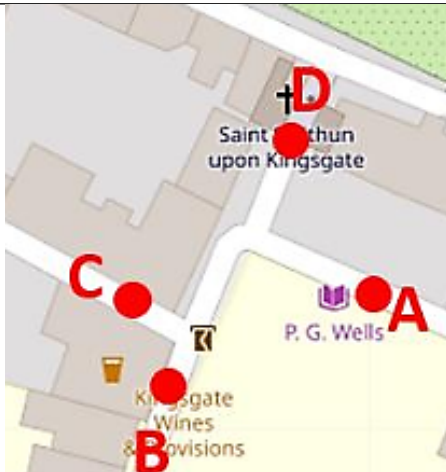
| from A |            |        | from B   |        |        | from C |          |        | from D |          |          | from E |        |          |
|--------|------------|--------|----------|--------|--------|--------|----------|--------|--------|----------|----------|--------|--------|----------|
| Exit B | Exit C/D/E | Exit A | Exit C/D | Exit E | Exit A | Exit B | Exit D/E | Exit A | Exit B | Exit A/B | Exit C/D | Exit A | Exit B | Exit C/D |
| 0      | 4          | 0      | 4        | 4      | 3      | 1      | 0        | 2      | 0      | 6        | 1        | 0      | 10     | 1        |

6 City Bridge



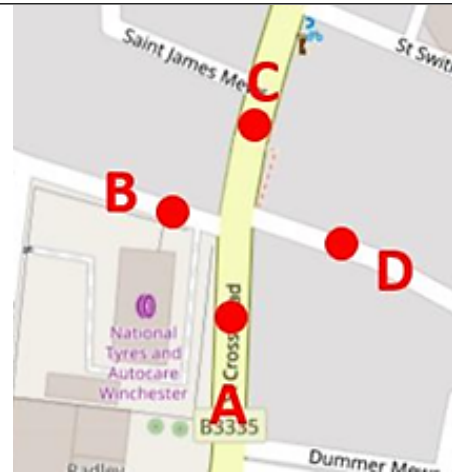
| from A |        |        | from B |        |        | from C |        |        | from D |        |        |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Exit B | Exit C | Exit D | Exit A | Exit C | Exit D | Exit A | Exit B | Exit D | Exit A | Exit B | Exit C |
| 2      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 7      | 8      | 1      | 1      | 2      | 0      | 10     | 1      |

### 7 Kingsgate Street



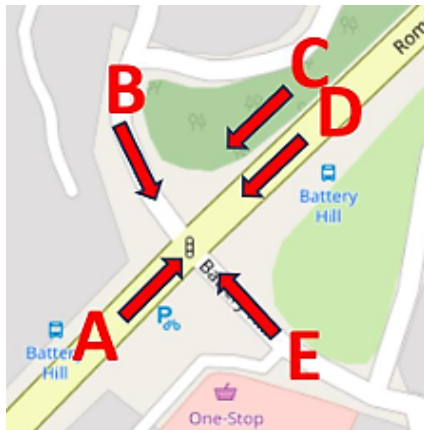
| from A |        |        | from B |        |        | from C |        |        | from D |        |        |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Exit B | Exit C | Exit D | Exit A | Exit C | Exit D | Exit A | Exit B | Exit D | Exit A | Exit B | Exit C |
| 2      | 2      | 12     | 7      | 0      | 13     | 4      | 1      | 2      | 4      | 3      | 0      |

### 8 St Cross Road



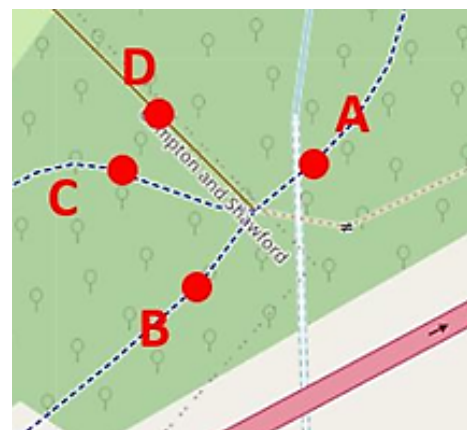
| from A |        |        | from B |        |        | from C |        |        | from D |        |        |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Exit B | Exit C | Exit D | Exit A | Exit C | Exit D | Exit A | Exit B | Exit D | Exit A | Exit B | Exit C |
| 0      | 2      | 3      | 2      | 1      | 4      | 5      | 0      | 7      | 9      | 2      | 0      |

### 9 Upper Romsey Road



| from A |        |        |        | from B |            |         | from C |          |        | from D   |          | from E |  |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|---------|--------|----------|--------|----------|----------|--------|--|
| Exit B | Exit C | Exit D | Exit E | Exit A | Exit C/D/E | Exit AE | Exit B | Exit A/E | Exit B | Exit A/B | Exit C/D |        |  |
| 5      | 0      | 4      | 0      | 1      | 1          | 0       | 0      | 1        | 0      | 2        | 0        |        |  |

### 10 NCN 23 (5 Bridges Rd)



| 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 |
| 1      | 1      | 0      | 3      | 0      | 2      | 1      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      |