

2019.09.10

6 Deputy L.B.E. Ash of St. Clement of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the reporting of cycling infractions: (OQ.200/2019)

Has any increase been recorded in the number of cyclists caught cycling on the pavement, travelling in the wrong direction on a one-way street, or crossing red lights and, if so, what plans, if any, does the Minister have to deal with this situation?

Connétable L. Norman of St. Clement (The Minister for Home Affairs):

I am very pleased to tell the Deputy there has been no recorded increase in the number of cyclists behaving in the manner that he has described. [Laughter]

3.6.1 Deputy L.B.E. Ash:

I can only say that I have received several complaints on this topic and as regards to the round it does appear to be a problem. Indeed, the other day I was walking along Havre des Pas and a cyclist behind me rang his bell for me to get out of the way. I realised, perhaps, I could have "Wide load, please pass" on my back, but I did not do it. I think many of the people, who are committing these offences, because that is what they are, are perhaps new to the Island. Would he consider, at least, an education scheme that this behaviour is unacceptable?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I hope the Deputy was able to move quickly enough when that bicycle came up behind him. It is fair to say it is annoying when things like that happen, but the police do take this seriously and they proactively patrol areas where this sort of behaviour may be an issue, whether reported by the Parish authorities, or whatever. But they do also take the attitude that prevention and education is an approach which they should take, rather than prosecution and that is the sort of work they will continue. But if any individual is persistent in behaving in that manner, then they will find themselves liable to prosecution.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I should say this has clearly generated some interest, because I have next here the Connétable of St. Helier, Deputy Tadier, Deputy Alves, Deputy Higgins, Deputy Wickenden, the Deputy of St. Peter and then a final supplementary, so I really cannot take any more on this.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sir, I did put my light on.

The Deputy Bailiff:

If you tell me you have put your light on, Deputy Ward, then I will add you to the list. But, of course, what goes in on one end may well fall off the line in the other, of course.

3.6.2 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Has any increase been recorded in the number of motorists caught parking on the pavement, travelling in the wrong direction on a one-way street, or running red lights? [Approbation] If so, what plans, if any, does the Minister have to deal with the situation?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I am sorry, I cannot answer that question. I will need notice of that question to get the information that has been requested.

3.6.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Constable got in there, because I had virtually the same question to be asked. But perhaps on a more serious note, when we have declared a climate change and when we know there are so many cars on the roads and we are trying to encourage people to cycle, rather than take their car, we have a question here demonising cyclists and we have the answer saying that there is not a problem. Does the Minister agree that in many advanced countries in Europe and elsewhere in the world that shared spaces and shared pavements where people can cycle, walk, roller skate to work is quite the norm and they can go both directions on a one-way street? In fact, it is the car issue that we need to be tackling, insofar as it is within his remit and we need to make car drivers more courteous so that they are not cutting up bicycles, *et cetera*, and that the shared space in a small island like this is the one focus that the Council of Ministers should be working on.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Can I say I am sure he can speak for himself, but I did not consider that Deputy Ash was demonising cyclists? I think he was raising a concern, which a number of people have, and it is quite valid he be able to bring it up. But I also think that all road users, motorists, cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians should be courteous to each other. **[Approbation]** That way we will all be able to use our roads and pavements and everything safer. There are already areas in Jersey where there are shared spaces, where pavements and footpaths can be used by cyclists. I can immediately think of Beaumont Hill; I believe that that is a shared area. Certainly, in the town area, cyclists are permitted, I understand, in some roads to go the wrong way, as it were, up one-way streets. That has nearly caught me out; I think I found a bicycle without a bell that was heading for me. I agree with Deputy Tadier in the sense that everybody needs to be courteous to each other and the areas that we use should be used safely and fairly by all.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I will just say, before I call upon the next question in connection with this, I am going to have to have a fairly narrow ambit and questions should be entirely relevant to the original question and connected with it. I am going to have to, I think, enforce that fairly severely, given that we have a large number of questions to get through within question period.

3.6.4 Deputy C.S. Alves:

Deputy Tadier touched on this, but would the Minister agree that the real issue is that the overwhelming evidence from around the world is that if a safe cycling infrastructure is provided, then more people will cycle? Sometimes, the reason people cycle on pavements is because they feel safer than cycling on busy roads.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Yes, that to me is a self-evident truth. If you make it easier for people to cycle, as certainly in my Parish there have been some changes recently to encourage safer routes to school and to encourage young people to cycle to school, and the more of that that can be done the more it is going to happen. But I think we also need to be realistic; sometimes we have bad weather and that will discourage people from being on cycles. But I think the more we can do within reason to make it easier for people to cycle, the more they will cycle, yes.

3.6.5 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

As someone who has been knocked down by a bicycle and had to go to A. and E. (Accident and Emergency), it is an issue that does concern me. I must say there has been, in recent years, a

marked deterioration in the attitudes of some cyclists who are riding on the pavements and they do come up behind you, you get no warning. If you are walking your dog, or something, there is a potential for a disaster.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy, you can only ask a question.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Yes, Sir. What I would also like to say, on the Avenue, on Thursday, cyclists are restricted. It is important from a public safety point of view that they follow the rules ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy, I am sorry. Deputy, I have indicated it has to be limited and it really has to come very quickly, please.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

OK. I will just ask the Minister for Home Affairs, please to look at this matter, because we do need to do something about it seriously before someone is seriously hurt.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Yes, absolutely and the police continue to be proactive in this area. Last year, there were 27 prosecutions for cycling offences and over 100 words of advice given to cyclists. The police are proactive in this area and will continue so to be. I assume the Honorary Police also take an interest in this issue.

3.6.6 Deputy S.M. Wickenden of St. Helier:

Would the Minister agree that any member of the public, who sees somebody in control of a vehicle that is at risk to themselves, or others, should report it to the police, therefore allowing the Minister to answer this questions appropriately, because the police will have the correct information?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I am not quite sure if I understood the question, but if a member of the public is witness to a crime, then, of course, they should have a public duty to report that to the appropriate authority and, in this case, that would be the States of Jersey Police.

3.6.7 Deputy R.E. Huelin of St. Peter:

Would the Minister consider the return of the cycling proficiency test? I do not know who remembers taking it. The benefits of which are a reminder of the highway code apropos cycle usage, but, more importantly - and it has been covered by many other questions - the etiquette of road usage.

[10:30]

The Connétable of St. Clement:

That is an interesting concept and I certainly cannot remember it. But really that would be a matter, I think, for the Minister for Infrastructure, who is responsible for the regulation and licensing of all types of road transport.

3.6.8 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Would the Minister agree that the situation that is suggested in the original question is absolutely miniscule, compared to the cost to society of motor traffic injuries, respiratory illness, long-term health issues, such as obesity and accidents that are caused? This is a negative approach to cycling, which should be encouraged on this Island and not pooh-poohed.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

While this is at the lower end of criminal activity, it is, nevertheless, not insignificant to people like Deputy Higgins, who had to attend Accident and Emergency because of an errant cyclist, or whether it was a cyclist, or Deputy Higgins' dog, I am not sure, but whatever the case, a cyclist was involved. We all know it does not matter what type of road user you are there seems to be always a minority who will go out of their way to aggravate and cause difficulties for other road users and that is wrong, whether a cyclist, a pedestrian, a motorist, or whatever. I would not belittle the impact that a very small amount of activity does have on pedestrians.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Final supplementary, Deputy Ash. Very well, we now come to question 7 that Deputy Ahier will ask, it is listed for the Minister for Home Affairs, but I have a note that it is to be answered by the Minister for Infrastructure, is that correct?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

That is correct.