

York Hospitals Foundation Trust – Comments from staff that cycle.

Gritting and Snow Clearance.

Wasn't safe to cycle for quite a few days on the cycle tracks or the road as the slush moved to the side of the road and then froze. I cycle down Blossom Street, past the station over (Lendal) Bridge and then up Gillygate.

This is a welcome initiative. One area in need of attention in the snow is the cycle path from Leeman Road, along the river, and into town. Another is the cycle path on the opposite side of the river from Clifton Bridge in past Museum Gardens.

Clearly car free roads/paths are a priority. So Foss Island route for example is one. Also paths on pavements a couple of miles within city centre would, in my view, be a priority.

Good to hear about the small maintenance vehicle - it did seem a shame that the road alterations on Water End, which have been so good for cyclists, were unusable by bikes during the freeze, as they were never gritted or salted.

The path down the side of the hospital was a nightmare when it was snowing - the one where you come out onto if you take south entrance. (*assumed to be Bridge Lane*)

I think the lane at the South side of the hospital (*assumed to be Bridge Lane*) does not seem to get treated, or is done so infrequently. I doubt it is a 'cycle route' but is used by many cyclists and pedestrians and would benefit from gritting.

When the weather was really bad in January and people were writing to the Press re the lack of gritting, the Council replied that all cycle paths had been gritted. However, the path over Clifton Backies was not touched at all and I ended up walking to work as it was safer.

I am impressed that they have bought a maintenance vehicle as a lot of the paths get overgrown - this is particularly the case with the section of cycle path that runs parallel to Water Lane at the Tribune House end. I just hope it gets maximum use.

From my previous journey to work, before we moved to Tribune House, I used to go along Bridge Lane from the Clifton end. That was rarely gritted and as it doesn't get the sun it was always icy for longer periods than most other paths.

Just to let you know that the cycle path out of Copmanthorpe is very icy in winter. I don't know if this is one of the recognised cycle network routes

The Copmanthorpe to York path was quite bad at times, particularly in the area around the road bridge coming into Copmanthorpe.

Sounds great! I regularly use the cycle path between Copmanthorpe and Askham Bar, Tesco and through Hob Moor when working at Acomb HC. I have had several falls on icy paths over the last few years. One particular "black spot" is when negotiating the barriers when approaching the railway bridge tunnel in Hob Moor. Another major hazard is when braking on a downhill icy slope to negotiate a barrier at the bottom of the slope e.g. the cycle path running down to the river from Bishopthorpe road by the race course.

Cycling on the road from the Tesco traffic lights via the junction turning right to Copmanthorpe is not a great option for any cyclist so keeping that part of the cycle path clear would also be a great help.

 Big problem was that cycleways that are part of the road (*WHY* can't we have tracks separated from cars by kerbs as in Holland, or actually, London?!) meant that snow and ice at road edge effectively meant no cycleway.

I ended up not using bike for significant periods simply because motorists themselves had little choice but to go very close to bikes and in the icy conditions that was very dodgy. Separation (as above if poss.) of both types of vehicles would give much greater peace of mind all round I guess.

To be fair, I think the Council tried very hard under difficult circumstances. Route clearing along some of the newer cycleways, e.g. over Clifton bridge would make a massive difference in allowing one to get back in the saddle quicker after snowfalls. Gritting the night before when snow is forecast might not be as good as waiting a day or so and then clearing plus gritting at same time. Gritting the roads the night that snow is forecast works because the weight of cars and buses does a lot of the clearing. Bikes are lighter!

Guess it would be helpful if the Council could prioritise **one** really good route into town from N, E, S & W and give it really high priority. Maybe call it a Winter Bike Red Route, whatever. If that was publicised for cyclists so they knew which route to choose to commute that would be really good.

 It would be great if the cycle path and especially the steps leading from Wilton Rise to Leeman road could be gritted as this path does not get any sun and soon turns to ice which makes the steps treacherous.

 The cycle route between New Earswick and Wigginton Road was unusable for about 5/6 weeks last/this winter, so if that could be gritted that would be great. The optimum time would be when there is a forecast of hard frost, if the roads need gritting then so will the cycle tracks. Solar lights have been installed at the edge of this path. If the edges are not kept clear the lights will be covered with vegetation and will not be any use at all. Also there are 4 cattle grids on this path and when they get wet or icy they are very slippery which can be quite dangerous.

 I'm pleased to learn the council have acquired a small maintenance vehicle; broken glass on cycle paths is a daily problem to be encountered. I have seen the vehicle in use, however, being quite small the amount of grit it left was rather sparse on the cycle paths across Clifton Bridge and up to Boroughbridge Road. It was disappointing that having invested so much money on the cycle paths that cyclists had to opt for the least risky option of using the 'narrowed' roads in such precarious conditions rather than the treacherous cycle paths over spell of bad weather. I see that it will take 2 days to cover the whole network, but it doesn't say how often they intend to maintain it.

My problem was that I couldn't get out of the estate in Earswick where I live in to a gritted road. I fell off twice and stopped cycling over the winter.

I use the cycle path from New Earswick to the Wigginton Road entrance of Nestle. This was very icy over the winter period at times, making it impossible to use. The choice was then to risk the road or use the car. Gritting on that path would be very welcome as it used by a lot of people.

I used the cycle path that runs from Nestle to Osbaldwick on the old railway and it remained icy for a long time - it's a busy route, so I'd suggest it should be a priority.

I cycle to work along the New Walk section of the River path which was very iced up, but passable until things really became arctic. Main problem was the ruts caused by other cyclists giving a tram track type obstacle that made it very hazardous to cycle. I had to get off and push during the worst of the winter. This is a popular route so would be worth keeping as clear as possible. The area just under Fishergate Bar which is a dead end for traffic but allow pedestrian and cycle access was very icy and rutted. The other area which is always really bad for some reason is Aldwalk, I think it's to combination of cars and no gritting and no sunshine. Hope this helps, hope we don't have another winter like this one in the near future as never had these problems before!!

My personal opinion is that it's unrealistic to expect the Council to clear/grit cycleways. I biggest problem I encounter is a build up of snow at the edge of the road when the road is cleared but this is unavoidable. For the few days when snow is a problem I'd prefer to see resources concentrated on bus routes/main roads to keep the traffic flowing. This year on the worst 3 days I either walked or used a bus - inconvenient but not a big deal.

Personally, I think the lane between YH and Bootham (*Bridge Lane*) and the railway bridge should be gritted/cleared of snow daily in bad weather. It is treacherous both for cyclists and pedestrians.

Also, the cycle path route along the side of Clifton Green School and Clifton Surgery to Lumley Road and Grosvenor Road should be gritted as this also is treacherous in winter; this is my normal route to work.

I cycle every day in all weathers but I have to change my route in winter when it is icy and stick to main roads which I don't like.

The new cycle route over Crichton Avenue bridge is no good in winter as it uses the footpath which is not gritted or cleared of snow, so this also needs to be done.

The off-road cycle route from Osbaldwick to Wigginton Road is hazardous in wintry conditions and has a number of fairly steep slopes, both along its route and from adjoining slipways.

The timing of gritting is always likely to be an issue.

Main cycleways I use are:

- 1) Path from Skelton down side of A19 through underpass to Shipton Road. The underpass can be treacherous when icy.
 - 2) The route down the riverside to Scarborough Bridge
 - 3) Path up from Bootham to Bootham Park Court and through the cut through to Park House and front of Trust (this is probably all Trust property and is usually well gritted in winter).
- Others that I know of that rarely get gritted are the path down the river to Bishopthorpe and the Millennium bridge.
- Hope this is useful

Can I ask for the parts of the cycle paths between New Earswick and Haxby where they go under the A1237 to be considered in a gritting programme. This would go for the pedestrian path to the side of the cycle path also there. In terms of optimum timing I'm not sure when that would be - I don't imagine they'd need quite the same frequency of gritting as the roads.

The main problem I encountered was the cycle paths from Heworth Green snow from the clearing of the road pushed into the cycle lanes and having to ride further out into the road. Also where the cycle path merge onto the pavements none of these were either gritted or cleared and having to either get off or move out into the road which under the conditions was a little treacherous.

During the cold snap we had, I found that the cycle tracks I use past Rowntrees (from Kitchener Street to Crichton Avenue) and the Clifton Backies was particularly treacherous, and was never gritted as far as I am aware.

On another matter, a couple of times now I have been quite annoyed to find a moped being driven quite quickly down the cycle track past Rowntrees mentioned above. Do you know what the legality is on this, as the rider is potentially risking a collision with cyclists or pedestrians using the track.

I use the cycle path from the hospital to Osbaldwick on a daily basis. Gritting has not been a problem for me as I am on a racing bike and so won't cycle in the ice. Regards the cleaning machine, this should be encouraged as much as possible. I had three punctures last summer, always from glass of smashed bottles. Even the special thicker tyres don't always work. On every route home there are at least six areas of smashed glass to be avoided at any time, anything to help would be gratefully received. As the path enters Osbaldwick there is a slightly elevated concrete section (an inch high) that has caused some cyclists difficulty and could do with a tarmac ramp up it. Finally as the cycle path heads to Osbaldwick itself the surface gets rougher and rougher and at some point will need a re-surfacing.

Thank you for bringing up what you can. I hope that others have experienced the same as me.

I am not a regular cyclist at present although I find the mailings interesting. My wife, however does cycle from Haxby into York on a daily basis and has these comments to make regarding gritting etc if that is of interest for Monday's meeting.

- In general, where there is a marked cycle track along the edge of the road, (eg York Road Haxby and new Earswick) these areas did not clear as well as the rest of the carriageway, forcing cyclists to use the main carriageway.

- The minor roads through The Groves, signposted as cycle routes were not treated and were not rideable, cyclists had to use more major routes - Clarence Street and Lord Mayors Walk - to gain access to the City.
- The approaches to the ring road underpasses on York Road were left untreated and became dangerous, cyclists had to negotiate the roundabout or push bikes on extremely slippery paths.

Obviously these were exceptional conditions, but any effort to improve the situation, particularly the underpasses, would have made life safer during the winter.

The problem area I encountered during the snowy winter weather was Bootham. The road was gritted and ploughed, but so much so that the cycle lane was treacherous as the snow had been pushed onto the cycle lane. So it was either a case of try and cycle over snow or share the very narrow road with other vehicles, it was a toss up which was the lesser of two evils !!

I live in Fulford and at the moment the council are creating a cycle path on the pavement of Fulford road. This is a reasonable sized hill, and would be very difficult to use if not gritted. I was wondering if it is planned to grit this adequately. If not, would a cyclist be penalised for using the road instead during icy weather?

I did not cycle at all over the icy period purely due to the treacherous condition of the cycle lanes and sharing reduced size car lanes did not appeal.
The angled ramp approaching the Clifton Bridge was impassable and I saw at least one person injured there. I hope the Council can sort this out.

Pavement Gritting

During the icy weather, I was "attempting" to walk into work. I know this may not be relevant to your meeting as you are concerned with cycle routes, but I think any meeting should include the gritting of pavements. I feel very strongly that the council should accept responsibility for gritting of pavements. It was nearly impossible to walk or get to a bus stop - I ended up slipping and broke my wrist, had 2 months off work and am still receiving physio and help with certain tasks at work. This has clearly cost the Trust money and inconvenience during my absence - not the mention the discomfort I still experience. To say pavements are not a priority is very short sighted.

When it was particularly snowy/icy, I walked instead of cycling, but went the same route. One area where it was particularly icy was the footbridge over the railway track - not sure of it's name, but it's at the end of the long foot/cycle path that starts near the railway museum, and then crosses the track, and then brings you out near Holgate Road. I don't know what the practicalities would be of clearing this, but it was the bit that was probably worst in my experience.

Praise

As I use the stretch of cycle track between Wigginton Road and Haxby Road. I would like to say I was very pleased last week when I notice the edges had been tidied up, and cutting of the vegetation too, they where in bad condition and now look vastly improved, thanks to the maintenance machine. Thank you York Council.

As my start and finish times in winter are in the hours of darkness I don't use the cycle route to Osbaldwick in winter as its too lonely, however I am pleased to hear the routes will have a maintenance vehicle as I have had a few punctures due to glass.

It is good to hear that the cycle paths will be swept during the summer; it will save a lot of time and stress repairing punctures caused by broken glass!

Other Issues

Pot holes and repair off needs to be a priority. Going round them means sharing more of the road with other road users. Which has meant I do use my car although can mean a longer journey (and I do not feel vulnerable.
The clearing of edges in summer - very positive.

There is a real issue on the cycle path that runs from Nestle to Osbaldwick with picketing of horses. Intermittently, traveller's horses are put to graze on the verges, with ropes or chains that they can stretch across the path if they cross over from one side to the other. I once saw a pony with a chain attached to the fence at chest height, so that when it was at the end of the chain it was across the path at garrotting height, and they are sometimes chained like that in the dark. I've twice phoned the police but never had any feedback.

Many 'quiet' lanes suffer terribly from pot holes.

Entry into and exit from hospital premises on Wigginton Road is potential danger to cyclists. The little roundabout near estate/stores entrance which many cyclists use has nothing to indicate to motorists to slow down or give way to cyclists. Traffic lights may be an idea!

It would be good if the Foss Island route is linked someway to the hospital to avoid Wigginton Road altogether!

The top end (Clifton Bridge end) is in need of resurfacing and is a nightmare in poor light. They have done some digging there and left it in a bit of a state.

Road markings and advance stop boxes are wearing out in some areas and the cold weather has just added to that.

It would be absolutely BRILLIANT if Police officers and PCSO's had a zero tolerance policy for cars creeping into the advanced stop boxes - I believe that if you stop in one when the lights are red that you could incur quite a high fine (£250?) but bet it never gets invoked. Taxis are particular culprits.
