

Thousands of Scots pedal for safer cycling

Pedal on Parliament took place on Saturday 28th April 2012 in a day that combined sombre moments with an air of celebration. After a minute's silence, observed by the crowd of more than 2,500 strong according to Lothian and Borders Police, a mass ringing of bike bells, horns and cheers marked the start of the ride from the Meadows to Holyrood. The ride passed without incident, with the police closing a number of junctions temporarily to keep the ride together in a safe manner. The ride was notable for the large number of families and children among the throng, including kids on balance bikes, with stabilisers, in child seats, tagalongs and pedalling under their own steam.

Once at Holyrood the petition was presented to MSPs **Alison Johnstone** for the Greens, **Jim Eadie** for the SNP, and **Sarah Boyack** for Labour, as well as Edinburgh's Transport Convener **Councillor Gordon Mackenzie** for the Lib Dems, in front of the assembled mass of cyclists. Also addressing the crowd were **Lynne McNicoll**, whose stepson was killed on Edinburgh's roads earlier this year, prompting her to set up the Andrew Cyclist Foundation with her husband; and **Mark Beaumont**, the round the world cyclist and adventurer who rode the route with a handmade banner calling for a Cycle Friendly Scotland.

Participants decorated their bikes, and themselves, for the fun event, which saw children paddling and swimming in the pools afterwards at Holyrood, as the spring sunshine seemed to make an appearance especially for the ride.

The event proved exceeded the wildest expectations of the organisers, and Dave Brennan, part of the grass roots Pedal on Parliament campaign said 'Originally we'd hoped that 300 cyclists might show up – in the end, ten times that number cared enough to come out on the day. We're overwhelmed by the response and it just shows the depth of feeling there is in this country, especially among families. There is clearly still a long way to go but today has shown our politicians that Scots want Scotland to be a cycle-friendly nation. Now it's up to them to act on the proposals we've set out in our manifesto'.

Ends

Notes to editors - overleaf

Notes to editors

Pedal on Parliament is a grass roots organisation of cyclists from across Scotland. The ride formed part of an international day of action with mass rides taking place in London and Rome as well as Edinburgh. See <http://pedalonparliament.org/> for more details

Pictures of the event can be found on the Pedal on Parliament flickr group <http://www.flickr.com/groups/popscotland/> (please check individual photographers' licensing before reusing any pictures and credit the original photographer)

This video gives a flavour of the day <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkHr5IrgMAk>, while the mass ringing of bike bells can be heard here <http://vimeo.com/41210899>

Tweets – using the hash tag #pop28 are still pouring in from excited participants <https://twitter.com/#!/search/%23POP28>

Pedal on Parliament was a light-hearted ride with a serious purpose. Two cyclists have been killed in Edinburgh alone, since the start of the year, highlighting the need to make cycling – and any form of active travel – safer for all. Cycling is the potentially the answer to many of Scotland's problems, from obesity and heart disease to congestion and climate change, but while most people find the roads to dangerous for themselves or their children to ride on, it cannot fulfil its potential. Pedal on Parliament is calling for national and local politicians of all parties to adopt its manifesto which offers a realistic road map that would allow Scotland to meet its own target – set in the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS) – of 10% of journeys to be taken by bike by 2020. It contains eight pledges, fleshed out in more detail on our manifesto (<http://pedalonparliament.org/the-manifesto/>):

- 1) Proper funding for cycling.
- 2) Design cycling into Scotland's roads.
- 3) Safer speeds where people live, work and play
- 4) Integrate cycling into local transport strategies
- 5) Sensible road traffic law and enforcement
- 6) Reduce the risk of HGVs to cyclists and pedestrians
- 7) A strategic and joined-up programme of road user training
- 8) Solid research on cycling to support policy-making

The Scottish government has already made a start in encouraging active travel. It led the world in signing up to a low-carbon future, part of which will include much higher levels of cycling. However, while we support much of what is in the CAPS, it is not enough to raise the share of cycling to the levels envisaged. In particular it is seriously under-funded, and what little funding was promised has been under threat. The history of UK cycling policy is full of cycling strategies which have been quietly shelved when it becomes clear that their targets are not going to be met. We call on all Scots to join us in pressuring our politicians not to join Westminster in this hall of shame.