

Spokes Action Update 20.2.16

... This is a circular to emailable Spokes members. If you recently sent us a change of email address it may not yet be in our database, so this message may go to your old address or possibly to both.

... **Please check below carefully for everything that concerns you, then follow it up.**

If you are short of time, the most important & urgent item is...

- **Scottish Budget - transfer just 1% of the trunk roads budget to cycling** – see 2 below
– *please act now - this weekend or by Tues 23 Feb.*

Are you concerned about...

- **Bike/rail** - see 3 below
- **Garden sheds/containers** for bike storage – see 4.2 (*and act by 29 Feb*)
- Learning about **Netherlands cycling provision & policies** – see 5 below
- **Gorgie/Dalry** – see 4.1 (*by Feb 29*)
- **A cycle link from Warriston path to Dundas St** – see 6 (*exhibition 25 Feb*)
- **Big car-dependent housing developments** – see 6 (*exhibitions 25 Feb and 22 March*)

1. FOR YOUR DIARY

- **Transform Election Platforms** – Transform Scotland is organising public meetings (with some snacks and drink provided!) on transport policy with all the parties represented at Holyrood. Labour was held on 28 Jan (as in our previous circular). Other dates .. LibDem March 3; Green March 9; SNP March 15; Conservative tba. More info and locations at transformscotland.org.uk/whats-new/events
- Tue 23 Feb *History of Cycling in Scotland* by Dr Nicholas Oddy. Evening talk – details [here](#) [search Regions for 'Scotland']. Amusing and myth-busting talk on cycling history [mainly early history].
- Sat 27 Feb **Spokes Spring Mailout** with Spokes Bulletin #124
- Tue 1 March [Love to Ride Edinburgh Cycle Challenge](#) begins – but you can sign up now [over 500 people have already!!]. More info in forthcoming Spokes mailout.
- Sat 5 March Cycle Campaigning [Training Day](#) organised by WalkCycleVote [Glasgow venue]
- Sat 19 March **Farmers Market** [Castle Terrace, a.m.] First Spokes stall of 2016
- Sat 19 March **Livingston** - Intro session to Bike Maintenance, 10am-3pm. [for West Lothian residents] Limited places – booking essential. Details at [Livingston 20-milers](#) website.
- Mon 21 March, **Spokes Public Meeting – Holyrood Election Hustings** *Info and downloadable poster at: spokes.org.uk.*
- Sat 23 April **Pedal on Parliament 2016** *Info: <http://pedalonparliament.org>*
- Thu 5 May **The Holyrood Election** – [are you registered to vote??](#) + [Info about the Holyrood Election](#). More about the election soon on our website and at walkcyclevote.scot.

2. SCOTLAND'S BUDGET – *Email your MSPs before Weds 24 Feb*

The final debate and vote on the budget is this Wednesday 24 Feb. **If you have not emailed your MSPs, and you feel strongly about funding for cycling, please consider doing so now – see below.**

The Scottish Government's draft budget for 16/17 is [very disappointing on transport](#) - trunk roads up, rail down, active travel static or down, and severe cuts to councils likely to mean reduced road and footway maintenance.

And whilst cycling/walking cash is roughly static, the way it is structured means that [actual investment in cycling by most councils is likely to fall](#). **In particular, the vital CWSS fund, on which all councils rely for their most basic cycling cash – the only cycling cash to go directly from the government to councils – is being cut by a shocking 26%, from £8m to £5.9m.** And changes to Sustrans funding mean that one or two councils will receive a lot more cash but the 30 or so others will pay for that by having a smaller pot to apply to.

Along with the [Walk-Cycle-Vote campaign](#) Spokes seeks 10% of transport spending to be allocated to active travel in party manifestos for the Holyrood elections. However that is too late for the 16/17 budget – the Scottish SNP government has an overall majority, so there won't be any major change at this late stage.

So, for the 16/17 budget, Spokes is proposing a politically realistic option – transferring just 1% of the £820m trunk road budget to active travel. See [our website article](#) for more details. Our article explains how the 1% could be used so that the growth in Council cycling provision and expertise across Scotland continues in 16/17 instead of being reined back. Stopping the CWSS cut is particularly vital.

Our proposal has gathered a lot of support, including [a letter from the Parliament's Cross Party Cycling Group](#) (signed by its Labour, SNP and Green co-conveners MSPs). Friends of the Earth Scotland has also done a great job helping to push our proposal, with an [e-action](#) supported by nearly 300 people so far, and a briefing to be sent to all MSPs and jointly press-released imminently.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Please help us by emailing your own MSPs (you have one constituency MSP and 7 or so Regional MSPs). Find your MSPs at www.writetothem.com. Ask them to support our proposal – and/or tell them what you would like to see in the budget. *A short email is fine – but the more people who do it, the better.* You might like also to do the FOE e-action above, but emails from individuals to their own MSPs are the top priority.

3. BIKE/RAIL ISSUES – *follow up items that interest you*

- (a) **Scotland Route Study – Scotland's long term rail future** Network Rail is consulting on Scotland's rail system (track, routes, stations, etc, not types of train) to help decide on investment 2019-2029, and to generate ideas beyond that to 2043(!) The consultation ranges from possible new routes [you may have suggestions] to the detail of stations. Waverley may get another floor to cater for rising passenger numbers [p38 of document]. We are suggesting this gives an opportunity for a ped/cycle bridge from the Old Town to Calton Rd (and so to Leith Walk) like the bridge that closed in the 1960s. Please submit your ideas to the consultation and send us a copy. [Consultation details here](#). **Closing date March 10.**
- (b) **Edinburgh-Glasgow new rolling stock** Work is progressing fast to electrify the main Edinburgh-Glasgow line, to be followed by lines to Dunblane and elsewhere. There will be new, longer, electric trains, [Hitachi Class 385](#). **A mock-up is on display at Waverley until Fri 4 March. Please go along, ask questions and leave your comments.** We have not yet visited the mockup and don't know what it shows about bike capacity. However the rumours are worrying, especially given the (relatively) good bike provision on the existing Edinburgh-Glasgow service. The rumour is that [1] there will only be 2 official bike spaces per 4 carriages, and these will have fold-down seats along the wall, so you will have to ask any seated passengers to move. (Like the existing trains, it may well be possible to fit in more than 2 bikes, guards permitting). But [2] there will also be one or more 'flexible spaces' for bikes, prams, etc, though rumour has it that they are not long enough to hold a normal bike! **Please note – do not quote any of this as definite** - we think decisions have been taken recently and may anyway not yet be final. We are not sure if the Waverley display is purely "for information" or if it is also a consultation which could affect final decisions on the detailed layout of coaches.

4. OTHER CAMPAIGNING OPPORTUNITIES - *follow up items that interest you*

4.1 Gorgie/Dalry Community Council – *by Feb 29*

An election is to be held for 10 places on the GDCC. If you live in the area it's a chance to stand for election and influence local issues that concern you – for example keeping up the profile of cycling and sustainable transport. This is particularly important with current plans for the Roseburn to Canal route, and with the East-West route nearby (e.g. how to access it from Dalry Road). Note that quite often there is not a huge number of candidates and you might well get in without an election. Normally these elections are non-party-political; people stand as individuals, not for parties. [Info here](#).

4.2 Domestic Bike Storage – sheds in gardens – *act by Feb 29*

As members will know, Spokes has done a great deal [to assist individuals](#), and try and get [clearer Council rules and decision-making](#), to help people who want to get about by bike but have nowhere to store it other than in a front garden, or other locations requiring planning permission. The Edinburgh position is now slightly clearer, but people are nonetheless often faced with planning application fees of £200 for a shed or container - and without absolute certainty even that permission will be granted.

The whole position in Edinburgh and indeed throughout the whole of Scotland could be revolutionised if the government changed the planning rules such that sheds meeting certain criteria (including size) were classified as 'permitted development' not requiring planning permission. The government so far has been uninterested in listening, but an opportunity has arisen through the current *Independent Review of Planning*. We have made a [main submission](#), but there is also an **"ideas" consultation** [closing 29 Feb]. We have submitted the above as an idea.

If you are affected, or have been, or know someone who is, please consider giving our idea a 5-star vote on the ideas website, and/or leave a comment. [We are not asking all members to vote – just those who know it is a real issue]. *To vote or comment, proceed as follows...*

- Go to https://ideas.scotland.gov.uk/independent-review-of-planning/home?sort_order=rated
- Scroll down the page and you will see all the ideas people have submitted, including "*Bike Storage as Permitted Development*."
- In order to vote, you must first register on the site (at the top of the page). Don't let this put you off - it's the easiest registration we've ever seen, and it also enables you to vote in other future government 'ideas' consultations. NB - the username and password are case-sensitive i.e. you must remember if you used capitals or lower case.
- Once you have registered, click on the idea you wish to vote for. Down the page you will see 5 'blank' stars. Click to highlight the number of stars you want. Note that 5 stars is 'very good', but 1 star seems to mean 'bad' not 'a bit good'.
- **You can also leave a comment if you wish, which is especially useful if you have a personal experience** or some relevant planning knowledge.

4.3 Caught short in Joppa or Portobello??

We've been written to a couple of times by Joppa Residents Assn asking us to publicise their campaign to reopen the Joppa Pumping Station Public Toilets – either permanently or at least April-September. There's also a small item online [here](#). We're not sure why they suggest writing to Spokes, as it's not in our power to remedy! But if you are concerned, you can help by [emailing your councillors](#). If you wish to contact JRA, you can leave a message on their website [here](#).

5. NETHERLANDS STUDY TOUR

Spokes member Iain Longstaff is hoping to organise a cycling study tour to the Netherlands this year, possibly in September, led in the Netherlands by British exile and cycle planning expert David Hembrow. Iain would like to hear from Spokes members interested in possibly joining the tour. He also hopes to attract some of those involved in cycle planning decision-making, such as councillors and professionals. Iain says...

It would be a great opportunity to see a place with some of the highest levels of cycling in the world and how that affects what we should be campaigning for in Scotland.

The tour would be led by David Hembrow, visiting Assen and Groningen, and will include the Assen school run. Details of his operation is at www.hembrow.eu/studytour.

The cost of the tour would be around £180-£315 each depending on the size of our group, which can be 5-12 people. Accommodation costs vary depending on where you stay, probably from £25-45 per night, plus of course the cost of travel to Assen.

The study tour dates (tbd) are likely to be after the school holidays; this makes it easier for potential councillors, officers and other professionals to join. The tour itself is on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday allowing travel on Monday and Friday of that week.

Please get in touch if you or anyone you know would be interested in joining this tour!

Email: i.longstaff.1@research.gla.ac.uk

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS to *comment/object* & PAN EXHIBITIONS to *attend*

Check our page of cycling-relevant planning proposals every week or two to see if any affect areas where you live, work or otherwise cycle. We also explain how to look them up on the council website, using the Council reference numbers below. Find our page at... spokes.org.uk : documents : local : current-pas-and-pans or click here to go straight there... www.spokes.org.uk/documents/members-campaigning/current-pas-and-pans/.

As explained there, a PAN is the stage before a Planning Application. It involves a public exhibition and consultation on a major development before the developer is allowed to submit their planning application.

Some big proposals with exhibitions soon are below. In all cases, cycle facilities, routes and connections will be vital, and in some cases the whole development may be too far from existing facilities and so may be car dependent even if it has good local cycle facilities. ***See our above web page for details of these and more.*** Occasionally exhibitions get changed/cancelled at the last minute – developer contacts can be found by looking up the reference numbers as above.

- 15/05819/PAN **Lasswade Rd/ Gilmerton Station Road area.** Major greenbelt residential development, needs path connections & permeability if given go-ahead. *Exhibition* Gracemount High School, **25 Feb**, 4-9pm.
- 15/05877/PAN **East of Burdiehouse Rd. north of Lang Loan.** Major greenbelt residential development, no amenities at all, so very car-based. Also needs path connections & permeability if given go-ahead. *Exhibition.* 10am to 7pm, Gilmerton Society Hall, **March 22.**
- *Also* 15/05024/PAN **RBS site for development, Fettes Row/Dundas St. ... Opportunity for an east-west connection through the site, to link Dundas St to George V Park and thence the Warriston Path/Rodney St tunnel.** *Exhibition* **Thurs 25 Feb**, 3-8pm at Broughton St Mary's Ch., Bellevue Cres, EH3 6NE. *NB* – this is their 3rd exhibition/consultation for this site, and perhaps for that reason is not in the normal list of PANs

7. FINALLY ...

- ◆ Remember to check out our **website** every so often www.spokes.org.uk.
- ◆ We are active on **Twitter**, [@SpokesLothian](https://twitter.com/SpokesLothian). Please follow us and RT tweets you support. Check our 'favourites' for important or interesting tweets. Recent Spokes tweets also appear on our website.
- ◆ If you use **Facebook**, please like, share, etc the [Spokes Facebook page](#). We hope soon to restart the automatic twitter feed to Facebook.