

Survey of bicycle parking facilities in Liskeard

This was an informal survey carried out between 27/6/19 and 2/7/19 by simply cycling around the various sites in the town where one might expect or hope to find facilities for cycle parking. Dedicated facilities at each site are described as well as the practicality of improvised cycle parking in the absence of such facilities.

It makes no claim to being exhaustive and I may have missed some. I have not visited private sites (eg industrial units) nor schools. If you know of anywhere else that has bike parking facilities, or should have such facilities please advise and they can be added.

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Community Hospital

Six Sheffield* stands, under cover, lit (presuming the light fitting functions), quite near the pedestrian entrance to the hospital, but tucked away out of sight (poor for security) behind the bus shelter. On the exit side of the one way system and so poorly signed that I only discovered it as I was leaving the site thinking that there were no facilities at all. This despite having previously visited the hospital on foot at least three times

Oaktree Surgery

5 Sheffield stands. Under cover, lit (presuming the light fitting functions), very near the main pedestrian entrance (good for security). This is a model of how it should be done.

Dental Centre

No dedicated bike parking facilities and, in practice, no space to leave a bike nor attachment point to which it could be locked.

There seems to be ample car parking (probably more than is necessary.) One car parking space occupies enough space for several Sheffield stands.

Rosedean Surgery

No dedicated bike parking but there are some railings near the main entrance which bikes could stand against and be locked to (the surgery might object.)

Railway Station

There are 5 steel lockers on the pavement by the short term parking at the front of the station that can be rented (by contacting www.bikeaway.com, at £50 per year.) Clearly this is only useful for daily commuters. Currently 3 of the lockers are taken and 2 are available.

There are no other dedicated facilities but there is space, under cover by the front entrance to the station and some posts to which bikes can be locked. There would be room here for several Sheffield stands.

There are also railings to which bikes can be locked above the ramps that lead down to the platforms.

Since this survey was carried out a grant application is currently under preparation for improvement of the facilities at the Station. The facilities currently proposed in the application appear to be carefully considered and ideal for the casual user. However it would be a retrograde step if, in the development of new facilities, the existing bike lockers were removed; they provide much greater

security for the daily cyclist who is prepared to invest a modest amount (about £1 per week) for the security of their cycle.

Leisure Centre

4 old style fittings that provide a short, vertical, wall mounted fitting into which the front wheel is wedged. They are rarely seen now having been largely superseded by Sheffield stands. These do not hold the bike securely, they can potentially damage the front wheel (particularly as many bikes now have much wider wheel rims than when these fittings were commonly installed) and in practice only the front wheel can be locked making removal of the rest of the bike trivially easy for the thief. Most experienced cyclists will ignore these and find somewhere else to leave their bike: There are some railings along the top side of the car park to which a bike could be locked.

Cattle Market

No dedicated cycle parking facilities. The opportunity should be taken to address this as part of the Cattle Market development as costs could be very modest during a large development in comparison with a separate installation.

Liskerrett Centre

No dedicated facilities but there is plenty of space and walls against which to lean bikes, and various railings to which bikes can be attached. However there is nothing here which gives the message that bikes are welcome. Perhaps the time to review provision here is when the future of the Liskerrett site is more certain.

Morrisons

There are three Sheffield stands near, but not obstructing, the main entrance. They are not under cover but in other respects are well situated and usually adequate for current usage. There are several more stands a little further from the entrance.

Aldi

There are four Sheffield stands near the congested and busy main entrance. When I visited they were completely blocked and not available for use due to shop merchandise – which also largely blocked the pavement at the point where it joins the pedestrian crossing. I understand that this is the normal situation. This is worse than no facilities at all since it adds an element of frustration to the practical problem of where to leave that bike.

Barras Street

One Sheffield stand near Lloyds Bank. There is reasonable space at the top on either side of the road (ie near the fountain and near the Post Office) which could accommodate several Sheffield stands. Currently there is very little to which a bike could be locked.

Fore Street

No dedicated bike parking facilities and very little to lean a bike against or attach. There is probably enough space for several Sheffield stands.

Pike Street

No dedicated facilities and little space. Two or three bikes could be left against the railings in front of the Museum.

Bay Tree Hill

No dedicated facilities. No space nor points of attachment.

Westbourne Car Park

No dedicated facilities. There is space against walls at various points along the southern boundary.

There is ample space for the installation of Sheffield stands near the Coop rear entrance and Pigmeadow Lane, possibly with the loss of one or two parking spaces.

Conclusions

The survey reveals a mix of good and poor or non-existent cycle parking facilities. They range from the excellent facilities at Oaktree Surgery to no facilities at all on Fore Street, to the potentially good but hidden at the Community Hospital, and the very frustrating at Aldi.

It is not surprising that the best facilities are on the outskirts of the town where the buildings are more recent and there is more space whereas in the centre of town there are almost no dedicated facilities and very little space to leave a cycle (even walls against which to lean it are in short supply due to the large display windows of many shops and very narrow pavements.)

Recommendations

Surrounded by attractive countryside and with Bodmin Moor and the coast within easy cycling distance for regular cyclists, and with relatively quiet roads and hopefully a cycle route to Looe in the future, Liskeard is potentially an attractive town for longer distance cyclists. Liskeard also offers a good range of interesting privately owned cafes of the type preferred by many cyclists.

Considerations of both the good of the wider environment and the desire to make towns more pleasant places imply the need to convert people from private cars to walking, cycling and public transport. Liskeard is of an ideal size for the promotion of cycling as transport; for those living in the outer reaches of the town, walking into the centre may be possible but is far enough that a round trip takes a long time whereas even the furthest reaches are only a short and quick cycle ride from the centre.

Cycling has become generally more popular in recent years but for a non-cyclist living in Liskeard and considering using a bike for transport there are two factors that will be significant in the decision to make that modal shift in transport habits: convenience and safety. Convenience is primarily a matter of having secure cycle parking near the destination; if it is near enough then cycling can also be quicker (in terms of overall journey time) than driving. There is a good deal that could be done in Liskeard to improve cycling safety but it should be the subject of a separate report. Effective solutions would certainly be more complex and costly than the provision of good cycling parking distributed in the centre of the town.

To summarize: it is clear that the greatest need for new cycle parking provision is in the centre of the town. Even if new facilities are provided they are only likely to be used and thereby support a

modal shift in transport habits if they are convenient for diverse destinations. It is therefore recommended that the council support and promote the provision of improved cycle parking in the form of Sheffield stands: on both sides of Barras Street, in Fore Street and in the south-east corner of Westbourne car park between Pigmeadow Lane and the Coop rear entrance, and in due course further provision as part of the Cattlemarket development.

* Sheffield stand: Now the most common form of bike parking furniture. usually fabricated from galvanised or stainless steel (preferred) tube of about 50mm diameter, bent into the form of a giant staple.

