NEWHAM CYCLISTS

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2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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This annual report was approved at Newham Cyclists' 2025 AGM on Monday 28th April, 2025, at the Aston Mansfield Centre in Manor Park.

SUMMARY

2024-2025 was a busy year for cycling in our borough.

There were a number of very positive developments in terms of new, high-quality infrastructure being opened and being built. The first completed sections of the long-fought for **Romford Road cycle track** officially opened. So has the first section of the **Westfield Avenue cycleway**, turning one of the

worst streets in the borough for cycling (a dreadful "stroad" type design left over from the Olympics) to one of the best. The **Royal Docks Corridor** scheme from Canning Town to Pontoon Dock and London City Airport is nearing completion, and is truly great. We have also seen a number of **public realm improvements** and **permanent mode filter upgrades**, and the roll-out of the borough-wide 20mph limit. Work has also just begun on phase 1a of **Cycle Future Route 7** from Leyton to Stratford Town Centre, which will improve one of the worst parts of Cycleway 16 and deliver a much-needed cycling connection over the Great Eastern Railway.

The new **West Ham Park LTN**, despite some opposition, appears to have settled in and is working well. This scheme in particular is a game changer, as Newham are delivering it simultaneously with the Romford Road works. This is the first time the Council has treated both side roads and main roads at the same time, providing a joined-up network of safer streets.

We are pleased that the ambition shown by portfolio holders and officers at Newham Council is generally high. We have seen some **positive consultations** for future schemes, for instance for the crossing of Water Lane on the Stratford-Forest Gate backstreet Cycleway link.

Unfortunately, there were also negative developments, particularly the **sudden long-term closure of the Greenway, TfL Cycleway 22,** by Thames Water in September 2024. At time of writing the Greenway at West Ham has now been unusable for 7 months, which has had a serious impact on children, families, and NHS workers at Newham Hospital who relied on it for their travel. We have had more contact about the Greenway than any other campaigning issue in the history of Newham Cyclists. Newham Council's diversion is not fit for purpose, after somewhat nebulous fears about traffic displacement from the Police led to them abandoning their original plan to close Abbey Road E15 to general traffic. It is also now clear the "temporary" closure of the Greenway will be longer than the originally planned 18 months. We have also been monitoring the long-term closure of the ExCeL waterfront path on NCN route 13, which raises similar concerns about the cycle network's dependence on permissive paths that private landowners can close at will.

Considerable disruption has arisen from works for the construction and mitigation of the **Silvertown Tunnel**, an urban motorway project that TfL has mortgaged £2.2bn of future tolls on. The desultory "cycle shuttle" (bike bus) is not an adequate mitigation, and has already proven in its first weeks to be inadequate for the demand to cross the river by cycle east of Tower Bridge.

A continued lack of action on legacy unprotected junctions has also been evident. **Tragically, Newham saw its first cycling fatality in 4½ years in**

mid-January 2025, at a known dangerous junction on TfL Cycleway 2 on Stratford High Street. The person killed was a man in his 20s. This section of Cycleway 2 features 4 of the 6 most dangerous junctions on our list, and at each, the physical separation for cycling disappears. We have pushed the Council and TfL to stop accepting the "Cycleway" designation as a *fait accompli,* and to get on with treating the dangerous junctions in line with best practice standards. We are pleased that both Newham Council and TfL recognise the need for rapid action, but they must work together to deliver a meaningful, permanent scheme, speedily, and without being watered down, mired in endless rounds of traffic modelling, or punted out to the next political cycle.

COMMITTEE 2024-2025

Our Management Committee for this period was elected at our Annual General Meeting on 30 April 2024, held at Canning Town Library.

They are:

Position	**Holder**
Co-ordinator	Jonathan Rothwell
Deputy co-ordinator (with outreach portfolio)	Karen Flanagan
Treasurer	Bill Bremner
Secretary	*Vacant* (role fulfilled by Co-ordinators and others on Committee)
Rides co-ordinator	Steve Smith
Infrastructure Lead	Chris Kershaw
Olympic Park representative	*Vacant/abolished*
Community Infrastructure Fund officer	*Vacant/abolished*

MONTH BY MONTH

MAY 2024

- We held bike maintenance sessions with Ambition, Aspire, Achieve on **4/5** and **10/5**.
- **6/5** On a very wet May Day bank holiday, we had a stall at the Newham Green Fair, with Fix Your Ride and outreach. We were joined by Nelson, a professional mechanic, with a neighbouring stall where he taught people to fix a puncture.
- **11/5** Fix Your Ride at Woodgrange Market saw 5 bikes & took £40 in donations.
- **12/5** Our Nature Reserve ride led by Arnold was well attended.
- **18/5** We held a ride with Ambition, Aspire, Achieve.
- **26/5** Our feeder ride to RideLondon Freecycle was led by Haydn Powell from our sister group, the Redbridge Cycling Campaign. We met with them at the Timber Lodge in the Olympic Park. The combined ride of 120 people got to and from Freecycle without incident. Our monthly meeting took place afterwards at Tina We Salute You in East Village, Stratford.

JUNE 2024

- **8/6** At our regular Fix Your Ride at Woodgrange Market, our volunteers helped fix 12 cycles and took £84 in donations.
- **11/6** Our Infrastructure lead, Chris Kershaw, along with Jonathan and Karen, met with staff from the London Legacy Development Corporation and Newham Council at the site of the new Westfield Avenue project. We were very impressed by the quality of the new scheme.
- **16/6** Our River Ride led by Bill was poorly attended as it had been raining, but the sun came out and we had a beautiful day.
- **22/6** We wrote to the candidates for the three Parliamentary seats in Newham to ask them to support cycling in Newham if elected.[1] We received responses from 5 of the 10 candidates we were able to contact

[1] Newham Cyclists is politically neutral and independent. We did not endorse any candidate (and legally can't, as a branch of a registered charity.) Instead we report their policies and responses to our asks, to allow our members and supporters to decide for themselves.

and posted these responses on our website. We were unfortunately not able to source email addresses for 5 candidates.[2]

- **24/6** Our monthly meeting was held at Bonny Downs Community Association in East Ham.
- **26/6** Jonathan, Chris Kershaw, and Ramiz (a regular Cycleway 2 user) met with a representative of the developer of 68-70 Stratford High Street in advance of their planning application. We offered them advice about cycle parking, schemes in the pipeline that they could contribute to (e.g. the upcoming Stratford High Street bus priority scheme) and other schemes they could consider as part of their transport assessment—for instance, the Marshgate Lane schools link project, which we hope could ultimately connect to Cycleway 2 on High Street.
- **29/6** We hosted Fix Your Ride at Woodgrange School. We helped approximately 10 people fix their cycles, and took £103 in donations, of which £75 was donated to the Woodgrange PTA.

JULY 2024

- 3 rides took place, all well-attended:
  - **7/7** Greensted Church, led by Steve
  - **14/7** West Ham themed ride, led by Arnold
  - **21/7** "Call the Midwife" ride, led by Anita
- We held two bike maintenance sessions with Ambition, Aspire, Achieve on **12/7** and **22/7**.
- **6/7** We hosted Fix Your Ride at the Forest Gate Festival. We helped 16 people fix their cycles and took £76.66 in donations.
- **28/7** We ran a tour of the cycling heritage trail and a feeder ride to the "Full Cycle" launch party on Odessa Road, where we also had a stall.
- **29/7** Met with officers from Newham Council, project managers from Thames Water and Barhale, and Michael Barratt from TfL, to review the proposed Greenway diversion. We were in agreement with those present that Abbey Road was the most dangerous part of the diversion.
- **29/7** We toured the new Romford Road cycleway and held our monthly meeting at a cafe.

[2] More detail on our methodology is available on our website. Candidates were also welcome to approach us by email to respond to our asks. We reserved the right not to seek a view from minor or “fringe” candidates who advocate for policies opposed to Newham Cyclists’ or LCC’s charitable objectives and values (for instance, those espousing views that are clearly racist, or peddling conspiracy theories.)

AUGUST 2024

- We maintained contact with Thames Water and Newham Council contacts as the Greenway closure was delayed from August to September.
- We responded to 2 consultations:
    - We supported Newham Council's and LLDC's proposal to realign the zebra crossing on Cycleway 16 at Honour Lea Ave/Olympic Park Ave, and convert it to a parallel crossing; also the proposed bus gate at the junction of Abercrombie Road/Temple Mills Lane.
    - We neither supported nor opposed TfL's proposed road user charges for the Silvertown road tunnel, but highlighted that the tolls still made driving better value than some other options such as the Cable Car. We urged TfL to work with the national Government to invest in and urgently progress the desperately-needed walking and cycling river crossings that east London has needed for decades.

SEPTEMBER 2024

- **11/9** The Greenway closure at Manor Road bridge took effect. We immediately began receiving a substantial amount of feedback on social media about the poor quality of the diversion, and expressed to Thames Water and Newham Council the unsatisfactory nature of the diversion.
- **14/9** At our regular Fix Your Ride at Woodgrange Market, we helped fix 14 bikes & took £75.50 in donations.
- **15/9** Our new Newham Parks Ride led by Arnold was well attended.
- **23/9** We published a video on YouTube about the shocking state of the Greenway diversion, demanding that Thames Water and Newham Council work fast to come up with a viable diversion, which we felt was achievable in the fastest and most prudent way by means of an experimental traffic order to close Abbey Road to general traffic.
- **30/9** Our monthly meeting was at Forest Lane Lodge and covered the Greenway Diversion.

OCTOBER 2024

- **2/10** We supported a 'Night Ride' for Woodcraft Folk.
- **6/10** Our ride to Rainham Marshes, led by Arnold, was well attended.
- **17/10** In response to surprise roadworks at Bow Roundabout (part of a Silvertown Tunnel mitigation scheme) starting the previous month, which we were not consulted on, we obtained the details of the new layout of

the roundabout through a Freedom of Information request. Despite TfL's claims that the Silvertown would not lead to a net increase in traffic, the designs show additional traffic lanes on the roundabout, and no improvement whatsoever for cycling, included on the dangerous unprotected section of High Street.

- **19/10** At Woodgrange Market, we held our usual Fix Your Ride, fixing 7 bikes and receiving £61 in donations.
- **22/10** We held a bike maintenance session with Ambition, Aspire, Achieve.
- **28/10** We held our monthly meeting on Zoom.
- **29/10** We responded positively to Newham Council's proposal for a parallel zebra and cycle crossing of Water Lane.
- **31/10** We wrote to Newham Council's Cabinet members for transport, Cllrs Ruiz and Morris, to express our dismay that Newham Council would not be proceeding with an experimental traffic order to close Abbey Road on the Greenway diversion, after an objection from the Police.

NOVEMBER 2024

- **3/10** Our tour of the "Full Cycle" bike trail, led by Arnold, was well attended.
- **9/11** We hosted our final Fix Your Ride of 2024 at Woodgrange Market, helping fix about 7 cycles and receiving £30.45 in donations.
- **19/11** LCC's Dangerous Junctions mapping was updated with the data set up to 2023, showing yet again that there is a cluster of 4 dangerous junctions (Cooks Road, Marshgate Lane, Warton Road, Carpenters Road) on Stratford High Street/TfL Cycleway 2. All of these junctions are unprotected for cycling; either the protected cycleway disappears in advance of them (at Warton and Carpenters Roads) or isn't present at all (at Cooks Road and Marshgate Lane.)
- **24/11** We ran our (almost) Christmas Social at the Wanstead Tap, which was well attended, including by local cycling residents, members of our sister LCC groups, and officers and elected representatives of Newham Council.

DECEMBER 2024

- We cancelled our Christmas Lights ride due to storms.
- **16/12** We helped to promote the Park Primary School bike bus, which operated on an extended route to celebrate the recently-installed West Ham Park LTN.

JANUARY 2025

- **13/1** Tragically, a man in his 20s was killed while cycling at the junction of Carpenters Road and Stratford High Street—a junction highlighted on LCC's Dangerous Junctions mapping in November. In response to conflicting reports in the press, on social media, and by our members who witnessed the aftermath, we co-ordinated in the days following the crash with our campaigning partners at LCC to confirm with the Police that the crash involved a cyclist and a lorry driver.
- **20/1** We held a short vigil for the cyclist who was killed at Carpenters Road the week prior. We were spontaneously joined by a number of residents who'd witnessed the aftermath.
- **22/1** Our website went offline due to an issue caused by the merger of our former web host, TSOHost, into 123-Reg—our credentials no longer worked. This meant that when our SSL certificate expired, we could not renew it and our website at newhamcyclists.org.uk displayed a security error. Our Committee, LCC staff members and Trustees, and even former Committee members all gave their time substantially to try and regain access to our account, to no avail.
- **27/1** We held our monthly meeting on Zoom.
- **28/1** Our co-ordinator and deputy co-ordinator, Jonathan and Karen, met with Caroline Russell AM, who had requested a meeting to see the Greenway diversion. The fatality on High Street also became relevant due to Newham's preferred diversion route changing to be via Bridge Road, thereby requiring those using it to pass the dangerous Warton Road and Carpenters Road junctions.
- **29/1** We raised serious concerns with TfL (via Michael Barratt) about management of the roadworks at Bow Roundabout, including misconfiguration of the cycle gates, and closure of the protected cycleway during joint renewal.

FEBRUARY 2025

- **3/2** Our co-ordinator, Jonathan, met with Michael Barratt and with the project manager for the Bow Roundabout scheme, who apologised for the issues that the works had caused for people cycling. This led to a much more hands-on approach where we were able to raise issues with him to be resolved during the construction phase.
- **5/2** Our campaigning partners in the LCC Women's Network released their landmark *Women's Freedom After Dark* report, which revealed the shocking statistic that 24% of TfL's Cycleway network is socially unsafe after dark,

which disproportionately excludes women, girls, and non-binary/gender non-conforming people from cycling—particularly during the winter months. The Greenway (Cycleway 22) is a key case study and is considered 100% socially unsafe. The report recommends safe Cycleways on the Plaistow Road-Greengate Street-Prince Regent Lane, Barking Road, and New City Road-Lonsdale Avenue corridors to provide a 24/7 on-road alternative to the Greenway.

- **12/2** We supported local resident Jess Smith, whose 3-year-old son was knocked from his balance bike on Balmoral Road in a hit-and-run. Thankfully he only received minor injuries. We promoted Jess's change.org petition & have continued to support Safer Streets Woodgrange in their campaign for Newham Council to deliver the long-awaited Woodgrange and Capel LTN.
- **14/2** Our deputy co-ordinator, Karen, met with Joseph Coughlan from *MyLondon* to talk about the fatal crash on Stratford High Street. His article was posted a few days later on 18/2.
- **24/2** In partnership with the LCC and our sister groups, we held a protest ride in response to the fatality at Carpenters Road six weeks prior. The ride leader was Michael Striesow. We demanded safer junctions on the one-mile stretch of Stratford High Street—which contains 4 of the 6 most dangerous junctions for cycling in the entire borough. Speeches were made at Carpenters Road by our co-ordinator, Jonathan, and by Cycle Sisters ride leader Shameem Dukandar-Patel (who also addressed our AGM last April.) The protest was attended by about 100 people—some who rode from the Greenway junction, and some local residents who joined on foot at Carpenters junction. It attracted a lot of local attention, and was reported in the press.

MARCH 2025

- We held bike maintenance sessions with Ambition, Aspire, Achieve on **4/3** and **11/3.**
- **8/3** We held our first Fix Your Ride of the year at Woodgrange Market. We helped fix 16 cycles & took £107 in donations.
- **19/3** Our co-ordinator, Jonathan, in conjunction with the Secretary of our sister group the Hackney Cycling Campaign, attended the final meeting of the London Legacy Development Corporation's (LLDC's) Sustainable and Active Travel Group. Ably led for the past 4 years by Monique van den Hurk (whose role with LLDC finished at the end of March), she oversaw a step change in ambition and quality of delivery for people walking and

cycling in the Olympic Park. Monique's role ended as part of LLDC's planning powers being returned to the four Olympic boroughs.
- **25/3** We migrated our website to 34SP.com, who generously agreed to host the site for free. We purchased the domain name newhamcyclists.uk for the next 9 years and paid for this from our group funds.
- **31/3** Following our meeting with Caroline Russell AM in January, we learned in Thames Water's response to her letter that the Greenway diversion was extremely likely to be extended beyond the originally advertised 18 months.
- **31/3** We held our monthly meeting at the Cart and Horses at Maryland.

APRIL 2025

- **2/4** The April issue of *Newham Voices* features two articles we submitted, one about the Dangerous Junctions protest on High Street (written by Jonathan), and one a preview of the Silvertown Tunnel bike bus (written by Karen.)
- **6/4** Our Nature Reserves ride led by Arnold was not well attended, as the route was curtailed due to the Greenway diversion.
- **7/4** We made a number of statements to the press about the poor quality of the Silvertown Tunnel Cycle Shuttle Service, which launched on that day, and attended a petition hand-over with other groups in the Stop the Silvertown Tunnel Coalition to ask the tunnel to be repurposed.
- **12/4** We looked at 14 bikes at Fix Your Ride at Woodgrange Market, and took £81 in generous donations.
- **26/4** In collaboration with Safer Streets Woodgrange, we marshalled their family ride to demand an end to rat-running and road danger in the Woodgrange and Capel area. The ride passed without incident and was attended by 135+ riders and passengers, and attracted a lot of attention from locals in Forest Gate.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Jonathan, Karen, and Chris have been in regular contact with officers from Newham Council working on the Greenway diversion.

Olawale and Jonathan have been in regular contact with the Romford Road project team.

STATISTICS

Fix Your Ride dealt with around 121 cycles in the period May 2024-April 2025. Unsurprisingly our busiest period was in the June-September window, where we saw in excess of 15 bikes per session.

NEWSLETTER AND EMAIL DISCUSSION GROUP

Our newsletter subscribers increased by 6% to 247 subscribers.

Our groups.io email discussion group has grown by 22% to 111 subscribers.

WEBSITE

Our website at its new address of newhamcyclists.uk generally gets between 20-30 unique visitors per day. We hope this will increase further as we start to use new business cards with our new Web address on them and update our printed material elsewhere (e.g. at the FYR stall.)

We have continued to post meeting readouts and new updates about long running issues, e.g. the Greenway, and our consultation responses. We have also begun (inspired by our sister group Camden Cyclists) an irregular “News from the Streets” feature, with progress updates about the many cycling infrastructure projects on the go in Newham.

We have also refreshed our list of local bike shops on the website.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Our YouTube video about the dangerous Greenway diversion, at time of writing, has been viewed 6,017 times, and received 105 comments. This is a new record for our YouTube channel.

We have continued to use our social media accounts on the following platforms:

- Instagram **@NewhamCyclists**
- “X” (formerly Twitter) **@NewhamCyclists**

In addition we have created an account on Bluesky **@newhamcyclists.uk** (originally @newhamcyclists@bsky.app), which is also followable on Mastodon.

ORGANISATIONS WE HAVE COLLABORATED WITH

We supported our parent charity, the London Cycling Campaign, and our sister LCC groups in neighbouring boroughs, by promoting important campaigns and consultations throughout the year.

Some of our members also contributed to the LCC Women's Network (in particular their landmark *Women's Freedom After Dark* report.)

We also campaigned in partnership with:

- Better Streets for Newham
- Woodgrange Safer Streets

We supported local cycling interest groups:

- Frames of Mind with their QR code heritage ride
- Ambition, Aspire, Achieve
- Bike from Boleyn
- Woodcraft

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES FOR 2025-26

- **We must celebrate the wins, but keep the pressure on.** We have seen a flurry of delivery on some very high-quality schemes in Newham, bringing Waltham Forest-level (and sometimes even better) infrastructure to places where it is desperately needed. This level of delivery and ambition is to be applauded. But we remain frustrated by the slow progress of certain schemes, and some schemes becoming mired in months or years of traffic modelling. We remain frustrated that Newham Council decided not to close Abbey Road E15 to general traffic, which would be a faster, financially prudent, and common-sense way of making the Greenway diversion safe; also with the apparent lack of movement on the Woodgrange/Capel LTN in light of a small (but noisy) opposition and disagreements about where the exits should be. Elected representatives (and candidates seeking to replace them in 2026) must be in no doubt that most Newham residents want their streets safer for walking and cycling. In line with LCC's campaigning themes, politicians and officers should feel compelled to "dream bigger, be bolder, bring everyone."
- **We must redouble our efforts to recruit more LCC members, and involve more of our members in our campaigning efforts.** This is linked with ensuring our actively campaigning members are representing

the diversity of those who cycle in our Borough in terms of ethnicity, gender, age, social class and income level, occupation, and housing status.

- **We must continue efforts to increase our footprint and serve more of Newham.** We acknowledge that almost our entire committee lives in the north of the Borough. Lots of people cycle in the centre and south of Newham, but there are also serious gaps in infrastructure (including with the closure of the Greenway, which severs Newham's only substantial north/south Cycleway.)
- **We must document our processes and standard operating procedure and ensure our resilience.** As a volunteer group, and keeping in mind that many Newham residents are renting and therefore more likely to move out-of-borough, we must be able to tolerate 'losing' active members of our group. As we have found with the website situation, confusion about whose name various accounts are in can cause serious issues (and expense.)