

Spokesworker is an occasional ("roughly monthly") news sheet, with stop-press news of forthcoming events, and of road, traffic and planning matters. It is not automatically sent to all members. A copy is enclosed if we are writing to you anyway, and copies are handed out at working group meetings. You can make sure to get a copy by sending us 10 or so stamped addressed envelopes. Spokesworker also appears on our Internet web site - to be notified of such updates by email, contact spokes@spokes.org.uk.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Jan 20-31 New Forth Road Bridge - Exhibitions Public info and feedback sessions. Full details of times and places: 0141 272 7578 www.forthreplacementcrossing.info. Events include... Caledonian Hilton, Princes St, Jan 30, 1030-2030; Jan 31, 1000-1700. Edinburgh Marriott, 111 Glasgow Rd, Jan 26, 1030-2030.

Dunfermline Jan 23; Kirkliston Jan 29; Linlithgow Jan 30; Livingston Jan 28; N QF Jan 24,26,27,28; S QF Jan 20-23; Winchburgh Jan 27.

Also sign up for official bridge e-newsletters at above website. For the environmental case see www.forthrightalliance.org.

Jan 25 Climate Change Event Discuss the Climate Change Bill and future of Micro-renewable technology in Scotland - Labour Party public event by Mark Lazarowicz MP (spokes member) and Sarah Boyack MSP. Workshops on local initiatives, business opportunities, etc. St Georges West Church, 58 Shandwick Place, 2.30-5pm. Email mendelr@parliament.uk to book your place.

Jan 24 - Mar 21 Dreams on Wheels - Not to be missed under any circumstances!! Danish Cultural Institute presents a major cycling exhibition at Edinburgh Botanics, as part of the lead-up to the UN Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in November 2009.

Aim: to show cycling as transport, and in relation to climate change, energy security, environment, public health. Jointly with **Scottish Government** [how do they have the gall to do this when cycle investment is 1% of the Scottish budget and falling in real terms? - ask your MSP!] and **Edinburgh Council** [who are removing cycle lanes in Leith Walk and Prince St, half-hearted about coloured surfacing, and no new cycling initiatives]. There is also a series of parallel events - rides, Dr Bike sessions, workshops, etc. See the excellent website www.dancult.co.uk/dreamsonwheels.

Jan 31- Feb 21 Spokes 100 Bulletins exhibn - Linlithgow library

Feb 3 Transport and Edinburgh Business Graham Bell, Edin Chamber of Commerce [formerly involved in cycling initiatives]. CRAG public meeting at Friends Meeting Hse, Victoria Terrace. 7.30; coffee at 7.15. 558 8042 www.capitalrail.org.uk.

Feb 7 Tollcross Green Fair 10.30-3, Free, Bruntsfield Place, Barclay Church. Green Party public event for local eco-friendly businesses/orgs. Help at **Spokes stall** - symondsmark@hotmail.com.

Feb 9 Building a Low Carbon Economy Lecture by Lord Adair Turner, chair of the UK Government Cttee on Climate Change - responsible for advising the govt. 6pm, Edinburgh Uni. Entry by ticket only - free from lecture@foe-scotland.org.uk.

Feb 25 Transport & Placemaking for Sustainable Communities with particular reference to Edinburgh tram. Riccardo Marini, Edinburgh Council Design Leader. [Spokes Note: an opportunity to challenge Mr Marini on the worsened onroad conditions resulting from how the tram has been designed - e.g. use of 1m valuable roadwidth for an island between the tramlines, unlike almost any other city; also space kept for Leith Walk car parking but no bike lanes]. CILT event, City Chambers, 6pm (coffee 5.30). Free but booking essential, quoting code SR055. Book 01536 740104 or membership@ciltuk.org.uk.

Late Feb/ early March - Spokes spring mailout/ Spokes no.103.

Mar 3 Integrating Bus and Tram in Edinburgh Neil Renilson, TIE Chief Executive. CRAG meeting - details as Feb 3.

Mar 19 Car Clubs Have Arrived conference, Edinburgh City Chambers. Enquire at info@transformscotland.org.uk for a discount as Spokes is a Transform member [if you're a spokes member].

Mar 25 Spokes Spring Public Meeting - provisional - Bikes & Buses; Bikes & Trams. JackiehATwaitrose.com.

Apr 22 Climate Change Rally Scottish Parliament, 11am-2pm. Details at www.stopclimatechaosscotland.org.

BUDGET 2009/10

The Scottish Government 2009/10 budget is near the end of its Parliamentary process, with a probable final vote on Jan 28.

The Scottish Government plans to freeze cycle investment - i.e. to decline in real terms. The Spokes budget proposal [www.spokes.org.uk - news item] reached a remarkably high profile in Parliament with support from Green, LibDem and Labour. Most actively Labour transport spokesperson **Des McNulty MSP** raised our submission with **Cabinet Secretary John Swinney** at the Transport Cttee and again in the main Parliament chamber, and asked to meet us to discuss campaigning for more cycling/walking investment. **The Parliament's Transport Committee recommended a change in the budget, in line with our ideas.**

However the SNP has not shifted, and the budget still has static cycle investment. This despite a £134m trunk road spending rise - PLUS John Swinney has just announced £24m 'accelerated capital spending' for major road projects [more A75 dualling, a new Fochabers bypass, A9 work, and Glasgow park-and-rides].

Therefore all now depends on the 'horse trading' between the parties prior to the Jan 28 vote. The government has to get a majority in that vote, or risk losing power.

Going by press reports the SNP have (like last year) got the Tories on side by various concessions. The Lib Dems are voting against, and Labour is likely to vote against. The one independent seems likely to abstain or support the SNP. **This leaves the 2 Green MSPs in a critical role.** If they either support the budget or abstain, the SNP will get its majority. (SNP+Tories=63 votes; Lab+LD=62 votes; Green=2; Ind=1).

However, the two Green MSPs are making house insulation their bargaining point. That is obviously a very important issue, but we are disappointed that **they appear not also to be making cycling investment a sticking point** - especially given that our proposal was backed by the Parliament's Transport Committee.

Please consider urgently lobbying Lothians Green MSP robin.harper.msp@scottish.parliament.uk. Also, if you are a Green Party member, or know their other MSP, Patrick Harvie, please lobby him also. A point worth making is that whilst funding for house insulation does need to accelerate much further, it at least is on an upward path already. In contrast, cycle investment is static or declining and so failing even to begin the new momentum that is essential. **Rising investment in insulation and in cycle projects should both be sticking points for the Green MSPs.**

SNIPPETS

- Our November **rush-hour traffic count** shows continued gradual growth in bike use [www.spokes.org.uk - downloads - technical - survey data]. Our thanks to Judy and her helpers.
- **Tenement Bike Parking** There is evidence [which we hope later to put on our website] that potential bike use is lost due to tenement/flat bike storage difficulties. One solution (on which the council is very reluctant) is onstreet bike containers, whilst another is backgreens storage. If interested, see the very lovely and environmentally-conscious website www.ecba.org.uk of **Edinburgh Community Backgreens Association**. Bike storage is one of their many interests. To find the bike storage info, click on *Design Guide*, then on *Useful Spaces*.
- **Environmental employment opportunities [1]** ECBA (above) has funding for an Enterprise Officer - closing date 31 Jan.
- **Environmental employment opportunities [2]** SCVO Green Agenda Policy Officer. 30 Jan. www.scvo.org.uk - vacancies.

- **Environmental employment opportunities [3]** Linlithgow Climate Challenge group [www.linlithgowclimatechallenge.org.uk] has money from the Climate Challenge Fund to employ a full-time coordinator for 1 year (more?) Projects likely to include domestic energy efficiency, transport and other topics. Email peter_roberts01ATyahoo.co.uk to receive a copy of the advert when it is issued, probably in next few weeks.
- **Towards a Healthier Economy** New report from Transform Scotland analysing *economic* benefits of sustainable transport investment. Continental cycle use levels could boost Scotland's economy by a remarkable £4bn annually says the report – mainly due to health benefits. www.transformscotland.org.uk.

PUBLIC MEETING

Report of Spokes Public Meeting, 3 December 2008

Speaker: Marshall Poulton, Edinburgh Council Head of Transport *Very disappointingly, and with an audience of nearly 100, Mr Poulton told us on arrival that for personal reasons he could only stay 45mins, rather than the expected 2 hours. As a result it was impossible to have any come-back during questions. Spokes has requested a follow-up meeting, but no response as yet.*

Mr Poulton said that £23bn is lost to business every year in the UK, due to congestion, so transport efficiency must be improved.

Social factors affect transport needs - car ownership has grown in Edinburgh, population increasing, household size falling. **Bus** patronage has been growing since 1990s, probably encouraged by greenways, but last year declined 2.5%. New **Park & Ride** sites encouraging people to leave cars outside the city centre. **Rail** has the new Brunstane - Edinburgh Park line. He is developing a business case to open the South Suburban line to passengers. The major new project is the **tram**. Line 1A currently being installed, with tracks on the roads in 2009. Money still uncertain for line 1B, Roseburn-Granton. Trams could eventually go to the Royal Infirmary and the Forth Road Bridge if a new bridge is built. **Road safety** is a 'passion' of Mr Poulton, with a £½m pa budget.

Despite the economic problems, Mr Poulton envisages interest in **city centre** investment, particularly Princes St and St James Centre. He wants more pedestrianisation in Princes St, whilst remaining a public transport thoroughfare.

For **cycling**, he has about £350k per year, and as we have had "safe routes to school", he wants *routes to major work places, railway stations, etc.* He would like to see streets 'given back to' **pedestrians**. 4% of Edinburgh journeys are by bike, twice as many as other UK cities. He envisages a *cycle super highway* as in London, and a big *bike hire scheme*, allowing people to jump on and off, picking up bikes and leaving them at numerous locations, eg tram stops. [*Spokes note* – he doesn't have funding for any of these interesting cycle ideas, so the council needs challenged on that]. There will be a trial of *off-peak cycle carriage on trams*.

Questions from the audience

Q: Recent idea elsewhere has been to *remove barriers and signage and make cars/cycles/pedestrians all share same space*.

A: MP worked on similar in Kensington, and would consider Edinburgh trial [*Spokes note:* Kensington scheme cycle injury figures are worrying; need to consider carefully if proposed here].

Q: *Is the Council really pro-cycling?* - various examples of very poor infrastructure for cyclists given.

A: In the past there had been lack of joined up thinking, which he hoped to address. As a positive example, there is £60m to improve roads, and cyclists would benefit from this.

Q: *Overuse of signage, out of date "temporary" signs etc.*

A: MP said a strategy needed to reduce clutter and signage.

Q: Do you have *evaluation process for accident blackspots?*

A: Yes, look at speed, patterns of collision etc over 3 year period and prioritise for remedial action. MP also working with car makers on warning technologies in cars. [*Spokes note:* not all Edinburgh cycle accident blackspots are picked up by this process – e.g. W.SavilleTer/MayfieldRd junction – Spokesworker 11.11.08].

Q: *Only £1/3m p.a. for the next 3 years for cycle investment!*

A: Hard to get money moved, especially between depts; or to make case for transport against school roof repair, etc. He said keep lobbying councillors, emphasising business/economic case.

Q: How can we *structure* to get the best out of limited resources?

A: Restructuring in his dept had taken place, and adverts were ready for 12 new posts, but there is now a freeze on recruitment. Working horizontally within and between depts helps.

Q: Will you explore *reasons for the increase in cycling in 1990s?*

A: The infrastructure was much improved, but hard to know if this was chicken or egg. [*Spokes note:* this is an important question – bike use rose significantly in Edinburgh and London in 1990s/early 2000s whilst falling/static in most of UK. Why is Edinburgh different? Our view is that the widespread coloured surfacing encouraged many more people to cycle. Evidence at www.spokes.org.uk – downloads – technical - 0710 Coloured surfacing. See also page 3 of Spokes Bulletin 93].

Q: Will you set measurable *targets?*

A: A 5-year report has been produced [?? the Local Transport Strategy – it has targets]. A Cycle Action Plan is being developed.

MARSHALL POULTON THEN LEFT ... we then discussed ...

Scottish Government 2009/10 Budget...

Dave du Feu spoke on the campaign to increase cycle investment.

Big schemes usually derive from Government money – eg canal path, where money to Sustrans from the previous govt funded this and many other schemes around Scotland. Hence increased government funding is vital. Councils don't spend much of their own money on cycling: of Scotland's £20m cycle investment about £1million is councils' own money, most of the rest is from assorted Government funds – although much of this is actually spent through councils, so identifying sources can be confusing!

The draft 2009/10 Budget has cycle investment static (falling in real terms) but big rises for trunk roads. Climate change, obesity and public health help our case. Good feedback from Green, LibDem and Labour MSPs, but less so SNP and Conservative. Our submission has been supported by the Parliament Transport Committee. Final budget in January [*Note* – see article overleaf].

Q: Should we write direct to Finance Committee?

A: Best to write to your own MSP, asking them to communicate with Finance Committee. To clarify what we are seeking – £20m fund open to bids from any organization for cycle schemes.

Q: Would it be useful to have pro-forma letter for lobbying?

A: A better response generally comes from individually worded letters. A short letter/email is fine - no great technical detail.

Edinburgh Council...

Sandy Scotland commented on Marshall Poulton's talk:

- MP didn't mention *climate change* once - surprising.
- *Finance* – our Budget Submission campaign is doing better than expected in Parliament, but single outcome agreements means transport and cycle spending will suffer in councils.
- There seems no real *cycling strategy* in the Council. Investment in the past led to increased cycling, but this is not ongoing. An *Action Plan* is needed to get more joined up routes.
- *Cycle hire scheme* – very large scale needed to make it work.
- *Coloured surfacing* – MP didn't commit one way or the other.
- *Trams* – Much new development planned around Leith Docks, only 1.5 flat kms from the tram terminus. Quality *bike parking* essential here, and at the tram stop. *Roadspace* – cycling losing out badly in this important aspect of the tram project.
- *Fife park and ride* working well, removing many cars from Edinburgh streets. Buses every 5 mins during rush hour.
- Possible *tram/rail interchange* near airport/Fife is very exciting.

Rally next year – brain storming...

Proposal for large event, following success of Car Free Day rally/protest this year. *Objective??* - cycle to work route to a large employer, or concentrate on Lothian Road corridor, or cycle to a major venue eg shopping centre, Royal Infirmary, Waverley Stn. Could get companies to compete for cycling miles within a month done by their employees. Benefits from Commonwealth Games – encourage tourists to use bikes, with new routes and links. *Where??* - Road closure, reclaiming a street for a day? Tramworks negative factor, as causing another unwelcome road closure. Closure of Forth Road Bridge for rally??

Idea for 2009 Spokes competition...

If you had say £1m for cycle projects how would you use it? Entries could also be used in our continuing campaign for higher cycle project investment. Big prize needed to attract good entries. [Report by Euan Renton/ Jackie Howlett, *Spokes Notes* by Dave du Feu]