

*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](mailto:spokes@spokes.org.uk).*

## FOR YOUR DIARY

See Spokes 103 p2 and Spokesworker 3.3.09 for more events

Mar 16-20 Spokes 100-Bulletin exhibition – see Spokes103p2.

Mar 20-26 Age of Stupid climate change film at Filmhouse; with post-film workshops [see Spokesworker 3.3.09 for details] including Transport with Spokes speaker on Mar 23 after the 5.45 showing.

Mar 24 Southside Corridor workshop [see Spokesworker 3.3.9].

Mar 25 Bikes & Bus, Rail, Tram - Spokes Spring Public Meeting. See Spokes 103. [JackieHATwaitrose.com](mailto:JackieHATwaitrose.com).

Apr 22 Climate Change Rally Scottish Parliament, 11am-2pm. Details at [www.stopclimatechaosscotland.org](http://www.stopclimatechaosscotland.org).

May 3 MegaCycle Ride Penicuik->Prestongrange by Midlothian Miners for Children 1st. [www.minersmegacycle.co.uk](http://www.minersmegacycle.co.uk).

May 9 Ride for Guide Dogs Glasgow->Edinburgh [coach transport to start or from end] [sandmil@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:sandmil@blueyonder.co.uk).

Jun 18-20 Cycling Science World Congress Conference, Napier Univ. Mainly cycling as sport. [www.wcss.org.uk/cycling%20page.htm](http://www.wcss.org.uk/cycling%20page.htm)

Jun 21 Two Capitals Ride by Sestran. Dunfermline->Edinburgh [coach transport to start or from end] [www.twocapitals.org](http://www.twocapitals.org).

## PRINCES STREET

Spokes is considering a campaign for Princes Street to become tram, pedestrian and cyclist only. Buses and taxis would continue the current diversions (with appropriate re-organisation once tram operation begins), ideally not returning to Princes Street at all – but certainly starting no later than day 1 of tram operation.

The proposal would allow Princes St to develop in a far more friendly way, as in European examples, with shops and gardens linked, extensive pavement cafes, and high quality cycle facilities - a 2-way cycle route on the north or the south side of the tram. In contrast, the current proposals remove even the existing cycle lanes, and so will make Princes St feel significantly less welcoming for the average and the novice cyclist.

The idea stems from a submission by CTC and Spokes member Peter Hawkins to the recent council consultation called *Princes St Development Briefs* [this consultation was notified to all emailable Spokes members some weeks ago, and put on our website]. We hope to reprint his submission in a future Spokesworker.

Since Peter's submission was prepared, two new straws have appeared in the wind, suggesting this could be a realistic idea.

Most important, the latest monthly report by Council Leader Jenny Dawe [12.3.09] states that despite the current huge Princes Street bus/taxi disruption, "*Footfall around the shops in Princes St and George St areas is holding well, indicating that the 'Open for business' message is working.*" This is extremely encouraging, and suggests that once the tram is in place, plus with the sort of Princes Street where people might enjoy lingering, there could be significant increases in footfall. Also, more buses in George Street must have the potential to boost business there, in an area traditionally of less retail.

Second straw: the brochure prepared by TIE for our recent Spokes members' mailout says, "*There may be a longer term solution (for cyclists) should the number of buses on Princes Street be reduced.*" It's the first time we've seen official mention of this – and if the council is already considering bus reduction, then the option of keeping all buses/taxis out is that much closer.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

♦ We'd be interested to hear member views on this proposal – and ideas on how we could take it forward. Obviously the views of

the business community in Princes St and George St would be a significant factor for the council.

♦ It would be useful to have a few pictures of a successful high-profile European city street similar to Princes Street, and in which only trams, bikes and walkers are allowed. And/or possibly a professional drawing of how Princes Street could be.

♦ Also useful would be a picture of Princes St as it was until the tram works diversions - showing congestion, lots of buses and pedestrians and at least one bike!

♦ If you like the idea, feel free to suggest it to your councillors – and copy us your email.

## TRAM/BIKE TRYOUT

Tram developers TIE and operators TEL held a bikes-on-tram tryout on March 13 – we included a last-minute note about this in our recent members's mailout, but our apologies if you didn't hear about it in time as it was fixed up by TIE/TEL at short notice. Here is a report from one Spokes member who attended...

*"Plenty interested cyclists turned up. There were at least half a dozen bikes locked to their railings all the time for the twenty or so minutes I was there and lots of yellow jackets in view.*

*There was plenty of space for two bikes. The passengers on the facing seats could still have leg room and people could still come in the door. A wheelchair user would normally use the wider doors in the centre of the carriage. It would block the door to the cab but this would be the rear cab and not in use. They propose a rack like those on the Scotrail trains, lifting bikes on their cross-bars and belting them in. Really no worse than on the trains if you come in second. Typically you identify the other cyclist - yellow jacket or helmet - and agree to put them in the order they are to come off or help to let the under-one out when needed. Also there will be a member of staff on each tram to help. The rack would need to fold up out of the way when not in use.*

*One lady said it would be very good as she gets older, to come up the hill from Leith to the West End with her bike, avoiding the perceived scariness of Leith Walk as well as the climb.*

*The TIE staff were very positive about the idea of trying this scheme out outwith the rush hour. There was one chap from TIE who is a cyclist, and it was his bike and mine that we tried out. He took a photo and so did his boss from TIE."*

This is a very encouraging report. For the first years of tram discussions TIE/TEL were adamantly against bike carriage, and council Transport Convener Phil Wheeler seemed to take their word as gospel. Even when TIE/TEL began to look more openly it seemed they were only considering a 1-bike option. Of course, the proposal is just off-peak carriage, and will be subject to a trial some time after the tram opens. However it is great that TIE now seems to be seeing it as potentially positive rather than a problem. We have continually pointed out that they could be UK pioneers, and get credit in professional circles (even if it is commonplace in other countries) - we hope they are increasingly seeing it that way!

We thank all members who have written to councillors and to TIE on this in recent years – the continual drip-drip has had an effect. Now if you are writing about other tram issues, you can include a bit of positive feedback, complimenting them on their forward-looking decision on bike carriage, and hoping this will also be reflected in your other concerns, etc, etc!!!

Finally, we'd appreciate feedback from any other members who attended the tryout – how did you feel it went technically, and do you agree that the officials seemed positive on this? Also, if you wish to provide any feedback direct to TIE then email [Mike.Connelly@tie.ltd.uk](mailto:Mike.Connelly@tie.ltd.uk). [and copy to spokes].

# TOUCAN NEWS

Following Spokesworker 3.3.09 our member Ian Archibald got in touch about the **Clermiston Dr to Davidsons Mains Park/NCN1** toucan crossing, for which he has long lobbied the council, and for which the legal order is complete. We obtained this response from council cycle officer Chris Brace: *"Unfortunately the Clermiston Drive crossing was delayed due to major works on Queensferry Road gas pipes. These works and their associated traffic management meant that we could not get permission to undertake our own work. It will be included with other projects going out to tender at the end of April, but I'm afraid this means it isn't likely to be constructed until June/July."*

Chris also mentions that the promised **Ferry Road and Lanark Road West** toucans are due for completion by end March.

The **Meadow Place** closure has been delayed, probably until late Spring, for discussion with the Community Council on the detailed design. This is very disappointing as the Order allowing the closure had already taken an inordinately long period due to objections by the Community Council. The City's cycle staff have been trying to progress this closure now for at least 5 years.

## SNIPPETS

- ◆ **Scientists call for far tougher UK and international climate change targets** following the latest scientific evidence. See [www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/Mar/17/uk-climate-budget-advice-weak](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/Mar/17/uk-climate-budget-advice-weak) and [www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/Mar/13/stern-attacks-politicians-climate-change](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/Mar/13/stern-attacks-politicians-climate-change)
- ◆ **Sustrans** has various useful information sheets, including...
  - **Active Travel and Healthy Workplaces** Info sheet FH06 available online at [www.activetravel.org.uk](http://www.activetravel.org.uk).
  - **Scotland Facts and Figures to support School Travel Initiatives** Info sheet FS27 at [www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk).
- ◆ Submit your comments on the **UK government's Low Carbon Industrial Strategy** at [interactive.berr.gov.uk/lowcarbon](http://interactive.berr.gov.uk/lowcarbon). Click on the transport section to read/comment on that.

## CONSERVATIVE NEWS

[as promised in last SpokesWorker] **A remarkable speech has been made by Theresa Villiers UK Conservative Shadow Transport Secretary. Below are extracts from transport professionals' magazine Local Transport Today, page 1 lead story [13.2.09].**

Note that the views of the Scottish Conservatives at Holyrood are different; for example *"We would be prepared to look at increased funding for cycling projects, but not at the expense of roads"* - **David McLetchie**, senior Tory MSP [and they anyway didn't look at it in the budget discussions!]

It is unclear whether the new ideas will actually happen if the Tories gain power, since there will be big internal opposition to reduced roadbuilding. Finally, although this is an exciting speech, other aspects of UK Conservative transport policy are worrying

**Nonetheless, this is a very positive development and also it can be used to put pressure on other parties** – who are starting work on manifestos for the next UK and Holyrood parliament elections. **Please consider contacting your MSPs (of all parties). Tell them how the UK Conservatives are thinking, and ask them to make sure their party keeps up if they want your vote!**

Finally Theresa Villier's proposed Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) in England **looks very similar to our own Scottish Budget proposal** [[www.spokes.org.uk](http://www.spokes.org.uk) – downloads – submissions – national] - rejected by the Scottish government - for a cycle infrastructure fund – except hers is much more wide-ranging in that it also covers public transport and walk.

### EXTRACTS FROM LOCAL TRANSPORT TODAY [13.2.09] LEAD ARTICLE ... "Villiers sets sights on revamping transport funding rules and NATA"

"A Conservative Government would convert the Transport Innovation Fund to a **Transport Carbon Reduction Fund to support walking, cycling and public transport projects**, Theresa Villiers pledged this week.

The shadow transport secretary also said she would reform **transport appraisal procedures**. One change she wants to introduce is reduced monetary values for small time savings - which often constitute the key justification for road schemes.

Villiers fleshed out her thinking at an event organised by environmental and public transport pressure group the Campaign for Better Transport. The CBT has invited each of the main political parties to spell out their policies for cutting carbon dioxide emissions from the transport sector.

The North London MP criticised the "modal neutrality" mantra of the Government and said a Conservative administration would actively encourage people to choose alternatives to car and air travel. But she emphasised that policy would be based around improving choice and persuasion, saying the party did not favour policies that could be interpreted as coercion. "I don't have any time for mindless car bashing," she said.

Villiers said the government had been wrong to link TIF awards to congestion charging. A Conservative Government would honour any TIF commitments it inherited but she said the remainder of the £200m per annum fund would then go into a Transport Carbon Reduction Fund. Local authorities and voluntary organisations would be able to bid to the fund for cash to enhance walking, cycling and public transport. The amount of paperwork needed for bids would be kept to a minimum, she said.

Increasing bus use would be at the heart of Tory Government transport policies, said Villiers, who said she had "learnt to love bus lanes". The party wanted voluntary agreements and statutory Quality Partnerships - rather than Quality Contracts.

The party would also enthusiastically promote cycling, she said. The needs of cyclists should be much higher up the agenda of transport planning and engineering professionals, and she pledged to review highway guidance to ensure that cyclists were "mainstreamed and not marginalised".

Villiers praised travel planning and said there was great potential to reduce workrelated travel through measures such as teleworking. She singled out the 'tellers-enc' concept - an advanced form of teleworking - and said the public sector should lead its roll-out if a current trial by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills proves successful. "I'm in no doubt that personalised travel planning can and should play an important role," she went on, adding that it could provide a "vital support mechanism" for policies such as encouraging bus use and cycling.

Villiers said there was a need for a "more pragmatic approach" to the division of capital and revenue funding for local authorities. Current rules were stunting the ability to deliver low carbon schemes, she said, with councils often struggling to find the revenue funding to start up car clubs, market public transport, or employ cycle support teams. She said a Conservative Government would work with local authority auditors to clarify whether capital funding could be used for some such initiatives.

Turning to **transport appraisal**, Villiers paid tribute to the critique of the Government's New Approach to Appraisal by Keith Buchan, director of the Metropolitan Transport Research Unit (LTT 18 Apr 08). She said the Tories would reduce the emphasis given to small time savings in appraisal, with more emphasis placed on journey time reliability improvements.

Villiers said it was "frankly barmy" for schemes that reduced road traffic to be scored down for the effect they had on reducing fuel duty revenues collected by the Exchequer.

In a question and answer session, Villiers said there was a continuing need to invest in the road network to remove the worst bottlenecks. And though she reiterated her party's opposition to expanding Heathrow Airport, she left the door open to expansion elsewhere. "I don't think it would be responsible for me to say no to airport expansion anywhere ever again," she said.

But she said there would be no return to out-of-town : development, adding that carbon assessments were needed of policies to centralise services such as post offices and hospitals.

The Conservatives were "committed" to building a high-speed rail line between London and Leeds, said Villiers, and she held out the prospect of eventually being extended to central Scotland.

There would also be longer rail franchises to encourage operators to invest and, overall, the Government would give the private sector more freedom to run the rail network, she said."