

JOIN LONDON'S BIGGEST EVER CRITICAL MASS CYCLE RIDE FRIDAY OCT. 28TH

London CM meets at 6pm on the last Friday of each and every month. The first 45 minutes or so is usually spent socialising and the ride has usually left the meet-up point by 7pm. On average the ride lasts about 2 hours but the time is flexible depending on who is there and what the weather is like. This meet up point is central, chilled out and great for pre-ride socialising/planning. There are a couple of bars/cafes nearby for any cyclists looking for refreshments. The ride often flows around central London taking in major tourist attractions. There is no set route, and the direction we move in is spontaneously chosen as we cycle. Anyone is free to join or leave the ride while it is taking place. The ride usually ends somewhere pretty central, often a pub! People on any form of un-powered wheeled transport are also welcome (eg skates, skateboards, unicycles, wheelchairs, supermarket trolleys...).

SO WHY IS THIS CRITICAL MASS GOING TO BE THE BIGGEST EVER?

On Sept 30th police (who usually facilitate the mass in an unobtrusive way) handed out warning letters to cyclists (reproduced overleaf) in an indefensible attack on freedom of assembly/expression/transport, and the mass will go ahead bigger and more fun than ever in the face of this unprecedented attempt at repression.

Critical Mass in London has rolled on since 1994 without police threatening to use the POA to impose conditions. Why invoke it now when there's been no need up to now?

Why are they wasting time threatening innocent cyclists? Car drivers flock together to block the roads on a daily basis commuting to and from work. We don't block the traffic – we ARE the traffic!!!

www.criticalmasslondon.org.uk

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New Scotland Yard CO11 Public Order Branch
London
SW11 OBG

Critical Mass Cycle Demonstrations

Organisers of public processions are required by law to notify police at least 6 days before the event occurs of the date, time, proposed route and the name and address of an organiser. Failure to do so makes the event unlawful

Demonstrations within a designated area around Parliament must also be notified, and anyone taking part in an unauthorised demonstration commits an offence.

Police can impose conditions on processions, demonstrations and other assemblies, and participants render themselves liable to arrest if they fail to comply with those conditions.

These cycle protests are not lawful because no organiser has provided police with the necessary notification. Your participation in this event could render you liable to prosecution. Police policy in facilitating these events is currently under review.

If you intend to organise a future similar event please refer to the Metropolitan Police website, www.met.police.uk for details. It is preferable for all parties if a lawful event can be safely facilitated, rather than the Police having to enforce legislation.

Superintendent Gomm New Scotland Yard

SUGGESTED REPLY – PLEASE WRITE!!!!!!!!!!

Thank you for your letter of the 29th in which you raised your concern that perhaps cyclists might be breaking the law by organising public processions. However, your concern is misplaced since the monthly community ride is not a procession or indeed a protest. Critical mass has no route and no organisers and doesn't aim to be a demonstration.

While new draconian laws now prohibit democracy around Parliament without prior notification this really has nothing to do with the monthly critical mass bike ride which is an ongoing event and nothing new - just like Brian Haw's constant vigil.

Police may like to impose conditions on critical mass and arrest participants not complying to such conditions. However, nobody involved in the ride is in a position to negotiate with the police as the event is by nature, unorganised and without leaders.

These cycle rides are lawful even though no organiser has provided police with the necessary notification and while participation may render one liable to wrongful arrest I am certain that we would be victorious in court and well compensated for any assault or unlawful detention resulting from such an action.

If you intend to review police policy in 'facilitating' these events please refer to the dozens of critical mass related websites. It is preferable for all parties to be aware of Human Rights Acts so that unlawful acts by the police can be avoided, rather than wasting court time on overturning bad legislation.

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