

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.

FUTURE FUNDING

Who will pay for the Quality Bike Corridor from Mayfield/Kings Buildings to Southside/Princes St next year 2011-12?

Who will pay for future quality bike corridors in other areas of the city, as in the Council's *Active Travel Action Plan*? Who will pay for the high quality connections and junction crossings needed for the Family Network – for example, linking North Edinburgh network to the south; or linking the Meadows to the Innocent? Even the best of plans won't happen without the funding!

And who will pay for cycling projects in other councils across Scotland. If one thing is absolutely certain from past experience, and from the Spokes annual funding survey, it is that councils will not come up with most of the funding from their own resources. If there had been any doubt, the current squeeze on council funds makes that even more certain!

For many years the great bulk of cycling facilities have been funded from a varying collection of government grants. As the quote from Edinburgh Council below shows, implementation of Edinburgh's *Active Travel Action Plan* relies heavily on this central funding continuing – and it will be the same in every Scottish council which has plans to boost cycle use.

The Spokes annual survey shows that currently the two main sources of cycle project funds across Scotland are...

- ◆ **CWSS – Cycling, Walking, Safer Streets**, a £9m a year fund which the Scottish government parcels out to councils on the basis of their population size, and 'ring-fenced' for CWSS purposes.

- ◆ **The Sustainable and Active Travel (SAT) line** in the Scottish Budget. This is divvied out to organisations/projects by the government's Sustainable Transport Team. Currently it is £21m, of which about half goes to 'reduced carbon' motor projects – electric car plug-in points, greener buses, etc; and the other half to walking/cycling projects – the biggest single sum is to Sustrans for their work with councils, British Waterways, etc.

Without continued government funds, cycling investment in Scotland will collapse way below its current already miserable level – around 1% of total transport spending. In Edinburgh, for example, the Councillors' report on the *Active Travel Action Plan* states clearly, *"Any withdrawal of Scottish Government CWSS funding is likely to have serious implications ... the ambitious cycling targets are unlikely to be met in this scenario."*

WHY THE NEXT FEW WEEKS MATTER!!

The next few weeks are likely to make a massive difference for several years to come, for 3 reasons...

- ◆ **The 2011-12 draft Scottish Budget is now being negotiated between the parties, with a final vote in February.** The draft budget increases the above SAT budget line by £4m (£1m for walk/ cycle and £3m for reduced-carbon motor projects) but omits CWSS entirely. Subsequently the government issued another draft document (the Local Government Finance Settlement) which *does* show CWSS (but down from £9.1m to £7.5m). Finance Secretary **John Swinney MSP** made clear that even this is not definite – it is up for negotiation with the body representing councils (COSLA) and with other political parties, with a final vote in Parliament in February. Thus, if the draft plans go through, total cycle project funding is likely to fall somewhat in 11-12 compared to 10-11. But if CWSS is scrapped, it will fall drastically.

- ◆ **The Scottish Government is to lay out provisional spending proposals for the next 4 years.** These can change year-to-year, but past experience shows the provisional plans are a good bet for

what happens. If different parties are in power after the May elections they might change the provisional allocations – but even then they may would probably start out from the existing pattern. Our aim must be to get a big rise in the proportion of the transport budget which goes to cycling – at present only around 1%.

- ◆ **Scottish political parties are drawing up their manifestos for the May elections to the Scottish Parliament.** This is critical. A couple of times, over the years, Spokes pressure has helped get commitments into various party manifestos. *Just a few words in the manifesto of a party which shares in power could make a massive difference to cycling investment throughout Scotland for each of the next 4 years!* Again, our aim must be to get a big rise in the proportion of the transport budget which goes to cycling.

HOW *YOU* CAN HELP!!

There has rarely been a more important time to write to your MSPs about cycling investment!! - make this your top New Year resolution – it's easy to do, you're doing your bit for the world, and you can even reward yourself with a couple of squares of chocolate (other resolutions permitting).

You can cover all 3 above bullet points briefly in just one email/letter and send it to all your MSPs. So, please do help!! You have one constituency MSP and several 'list' MSPs (7 if you live in Lothian) – find them all at www.writetothem.com.

At a recent forum on environmental issues, with MSPs from all parties on the platform, it was fascinating to see how two of the MSPs (who are known to have strong personal environmental sympathies) made powerful appeals for members of the public to write to MSPs – **it really felt like they were pleading for help!!**

They reminded us that there are many pressures within parties: if MSPs are hearing from several constituents about an issue they are more likely to push for that issue, and to support its inclusion in their party's election manifesto.

We suggest your letter/email could be on the following lines...

- ◆ *Explain briefly* why improved conditions for getting about by bike are important to **you** and/or more widely.

- ◆ [optionally] *Remind them* that only 1% of the Scottish transport budget is invested in cycling projects, even though 2% of trips to work are by bike (much higher in Edinburgh) and the government has set a hugely ambitious target: 10% of all trips by bike in 2020.

- ◆ *End your letter with 3 bullet points, asking your MSPs to...*

- **Speak to Finance Secretary John Swinney** to ensure that the CWSS fund is retained in the final 2011-12 budget.

- **Speak to their own party's transport spokesperson** to argue for a higher percent of the transport budget* to go to cycling investment in the spending plans for the next 4 years.

- **Ensure that their party manifesto for the May Holyrood elections** includes a commitment to raise the percent of the transport budget* invested in cycling (or in active travel).

- ◆ *Finally, ask them to write or email you back* to let you know what actions they are taking on these matters.

Please send Spokes any interesting replies!

*When writing to your MSPs it is fine just to ask for an increase in the proportion of the transport budget allocated to cycling. However, if you want more detail, have a look at the Spokes submission on the draft budget - see the Dec 3 news item on the Spokes website. Our submission calculates that the government's own target of 10% of trips by bike in 2020 needs a minimum £50m annual investment, 2.5% of the transport budget. Double that would be needed if it is to cover all active travel rather than just cycling. And a report by the *Association of Directors of Public Health*, signed by many other professional and expert bodies, calls for 10% for active travel [the reference is in our budget submission].

BIKE STORAGE OFFER

Please pass this article on to anyone you know who might be interested in bike storage improvements where they live

If you live in Edinburgh City Council area there's a chance to buy bike racks and other storage equipment for flats or tenements at reduced cost – but you must order by 17 Jan. This offer results from the recognition by the Council that domestic bike storage problems are a constraint on bike ownership and use in the city.

The Council is to place a bike parking equipment order in Jan (for schools etc). Anyone interested in storage equipment for their tenement or similar location is welcome to order from the supplier who wins the tender. Delivery charges will then be shared, significantly reducing costs. Delivery should be in mid-Feb.

To get an idea of products, see the websites of companies whom the Council is asking to quote – links and ballpark costs are in the Dec 26 news item *Bike Storage Offer* on the Spokes website.

If interested, please proceed as follows...

- ◆ Look at the *Spokes storage factsheet* [see below] for an idea of possible solutions, considering both security and convenience.
- ◆ Ensure neighbours, landlords, and other relevant persons, are happy with whatever storage improvements you propose, especially if in a common stair, garden or backgreen. You may also need to discuss with them sharing of costs, or raising funds.
- ◆ Check if you live in a listed building or conservation area as this may prevent you attaching anything. A stand-alone rack may get around this issue. See the Spokes factsheet for summary information on other possible regulatory issues.
- ◆ Measure the width of door through which deliveries would come as well as the space for a rack in a stair or back green.
- ◆ If you are interested, or have further queries, contact mark.symonds@edinburgh.gov.uk by 6pm on Monday 17 Jan.

Spokes would like to hear if you take up this offer, and how you get on: let us know at spokesbikestorage@spokes.org.uk.

Please note that Spokes is merely passing on the information about this offer – we are not involved in the arrangements and you should deal solely with the above council contact for that.

STORAGE INFORMATION MATERIALS

The Spokes factsheet on bike storage for flats and tenements is now online, together with a spreadsheet of relevant products – see Dec 26 *Factsheet* news item on the Spokes website. A shorter printed version should be available in the next few weeks. *If you know a local group which could use multiple copies, please contact us urgently before the factsheet goes to the printer.*

If you have **comments on the factsheet**, or if you are **taking action on bike storage in your home, tenement or street**, or if you have **ideas for a follow-up project**, we'd like to hear from you. If so see our questionnaire www.surveymonkey.com/s/XX5982Y or email spokesbikestorage@spokes.org.uk.

OUTSIDE EDINBURGH

STIRLING CYCLE PLANNING DAY Sat 22 Jan, 9.30-3pm.

Aims to (i) identify existing Stirling initiatives where we can support each other, and (ii) identify, prioritise and plan initiatives which the network can lead on. Participants to include Council officers and local groups such as Going Carbon-Neutral Stirling. *More information:* andrew.abbess@btinternet.com.

ANOTHER FORTH BRIDGE

The Scottish Government draft 2011-12 budget includes £200m to start work on the £2000m Forth road bridge. A letter organised by the Forthright Alliance (to which Spokes is affiliated) has been sent to the Auditor General (who looks into responsible use of public money) calling for a delay until tests on the existing bridge are complete. See the letter at www.forthrightalliance.org. The Alliance asks concerned people to write to the Auditor General.

PEAK OIL WARNING FROM INDUSTRY

On 18th November 2010 the *UK Industry Taskforce on Peak Oil and Energy Security*, which includes big UK companies such as Arup, Scottish and Southern Energy, Stagecoach and Virgin, launched a briefing note titled '*Peak Oil - Implications of the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill*'. The conclusions include...

"The Taskforce sees major consequences of rising oil prices in the next few years. Without a strong, coordinated response from Government to protect the UK economy and society from rising prices the cost of travel, food, heating and retail goods will rise, impacting British businesses and citizens alike. We also need to see much quicker Government action to support the introduction of renewable energy technology and energy efficiency measures."

The report, and much more on peak oil, can be found at the Taskforce website, <http://peakoiltaskforce.net>. The BBC also has a report, including comments by Richard Branson, and a link to the briefing note: www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-11781533.

HAZARD RECORDING

This article submitted by a Spokes member [slightly abbreviated].

Taking action against dangerous cycling conditions

Do you get cheated off by irresponsible parking, contractors who leave stuff on the road, or dangerous potholes and road surfaces? Hopefully you report such incidents to your Council's road maintenance service (Clarence in Edinburgh - phone 0800 232323 or email clarence@edinburgh.gov.uk). Clarence are usually quite good at sorting potholes but for contractor and parking issues they often cannot react quickly enough.

On the **cyclestreets website** - <http://edinburgh.cyclestreets.net/> you can create a **photographic record** of such incidents. This also helps build a picture of persistent problems over time. Spokes can use this evidence to push for decisive action by the authorities to create a permanent fix so that the problem will not re-occur.

To help keep track of issues, it would be really useful to use standard keywords (also known as **tags**) when posting pictures. Please use the following (with no spaces)...

- ◆ **badparking** for parking issues;
- ◆ **contractordanger** for contractor issues; and
- ◆ **badsurface** for potholes and other dangerous surface features

Add your own tags if you wish, but please also use these standard ones, to help us to pick up all the issues of a similar type.

Adding your pictures using the Photomap facility is intuitive and straightforward. As well as problems you can also alert other cyclists to good features such as beautiful views from cycle paths.

If you have ideas about other categories of issue you think spokes should track, please email spokes@spokes.org.uk.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Relevant meetings of CRAG (Capital Rail Action Group), all at Friends Meeting House, 7 Victoria Ter, 7.30 (7.15 for coffee etc). More info: www.capitalrail.org.uk Patrick Hutton 0131 558 8042.

Feb 1st Haymarket and Gogar stations by Transport Scotland (TS). Could be useful given the problems over the new Gogar station cyclist do-minimum approach by TS [Spokes 108, p7].

Mar 1st Airdrie-Bathgate Project talk by Network Rail Director, Ron MacAulay. [See again Spokes 108p7].

Apr 5 CRAG Holyrood Election Transport Hustings.

Jan 23 Womens' cycling day/course by the Forestry Commission at Ae forest www.7stanes.gov.uk/womenonwheels.

Jun 11 Edinburgh Moonwalk for breast cancer. Volunteer cyclist marshalls needed. steve@walkthewalk.org. www.walkthewalk.org.

TARTAN TRAIL, Aug 5 – Sept 17, ages 18-28

Otesha UK is a charity helping young people be agents of change for a cleaner, greener, fairer world: www.otesha.org.uk

"If you're 18-28 and want to do something that matters this summer, come ride with us! Hop on your bike, roam around in a two-wheeled community, explore, meet good mates and make a real difference in the world. You'll also get trained in public speaking, theatre, bike touring, maintenance, group living, media relations, consensus decision-making, and sustainable living."

The tours spend six weeks on the road, over 600 miles, visiting an inspiring, diverse range of rural and urban communities.

Northern Soul 10 June – 23 July Snowdonia -> Yorkshire Dales -> Lake District -> Scotland.

Tartan Trail 5 Aug – 17 Sept From Edinburgh, heading north!