

# Cycling hints and tips

## Getting and keeping fit

If you're not cycling for some time, take it easy at first. You may find cycling tiring for a few weeks but you will soon start to feel the benefits and arrive at your destination feeling more energetic than you ever used to! Remember that ten miles of cycling can use an extra 350 calories, so with regular cycling the scope for weight loss is considerable.

## Coping with the weather

The UK weather is relatively cycle-friendly as it rarely gets cold or hot for cycling. But, if you don't feel like cycling in the rain or snow, just don't do it! Most regular cyclists find they cycle more than they originally expected to.

## Which bike?

If you already own a bike then use it first. This will help you decide what is important if you later decide to buy a new one. Make sure a new bike has mudguards, as this makes a big difference when it is raining. Modern bikes have a wide range of gears, which will painlessly deal with the sort of hills you are likely to encounter in this area. Give your bike a thorough check over well before you wish to start cycling – many bike shops will service it for you. Once you cycle regularly, keeping your bike ready to go takes very little time.

## What clothes?

There is no need to wear special clothes for cycling. A good windproof layer, plus a varying number of thin layers, will keep you warm whatever the weather. Avoid too many clothes that will soon make you hot and tired – it is better to be a bit chilly for the first half mile and comfortable for the rest of the journey. As you become more experienced, you may wish to invest in some special clothes, which may make you more comfortable.

## Staying safe

Cycles are not inherently dangerous, but poorly driven motor vehicles are! Wear a helmet and make sure you are visible by wearing high visibility, reflective clothing such as a vest or shoulder belt. If cycling at night, always use lights and consider using a supplementary flashing light – rechargeable batteries are a good investment for regular night cyclists.

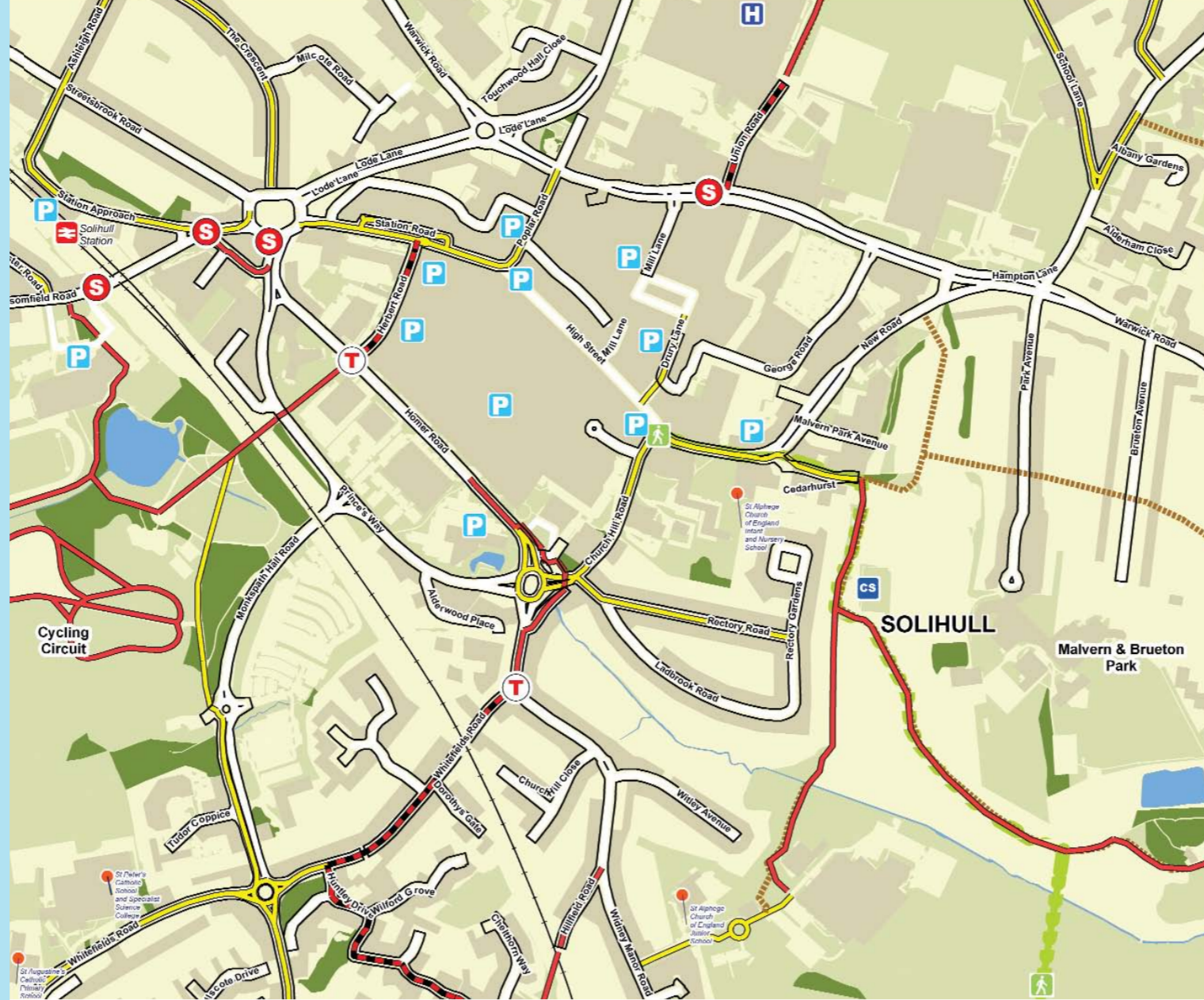
Experienced cyclists who are assertive and anticipate potential problems are the safest riders. Aim to develop your confidence and skill to a high level.

## Reliability

Most cyclists find their journey times are more reliable than those of bus, train or car users. A well-maintained cycle will suffer few problems. To cope with the odd puncture, take a spare inner tube and know how to change it!

## Have fun!

Most people cycle because they enjoy it. There is something exhilarating about travelling under your own steam. Your route will seem more interesting than in a car and you may discover something new on the way.



## Key and Signs

- |                        |                            |                           |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Signposted cycle route | Green Man Trail            | School                    |
| Cycle lane             | Millennium Way             | Hospital                  |
| Advisory route         | Kenilworth Greenway        | Railway station           |
| Shared use             | Canal access point (ramp)  | Cyclesolihull start point |
| Canal                  | Canal access point (steps) | Cycle shop                |
| Bridleway              | Signalled crossing         | Airport                   |
| Footway                | Toucan crossing            | Parking                   |

# Cycling safety tips

Cycling can be a fun, healthy activity that can be safely undertaken with a few sensible precautions.

## General

- Rely on your own judgment
- Check over your shoulder regularly
- Make eye contact with motorists when possible
- Signal clearly the direction you intend to travel
- Keep off footpaths unless you allowed to be on them
- Where you are sharing space with pedestrians, remember they can be frightened by cyclists passing too closely and too quickly
- Give horse riders plenty of room and do not pass too quickly, especially from behind

## Cycle maintenance

Check moving parts often, giving special attention to brakes and lights. Make sure that your tyres are properly inflated and that you can see the tread on them clearly – they need frequent inspection for damage. If you need help, go to your nearest bike shop.

## Plan your route

When you are about to plan your journey, ask yourself if there are areas of the route that are hazardous or that cause you concern. Are there alternative roads you could take? Unless you are a very experienced cyclist, think about ways of avoiding roundabouts, multi-lane roads or busy junctions. Use this maps to plan your route (wherever possible) and use the cycle routes provided for cyclists.

## Be seen

When cycling in adverse weather or in the dark, the right clothes can help you to be seen – wear something bright and reflective. The law says that at night you must use front and rear lights and a red rear reflector. Make sure they're clean and working properly.

## Wear a cycle helmet

A cycle helmet will not prevent an accident occurring, but it can help to prevent a serious head injury. Make sure your helmet is the right size and is properly fitted – ask your local bike shop or contact your local road safety officer for advice. As a rule, you should just about be able to see the rim of the helmet above your eyes when it is on. Only buy a helmet that conforms to a recognised standard BS EN 1078; 1997; BS6863; 1989 or SNELL B.95.

## Stay legal

Cycling through red lights, on pavements and down one-way streets the wrong way is against the law. It is also risky for you and makes you a danger to other people. The Highway Code tells you what the law is and what traffic signs mean – it also has a special section for cyclists.

## Advanced stop line for cyclists



## Watch that junction!

The most common type of cycling accident occurs at junctions. Cyclists should take great care – this is especially true at roundabouts. Clear hand signals are always very important and be aware of drivers cutting in front of you. Check if it is safe before joining a main road – if it's not, stop! If a situation looks tricky, get off your bike and walk it along the pavement to a safer crossing point.

## Load safely

Be careful not to overload your bike. It's advisable to load your belongings in a rucksack or panniers (special bags designed for cycles), with the weight equally balanced on either side and nothing loose that might get caught up in the wheels or chain. Ensure that you keep your hands free to signal and control your bike. Using cycle clips can prevent loose clothing from getting caught in the wheel.

## Weather and road surface hazards

Cycling in bad weather can be particularly hazardous.

- Windy conditions may cause a cyclist to over-balance.
- Icy or snowy conditions make the road surface very slippery. It takes significantly longer to brake and you're more likely to skid and fall off your bike. Extreme cold causes discomfort and can numb your fingers, making it harder to brake.
- Strong winter sunshine can cause visibility problems.
- Fog reduces the ability to see and be seen – it is better not to cycle in foggy conditions.
- Pot holes, tarmac edging, glass, debris and uneven grids can all cause problems for cyclists. Maintain a gap of around 60cms from the kerb to avoid them.

## Get equipped

Prepare for the unexpected! Always carry a tool/puncture repair kit and waterproofs. It is also a good idea to carry a mobile phone, in case of emergencies.



# Solihull Cycling Club



- A proud history of Olympic medallists and National Champions
- All year round programme of racing, touring and social activities
- Organised club runs for riders of all standards – 9.00am every Sunday from Solihull town centre
- Weekly club night social gathering
- Regular programme of structured training on the Tudor Grange cycle circuit
- Open to all ages

Visit our website: [www.solihullcc.org.uk](http://www.solihullcc.org.uk)  
 Contact the club secretary  
 Email: [secretary@solihullcc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@solihullcc.org.uk)



## Countryside Walks in Solihull

Why not take a look at our series of guided walks leaflets?

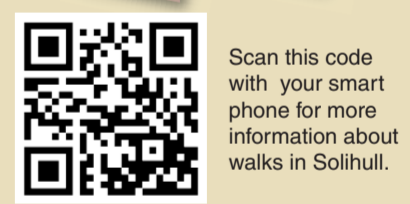
Based around villages, each leaflet sets out a number of suggested walks that will allow you to explore some of the many public footpaths in and around Solihull. Each is different but they all offer a unique view of the borough and its surrounding countryside.

The leaflets are available to pick up in the tourist information centre in the library complex in Solihull town centre or on line at: [www.solihull.gov.uk/walksinsoalihull](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/walksinsoalihull)

Leaflets available: Balsall Common, Castle Bromwich, Hampton in Arden, Meriden, Three Churches (Berkswell, Meriden and Eastern Green)

If you have any questions or enquires about these leaflets or the routes which they describe please contact the Rights of Way Officer at Solihull Council, Council House, Manor Square, Solihull B91 3QB – 0121 704 6429.

- Countryside Code:**  
 When using these walks, please respect, protect and enjoy the countryside you pass through.
- You can do this by:
- Being safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
  - Leave gates and property as you find them
  - Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
  - Keep dogs under close control at all times
  - Consider other people



# CycleSolihull

## Explore your borough by bike

CycleSolihull aims to help you to use your bike more, whether it's to cycle for local trips, explore the surrounding countryside, or improve your fitness and health.

- Run by volunteers CycleSolihull offers:
- Over 30 self-guided ride leaflets, starting at various points within the borough and exploring some of Solihull's quieter roads. Ride start points are marked CS on the map.
  - A programme of weekly cycle rides throughout the year, providing opportunities to cycle with others at a leisurely pace.
  - A regularly updated website [www.cyclesolihull.org.uk](http://www.cyclesolihull.org.uk) containing details of all the rides and route leaflets, plus information and news about local cycling.
  - A monthly CycleSolihull E-newsletter to keep you in touch with the latest developments.
- CycleSolihull can also put you in touch with other organisations supporting cycling in Solihull, including cycling clubs, local and national groups, and providers of cycle training. Email us at: [info@cyclesolihull.org.uk](mailto:info@cyclesolihull.org.uk) or call 07896 885726
- [www.cyclesolihull.org.uk](http://www.cyclesolihull.org.uk)

## CycleSolihull Community Cycle Rides

- Sunday Cycle Rides** are regular afternoon rides of between 10 and 20 miles long, starting from various points in the borough and following one of over 30 CycleSolihull routes.
- Evening Explorer** rides take place on summer weekday evenings and are about 10 miles long.
- Taster Rides** are only 5 miles long – ideal for new cyclists and children beginning to cycle on the road with their parents.
- Saturday Stretcher** rides are twice-monthly longer morning rides (25 to 35 miles) with variable routes.

All the rides use quieter roads and include a refreshment stop of about 30 minutes.



## Collect fresh air miles.

Twenty-eight of our favourite National Cycle Network routes along quiet country lanes and traffic-free paths, featuring full OS mapping and detailed town close-ups.

A great way to explore the National Cycle Network from your back door and beyond... order your copy today at [www.sustransshop.org.uk](http://www.sustransshop.org.uk)



IM Properties & Shirley Golf Club

# LAND OFF STRATFORD ROAD VISION DOCUMENT

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