

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.

CYCLING ACTION PLAN

Please respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on CAPS - the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland. Closing date 20 Aug.

You can find the Plan itself and an online response form at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/05/28093408/0. Paper copies may also be available. Email Karen.Furey@scotland.gsi.gov.uk if you have any queries, or phone her 0131 244 4074. You may also find useful the government's Sustainable Transport website, at www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Transport/sustainable-transport.

Send us a copy of your response if you have important ideas we should consider for the Spokes response.

The Plan contains excellent ideas and **an ambitious target for 10% of journeys to be by bike by 2020. But no money** - only a vague promise to consider money in the next Spending Review, which means no new money till 2011/12 financial year (if then).

At the same time the Spokes annual survey [Spokes 104] shows Scottish cycling investment falling from a miserable 0.93% of the Scottish transport budget under the Lab/Lib government in 07/08 to just 0.81% under the SNP in 08/09 and, unless present policies/decisions change, to 0.66% in 09/10. Down from 422p per person in 07/08 to 355p in 08/09 and maybe 317p in 09/10. Compared to 5%-10% (£10-£20 per person) in bike-friendly European areas.

[*Nerdy paragraph: skip if bored!*] - Moreover there is no discussion of how increased funding might be implemented. Most spending would need to be at council level, but the SNP is reluctant to give councils money for specific purposes - indeed, this is one of the 2 main reasons cycle investment is falling - the Regional Transport Partnerships set up by the Lab/Lib government invested at a good level in cycling, but the SNP transferred RTP funds to councils to use for anything (not even necessarily transport) - and, sadly, most councils invest far less of it in cycling than did the RTPs]. The Spokes proposal [originally made for the 2009/10 budget, and discussed with government officials] is to transfer £20m-£40m of the government's planned *increases* in trunk road funding into a new fund, to which any relevant body could apply for cycle investment money - councils, Sustrans, ScotRail, employers, etc, etc.

QUESTIONS IN THE CAPS CONSULTATION

Below are points to consider for your own response. **But please use your own wording, ideas and experiences - don't just copy what is written here.** Skip some questions if you wish.

Q1 Actions that would encourage you to cycle more? What is needed to get big rises in bike use is: more people using bikes for everyday journeys, not just existing cyclists using their bikes more, and not just offpeak leisure trips. *Why has bike use risen substantially in Edinburgh in recent years, when it was static in most towns and cities??* Feedback from Spokes members and other cyclists suggests a major reason is the **widespread presence of coloured onroad facilities** throughout the city. They are not perfect - but every road user of every sort sees them every day, and gradually people start to think cycling is ok to try - it looks and feels more 'normal' (not quirky), more expected, safer and more welcoming. **If you, friends, family or work colleagues have felt this, say so, and explain why.** If you think facilities could be improved - better maintenance, banning parking, etc - say so too.

Q2 Who should deliver these changes? Most changes have to be made by councils. If government is serious about its target, they must give councils a serious incentive, and that means new sources of investment. We propose a government fund to which councils [and any other bodies] could apply [see 'nerdy' para above if you want a bit more detail] - and/or the government could reinstate adequate funding to Sustrans for its work with councils.

Q3 Would improved local facilities encourage you to cycle more? See also Q1 above. For *everyday journeys* (work, shops, etc) facilities must be *as direct as possible*, must be *visible so that the population is continually reminded about them*, and must *look and feel safe*. Towns and cities should allocate more roadspace to this, as in European countries and in the planned new London 'cycle superhighways' [www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/cycling/11598.aspx]. For *leisure use* (and commuting where convenient) a high quality offroad network (like Edinburgh's railway path network) is great.

Q4 Who should deliver these changes? See also Q2. Above all, government must provide the funding to achieve its own aims on cycling and sustainability. **Professional bodies such as the Assn of Directors of Public Health are calling for 10% of transport investment for walking and cycling** [Spokes 100, p7] - at present cycling gets a miserable 1% in Scotland. The Parliament's own all-party Transport Committee called for proper cycle investment [Spokes 103] - though the government disregarded this.

Q6 Do drivers know about cycle routes? This is one of the big advantages of widespread coloured cycle lanes and ASLs - they are seen every day by every road user - they are 'self-promoting'! Of course, once people do start using a bike, or thinking about it, a map is very useful to show up other options.

Q8 Which organisations are best placed to deliver cycle promotion? Sustrans is very effective, and each area will have its own relevant organisations, such as the Bike Station in Edinburgh. **A fund to which any organisation [including councils, voluntary organisations, etc] could apply [as in the 'nerdy' para above]** would enable whoever was enthusiastic in any area to take action.

Q9 Should liability laws be changed to give cyclists & pedestrians more protection? Yes, as in most other European countries [as mentioned in the consultation document].

Q10 Should all users pay road tax? Pedestrians/cyclists shouldn't - the government supposedly wishes to encourage these modes!! Also, cycling and walking benefit the taxpayer through improved public health and more reliable journey times, whilst walking and cycling cause zero damage to road infrastructure. Thus any tax would need to be low, and the cost (and police time) of administering and enforcing it would likely be disproportionate.

£1m COMPETITION

Please enter our One Million Pounds summer competition - and tell colleagues or friends who may be interested to enter.

We want ideas on how to get lots more everyday trips by bike - for example for work, shopping, school or leisure. Tell us how £1m could best be invested by councils or others to achieve this.

Great prizes include: 1st class return for 2 between any 2 ScotRail stations; Edinburgh Bike Coop Workstand (£88 value); Edinburgh tram works guided tour; Restaurant meal vouchers; and more.

Clarification: Up to 2 entries per person are permitted.

For full competition rules and prizes: See www.spokes.org.uk downloads - OneOffDocuments. Closing date: 25 September.

BIKE BREAKFAST COMPETITION

The winner of the Cyclist's Rucksack presented by **Edinburgh Bicycle Coop** was **Sarah Malcolm**. Correct answers were...

1. **Road junction with no advance stop area** - Morrison St/Gardners Cr
2. **Former Transport Minister who introduced the CWSS Fund** [Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets] - Sarah Boyack MSP.
3. **Year when Middle Meadow Walk cycleway was opened** - 1983.
4. **Number of bike parking racks installed in Edinburgh** (by the council) in 2008 - 187.

THEBIKESTATION.ORG.UK

Please help the Bike Station...

The Bike Station is seeking funds to encourage cycling amongst staff of small and medium sized companies. This would be a great initiative, allowing intensive Bike Station support to small companies which don't have the travel-planning resources of huge organisations like banks and universities.

To help their funding application, the Bike Station is identifying what support might encourage more people to cycle to work. **Please help by completing a short online questionnaire** - no personal details necessary unless you are happy for follow-up contact. www.questionpro.com/akira/gateway/1275915-0-0.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Note: these events are not organised by Spokes unless stated.

Jul 27-> (for 8 weeks?) Go Greener The government TV/web campaign gets a transport theme. www.infoscotland.com/gogreener.

Jul 30 Cycling Afternoon 12-4.30, King Geo. V Park, between Rodney St and Scotland St tunnels. Stalls (incl. Spokes stall), events, maintenance, health checks, etc. New transport convener **Cllr Gordon Mackenzie** expected at some point (2pm?). Possible tours of Scotland St tunnel (which may reopen as a youth centre!).

Jul 31 Critical Mass Ride 6pm. "group celebration of cycling" - join a group of cyclists riding the streets together.

Aug 16 & Sep 20 Summer extra-long Spokes rides 60-80 miles. Meet Usher Hall 9.30 [not the usual 10.00] www.snowcycle.co.uk.

Aug 23 Glasgow Skyride Roads closed to form a 4-mile traffic-free route for all types of cyclist - especially families, novices, etc. 25,000 expected!! Sign up at new.britishcycling.org.uk/skyride.

Ride leaders are needed - competent cyclists. You get training and are paid for each ride you lead - tel. 0161 2742063 for details.

Sep 6 Spokes Sunday Ride to Linlithgow [provisional]. Bring own picnic, tea/coffee provided at Dave du Feu. www.snowcycle.co.uk.

Sep 13 Pedal for Scotland www.pedalforscotland.org.

Sep 16-22 Mobility Wk Sep 22 Carfree Day mobilityweek.eu

Events expected in Edinburgh but no details yet.

Sep 25-27 Newcastle-Edinburgh Sustrans 200-mile sponsorship ride. www.sustrans.org.uk/challenge.

Oct 10 Suffragette Centenary Procession Edinburgh. A cyclist group is wanted with banners, flags etc. gudecause.org.uk.

Nov 5-8 World CarFree Conference and workshops - Prague. Info from tanja@worldcarfree.net.

Dec 5 Climate Change March www.stopclimatechaos.org/scotland Organisational help needed - contact gail.wilson@rspb.org.uk.

SNIPPETS

UK CLIMATE PROJECTIONS A government website has been created to help the UK plan for a changing climate - defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/adapt. The site contains maps and information on observed and projected future climate change, based on the latest scientific understanding.

CYCLISTS AND LORRIES More than half of London cyclist deaths are in crashes with goods vehicles. Transport for London has produced a new video to help cyclists and lorry drivers negotiate each other safely. Drivers can struggle to see a cyclist, especially if the lorry is turning left and the cyclist going straight ahead - even though that is no excuse. The video is at www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/cycling/11687.aspx.

CYCLING SUPERHIGHWAYS TfL's website www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/cycling/11598.aspx has lots more info, such as planned **cycle superhighways** from suburbs to city centre. Edinburgh Transport Director **Marshall Poulton**, formerly of TfL, told our autumn 2008 public meeting that he wanted to see cycling superhighways in Edinburgh too. **If you were at the meeting - why not write to ask him for a progress update!**

CARFREE BLOGOSPHERE - worldcarfree.wordpress.com. The World Carfree Network [www.worldcarfree.net] announces *The Carfree Blogosphere* to share ideas/news around car dependency, explore alternatives and celebrate carfree living. Send letters, articles, news, pics, videos to blog@worldcarfree.net.

NSPCC BIG BIKE RIDE The Big Bike Ride supports NSPCC's Child's Voice Appeal, for their 24-hour helpline for children in distress or danger. Sign up for a free organisers' pack and set a date and a distance that's a challenge for you - whether it's 1, 50 or 100 miles. www.bigbikeride.co.uk 0845 1303073.

LOCAL AREA NEWS

Find Edinburgh councillors at www.edinburgh.gov.uk. See back page of Spokes Bulletins to locate other councillors, MSPs, etc.

PRINCES STREET CAMPAIGN See main article in Spokes Bulletin 104. **If you've not yet contacted your councillors, please consider doing so.** We understand there may now be a council consultation, and will inform members if this happens.

STENHOUSE BIKE FACILITIES Closure of the guided-busway, for conversion to tramline, necessitated a new road layout with improved bus facilities. **But cyclists were neglected**, with seriously worse connections from the road system to the bikeroute beside the busway. **If this affects you contact your councillors.** Ask what is going to be done - and that procedures get changed so cycling gets proper attention in future schemes. Please also copy your email/letter to peterhawk@care4free.net, who is raising the issue officially on behalf of Spokes. **Remember** - if you contact councillors as an individual, this helps strengthen our Spokes case.

LOCAL AREA FUNDS Do you have an idea for a community project to encourage more bike use? Communal tenement or local bike parking, events, noticeboards/signs etc - anything involving local people from your area?? Neighbourhood Partnership grants up to £5000 may be available [www.edinburghnp.org.uk]. If you have an idea and would like to get together with others to discuss and make an application, we can email members in your area and ask them to contact you if interested. **Note - this is an Edinburgh scheme** - if you live elsewhere, ask your councillors.

AIRDRIE-BATHGATE RAILWAY PATH **This path is now closed for railway re-opening.** There are no signed diversions in place, but see the *Clyde to Forth* page at www.sustrans.org.uk for suggested alternative routes. Cyclists travelling from Glasgow to Edinburgh can also use the Forth and Clyde Canal and Union Canal towpaths, soon to become National Route 754.

The railway project includes a **new** cycle path, on roughly the same alignment, due to open in Dec 2010. For info on the railway and replacement path, go to www.airdriebathgaterailink.co.uk.

Note that many maps (including Spokes West Lothian) still show the now closed path, which was part of National Route 75.

FAULDHOUSE to CUBA!

West Lothian councillor **Neil Findlay** sent this article [abbreviated].

Fauldhouse hosts glamorous film premiere

In May Fauldhouse Miner's Welfare was the unusual venue for the world premiere of a new documentary film. *Half the World Away - Addiewell to Havana via Fauldhouse* tells the story of three West Lothian men and the 2008 Cuba Cycle challenge.

Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley Councillor **Neil Findlay** and his two pals, **Alan Brown**, a joiner from Whitburn and **Tommy Kane**, a PHD student from Addiewell joined 16 other people to cycle 350km in five days through the towns and villages of Cuba raising almost £30,000 for a school for visually impaired children.

The film follows the three in the lead up to, and throughout the event, culminating in the annual May Day event in Havana where over 1 million people celebrate international workers day. Tommy explained "*throughout the trip we saw at first hand how Cuban society works. We saw the excellent health and education system, innovative organic farming methods and the way in which small local communities organise to help and look after each other. We hope that our film has successfully captured the real Cuba.*"

Neil, Tommy and Alan now want others to see the film so that some of the myths about Cuba can be dispelled - Neil said, "*Cuba is a third world country with first world social services. Our hope is that we will be able to show the film to schools, community groups, trade unions and anyone with an interest in world development and social justice - or of course in cycling!*"

If any school, community group or organisation would like to host a film screening, would like a copy or wishes to discuss any aspect, contact neil.findlay@westlothian.gov.uk 01501 770365.