

*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 [spokesATspokes.org.uk](mailto:spokesATspokes.org.uk).*

## COPENHAGEN

On Dec 6<sup>th</sup> our Spokes Sunday Ride joins the Ride Planet Earth initiative pressing for a strong deal at the Climate Summit. See [www.rideplanetearth.org](http://www.rideplanetearth.org) for the background and an inspiring blog by Kim Nguyen who has cycled for 16 months from Australia through Asia and Europe, to Copenhagen.

As further background we print here [abbreviated] the latest statement by the UK Met Office chief scientist and the Royal Society – the independent top British science body. Full report at [www.metoffice.gov.uk/corporate/pressoffice/2009/pr20091124a.html](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/corporate/pressoffice/2009/pr20091124a.html).

### CLIMATE SCIENCE STATEMENT 24 Nov 2009

**Prof. Julia Slingo**, Chief Scientist, Met Office

**Prof. Alan Thorpe**, Natural Environment Research Council

**Lord Rees**, President, the Royal Society

**Contacts:** 01392 886655 [pressoffice@metoffice.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@metoffice.gov.uk)

“Crucial decisions will be taken in Copenhagen about limiting and reducing the impacts of climate change, now and in the future. Climate scientists from the UK and across the world are in overwhelming agreement about the evidence of climate change, driven by human input of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

As three of the UK’s leading scientific organisations, involving most of the UK scientists working on climate change, we cannot emphasise enough the body of scientific evidence that underpins the call for action now, and we reinforce our commitment to ensuring that world leaders continue to have access to the best possible science.

The 2007 Assessment Report of the UN’s climate change panel [[www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)] made up of the world’s foremost climate scientists, provided unequivocal evidence for a warming climate, and a high degree of certainty that human activities are largely responsible for global warming since the mid 20th century. However, the IPCC process is based only on information already published and even since that report the evidence for dangerous and potentially irreversible climate change has strengthened significantly.

- ◆ Global CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations continue to rise and methane concentrations have started to increase again after a decade of near stability
- ◆ The decade 2000–2009 has been warmer, on average, than any other decade in the previous 150 years
- ◆ Observed changes in precipitation (decreases in the subtropics and increases in high latitudes) have been at the upper limit of projections
- ◆ Arctic summer sea-ice cover declined suddenly in 2007 and 2008, prompting the realisation that this environment may be far more vulnerable to change than previously thought
- ◆ There is increasing evidence of continued and accelerating sea-level rises around the world.

We expect some of the most significant impacts of climate change to occur when natural variability is exacerbated by long-term global warming, so that even small changes in global temperatures can produce damaging local and regional effects. Year-on-year the evidence is growing ... *This includes:*

- ◆ In the UK, heavier daily rainfall leading to local flooding
- ◆ Increased risk of summer heatwaves such as the summer of 2003 across the UK and Europe
- ◆ Increasing incidence of extreme weather events with unprecedented levels of damage to society and infrastructure
- ◆ Sea-level rises leading to dangerous exposure of populations in, for example, Bangladesh, the Maldives and other island states
- ◆ Persistent droughts, leading to pressures on water and food resources, and the increasing incidence of forest fires in regions where future projections indicate long-term reductions in rainfall, such as south-west Australia and the Mediterranean.

These emerging signals are consistent with what we expect from our projections, giving us confidence in the science and models that underpin them. Without action to mitigate climate change, we can expect much larger changes in coming decades.

Some countries and regions are already vulnerable to climate variability and change, but in the coming decades all countries will be affected, regardless of their affluence or individual emissions. Climate change will have major consequences for food production, water availability, ecosystems and human health, migration pressures, and regional instability. In the UK, we will be affected both directly and indirectly, through the effects of climate change on, for example, global markets (notably in food), health, extent of flooding, and sea levels.

The accumulation of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere will lead to long-term changes in the climate system that will persist for millennia. Our growing understanding of the balance of carbon between the atmosphere, oceans and terrestrial systems tells us that the greater the accumulation of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, the greater the risk of long-term damage to Earth’s life-support systems. Known or probable damage includes ocean acidification, loss of rain forests, degradation of ecosystems, and desertification. These effects will lead to loss of biodiversity and reduced agricultural productivity. Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases can substantially limit the extent and severity of long-term climate change.

**Summary** The 2007 IPCC Assessment, the most comprehensive and respected analysis of climate change to date, states clearly that without substantial global reductions of greenhouse gas emissions we can likely expect a world of increasing droughts, floods and species loss, of rising seas and displaced human populations. However, even since the 2007 IPCC Assessment the evidence for dangerous, long-term and potentially irreversible climate change has strengthened. The scientific evidence which underpins calls for action at Copenhagen is very strong. Without co-ordinated international action on greenhouse gas emissions, the impacts on climate and civilisation could be severe.”

## EXCITING HOPES

### TENEMENT BIKE PARKING

Spokes has applied to the Cycling Scotland Innovation Fund for a project to identify practical options for tenement bike parking – onstreet, in backgreens, stairwells, in-flat, folding bikes, etc, etc. *Please email Spokes if you have any helpful suggestions.* There is strong evidence that storage problems are repressing bike use in the central areas. Our application is supported by Edinburgh Council, the Community Backgreens Assn and the Bike Station.

### WORKPLACE BIKE USE

The **Bike Station** has received a huge £3/4m Climate Challenge Fund grant to work with medium and small employers to promote shift from car use to cycling, walking and bus. **Spokes** is a project partner – we will help promote the project and supply 10,000 of our next Edinburgh map edition at a low bulk price.

**JOB OPPORTUNITIES** – the Bike Station is advertising for staff for this project – closing date 18 December. [thebikestation.org.uk](http://thebikestation.org.uk).

### BIKE TRAILERS PROJECT

**Linlithgow Climate Challenge and Linlithgow Cycle Action Group** (including several Spokes members) have applied to the Cycling Innovation Fund for a project to loan out bike trailers to encourage local shopping by bike. Many people drive 1 or 2 miles to the town supermarkets and other shops, clogging up the town – it is hoped some of these can be persuaded to go by bike instead.

## BUDGET ADVANCE

Our campaign on the 2010-11 Scottish budget has moved a step forward. The just-published report by the Parliament's **Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee** [TICC] on the draft budget states, *"the treatment of active travel in the draft budget once again gives the Committee cause for concern."* They recall that the government ignored its recommendation for higher investment in 08/09 and again 09/10. Declining funding, they say, is *"contradictory"* to the government target for a *"tenfold cycling increase"* from 1% to 10% of all journeys, and is at odds with the Climate Change Act. **They urge that funding be "significantly increased" and that the government looks immediately into re-allocating transport funds – before the full budget debate on 17 Dec.** We also understand from Labour Transport Spokesperson **Charlie Gordon MSP** that the TICC Committee's Convenor **Patrick Harvie MSP** and Vice Convenor **Cathy Peattie MSP** met Finance Secretary **John Swinney MSP** to emphasise this.

The TICC Committee is clearly highly frustrated at continuing government inaction on the evidence - and on its own target to grow bike use. This we suspect is why TICC have set up the **Inquiry into Active Travel** [opposite] – to increase the pressure.

**Therefore now is a really important time to write to MSPs. Tell them you understand the Transport Committee is strongly urging increased cycling investment in the budget, say why this matters, and ask them to raise it in the Dec 17 debate and to promise their party will make it a condition of supporting the final budget.** Find your MSPs at [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com).

For more budget background see the articles in Spokesworker 11.11.09 and on our website [www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress](http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress).

### MORE EVIDENCE - 1

Yet more evidence on the need for a rapid rise in cycling investment has just come out - the *Third Annual Assessment of progress in sustainable development by the Scottish Government*, produced by official government advisory body the **Sustainable Development Commission Scotland** [[www.sd-commission.org.uk](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk)]. You may find this useful to quote when writing to MSPs.

The SDC Assessment Report says the government 2020 target of 10% of all trips by bike *"is welcome but will require significant investment in high quality, safe and attractive cycling routes and reducing the danger posed to cyclists by motor transport."*

It continues, *"Given that funding for active travel currently represents around 1% of the transport budget, a significant reallocation of transport funds will be required. We are therefore disappointed to see in the ... draft budget for 2010/11 ... no increase in active travel funding"* This signifies *"a gap between the Scottish Government's aims and its financial commitments."*

**Spokes says: this is still a draft budget – the government can still get it right, and other parties can still pressure them – so please email all your MSPs! The SDC report is good to quote, as SDC is an official advisory body to the government.**

### MORE EVIDENCE - 2

A drastic picture of future oil availability is painted in *"The Oil Crunch: Securing the UK's Energy Future"* - First Report of the **UK Industry Taskforce on Peak Oil and Energy Security** (ITPOES). ITPOES comprises big companies like Virgin, Yahoo, Scottish and Southern, etc, yet it sees a *"highly probable"* scenario where both the world and the UK soon (maybe 2011/13) face a 5% annual decline in oil use, and the need to virtually end UK oil use in 20 years. There is a combination of reasons: easy sources of oil are becoming fewer, rising worldwide demand as more countries industrialise, prices are likely to rise, and oil-producing countries will retain more of their own limited supplies.

The report has an annex on how the UK should urgently reduce oil demand, with increased walking/cycling for everyday journeys as an important transport measure - 50% of UK car trips are under 5 miles. The report points out that 35% of journeys under 7.5km in the Netherlands are by bike. But: *"to approach these levels of bicycle travel, large investment in cycle facilities will be needed across the country."* It also points out, however, that *"these costs can be offset by a reduction in healthcare and congestion costs."*

## Stop Press: PRINCES ST

Princes Street reopening has revealed many immediate problems – quite separate from the debate on the longer-term future. **Already we know of 2 cyclists falling on tramlines.** Several problems would have been less serious if the council had listened to Spokes, and used the space wasted by the Streetscape-inspired central island to provide more width each side. **Please take great care of:** cobbles (not consulted on?); turns into Waverley Bridge and St Andrews Sq; Hanover St to Mound; Princes St to Shandwick Place. The council is looking into 'remedial measures.' **Please report any falls or problems to your councillor and to Spokes.**

## MORE THINGS TO DO

### ACTIVE TRAVEL INQUIRY

**Submit your views to the Scottish Parliament Transport Committee Inquiry into walking and cycling - by 11 Dec.** For details, links to Spokes written evidence, and a video of our oral appearance see the Nov 27 article at [www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress](http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress).

### GOGAR TRAM/RAIL INTERCHANGE STATION

Network Rail & Transport Scotland plan a tram/rail interchange at Gogar, funded by the Scottish Government, a concept we support. It will be just north of the A8, between Gogar roundabout and Maybury. A safe A8 crossing here from the Gyle and its path network to the north side is already badly needed, and is now also vital not just to access the new station but for the extensive future development planned north of the A8. The interchange plan gives the opportunity for such an underpass. Instead, it includes a pedestrian-only tunnel (bikes pushed), and only to the station.

**Transport Scotland is a government agency and so should do all it can to support the government target of 10% of trips by bike in 2020. But, not for the first time, it is doing the least it thinks it can get away with.** [Another crazy example is Airdrie-Bathgate railway, now under construction, where Transport Scotland - *"it's not our responsibility"* - refuses to provide cycle links to new stations from surrounding areas, despite strong Sustrans and Spokes objections. So there is every incentive for many rail users to drive to the big new car parks being provided].

**The date for official objections is now past, but if the plans concern you please contact your MSPs. A final decision is not expected till January, so it is worth writing now** [you have one constituency MSP and 7 regional ones – find them at [writetothem.com](http://writetothem.com)]. Ask your MSPs to investigate and tell you why Transport Scotland is allowed by the government to use public money for a so-called interchange with grossly inadequate cycling provision - particularly in light of the government's cycle use target.

### EDINBURGH PARKS EVENTS CONSULTATION

The Council is consulting on the rules for allowing commercial and other events in parks. Spokes has urged that important cycle routes (such as the N-S and E-W Meadows paths) should be kept open and in good condition 24/7, and not permitted to be blocked or damaged by events. **Please send your comments by 31 Jan** to [parks@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:parks@edinburgh.gov.uk). For more details of the consultation see [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Leisure/Parks\\_and\\_recreation/Gardens/CEC\\_edinburgh\\_parks\\_events\\_manifesto](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Leisure/Parks_and_recreation/Gardens/CEC_edinburgh_parks_events_manifesto) or phone 529 7921.

## CARFREE CITIES

**Jun 28-Jul 1, 2010 Towards Carfree Cities IX** world conference in York – first time in UK. [www.worldcarfree.net/conference](http://www.worldcarfree.net/conference).

"Promoting practical alternatives to car dependence, and working to transform our towns and cities into human-scale environments rich in public space and community life. The focus is on strategy, collaboration and exchange, assisting the practical work of conference participants – whether it be organising carfree days, promoting urban cycling or building carfree cities of the future."

**Ideas for the conference** must be submitted by 11 December. **Registration** as a delegate is available now at the above website.

**For more carfree news ...** including all back issues of CarBusters magazine, see the updated website at <http://carbusters.org>.