

Above: Hastings Community Contact Centre. First stop when looking for help.

Shortly after my second cycle collision, I went seeking advice at Hastings Community Contact Centre to find out who could help me. After a short wait, I was told to go and sit at one of the counters to talk with an adviser. I ended up having a very nice discussion and it was most interesting to find that the adviser had herself been hit by a bike. She told me that she was aware of the problem (encountering it head on, as it were) and she gave me the name of Rob Woods at Hastings Town Centre Management. She informed me that many people have complained about the issue but nothing is ever done and so she did not hold out much hope for me getting anywhere and yet it was worth a go.

Talking for any length of time is quite difficult for me so I came away pleased that I had managed to stay on track and wasn't unduly tired. I had a name, even if the address on file was wrong (which I was to discover).

The next day I made a phone call to the managing agent of my property and, as the subject matter was nuisance neighbours and antisocial actions, I ended up having a fairly lengthy discussion with the secretary. I mentioned my two crashes with cyclists and the skateboarder in Priory Meadow. I mentioned having lots of trouble on the fairly recently extended Hastings and Bexhill waterfront cycle lane, to the degree that using the promenade during the summer is too much effort. And that, though I used to enjoy a stroll in the dark during the winter, the promenade wasn't safe now due to cyclists without lights and that I'd had enough close calls to give up walking it, unless it was extra cold or blowy - in which case, no cyclists!

The secretary then told me that as part of the team who put on Beatles day, she had been coming off the Pier at night and had a close call with a cyclist. She said that she completely understood where I was coming from, as it was exceedingly dark in places and the cyclist in

question was not using lights so she had no idea he was coming. From the close call she had, neither had he been aware of her.

A bike outside the Community Contact Centre highlights the nuisance cyclist problem in Hastings Town Centre

A day or two later, I met my dad in town. I'd been in the Community Contact Centre (side of the Town Hall) trying to get a correct address for the town centre management. I remember coming out, seeing my dad and as we walked towards each other, a cyclist whizzed in front of us. Yes, in the no-cycling, no signs (at the time!), Priory Meadow.

I looked at my dad, my face ripe with disdain. I probably extended some expletives (about the cyclist) and then proceeded to tell him about my visit to the Town Hall and my conversation on the phone.

'...so that's one skateboard in the ankle and two bikes hits and some close calls. I've seen two small children in the last 2 months almost have their faces smash into bike tyres. No word of a lie, no exaggeration - one incident, outside Jempson's, there can't have been more than 2 inches between the girl and the tyre. She was only 4 or 5. The other girl was more 4 than 5. She was trying to hold her younger brother who was straining to pull away. It was near Costa, on that darkened paving that cyclists seem to think is for cycling. Younger brother pulled - she was yanked in front of an oncoming bike going what you'd think was a reasonable speed but given the distance between her wheel and the child, wasn't. 6 inches max, between her and the front tyre. And amazingly, no apology from the

woman on her bike and the mum apologises to the woman and has a go at her daughter. Like outside Jempson's. Cyclist looked ashamed but then realised they were getting off the hook because the parent had a go at the child and apologised. What is wrong with people!

So anyway, that's one skateboard in the ankle and two bikes hits and some close calls. I've seen two small children in the last 2 months almost have their faces smash into bike tyres. Then I go into the town hall to...and the adviser has been cycled into. And the secretary at the property management company..works at Beatles day..close call..etc.'

'I know someone to', says my dad. A friend of his.

What is going on here? And why will no-one do anything?

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