



# An Olympic Winner

## *If Lord Coe would just get on his bike*

**W**HY is it going to cost millions to build an Olympic mountain-bike circuit in flat Essex when there is already a world-class one in Kent? According to the Olympic organisers the reason is that the one in Kent — at Penshurst, in what was once a royal estate — ‘is too far away from the Olympic village’. Which, since it is actually no further and easier to get to than the one proposed in Essex, is Very Curious.

In its beautiful 44 acres, Penshurst off-Road Cycling (Porc), has run races at local, county and national levels since 1992. Both national championships staged by Porc were voted ‘Best event of the year’ by *Mountain Biking International*.

*Cycling Weekly* described Porc as ‘Cycling Heaven’ and an ‘off-road nirvana’ and argues that it is the obvious home for the Olympics, an opinion commonly held by the cycling fraternity. For not only is it a proven world-class venue, it involves no destruction of green-belt land. With its eco centre and recycling policies, Porc is a shining example of carbon neutrality and has even won an environmental award from *Mountain Biking UK*.

In contrast, the works at Essex would generate a massive carbon footprint — as well as costing millions the taxpayer would save at Penshurst.

So there you go, Lord Coe. *Pedal off to Penshurst and go for gold.*

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