



Quiet Lanes are now covered in the revised Highway Code published in January 2022. (Suffolk County Council are planning a publicity drive around Quiet Lanes later this year). The revisions include new rules on road user priorities and overtaking on all roads. We have had recent incidents in the village with traffic passing too close to pedestrians and cyclists. It may be helpful to highlight the changes, the law and how to report issues.



## THE CHANGES

### Hierarchy of road users

The new Highway Code has introduced a hierarchy of road users. The new hierarchy means that road users that could cause the greatest harm, like cars, vans and lorries, have more responsibility to reduce the danger they might inflict on the more vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

### Overtaking (Rule 163)

There are updates on safe passing distances and speeds for people driving or riding a motorcycle when overtaking vulnerable road users, including:

- \* leaving at least 1.5 metres when overtaking people cycling at speeds of up to 30mph, and giving them more space when overtaking at higher speeds
- \* passing people riding horses or driving horse-drawn vehicles at speeds under 10 mph and allowing at least 2 metres of space
- \* allowing at least 2 metres of space and keeping to a low speed when passing people walking in the road (for example, where there's no pavement)
- \* take extra care and give more space when overtaking in bad weather (including high winds) and at night
- \* Wait behind them and do not overtake if it's unsafe or not possible to meet these clearances.

## THE LAW (source [motoroffence.co.uk](https://www.motoroffence.co.uk))

### Penalty for a 'Close Pass'

Although there is no law in the Road Traffic Act 1988 for driving too close to a cyclist (or pedestrian), there is a law for 'Careless Driving'.

Section 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 states: 'If a person drives a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road or other public place without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other persons using the road or place, he is guilty of an offence'.

This means that if one is driving too close to a cyclist (or pedestrian), it is possible to receive a fixed penalty of 6 penalty points and a £100 fine. If the case is brought before the court, careless driving can see this raised to anywhere from 3-9 penalty points, a fine of between 50%-150% of your weekly income, or even a discretionary disqualification from driving.



## HOW TO REPORT

Police- Take a picture if possible (mobile phone, dashcam or cyclecam) as the number plate is key evidence. Report the incident to the police non emergency number – 101.

If an HGV is involved – you can also report this to Suffolk Highways at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/lorry-management/report-a-heavy-goods-vehicle-incident/>

The screenshot shows the Suffolk County Council website interface for reporting a heavy goods vehicle incident. The page title is 'Report an incident with a heavy goods vehicle'. It includes a search bar, navigation links, and a sidebar with categories like 'Suffolk County Council', 'Roads and transport', and 'Lorry management'. The main content area explains the reporting process, stating that the quickest and easiest way is to complete an online form, which takes an average of 15 minutes. There are buttons for 'Start', 'Before reporting', 'After reporting', and 'Other ways to report'.