

“What would you like Spokes to tackle this year?”

Analysis of responses from the Spokes membership in 2013

The Spokes membership form and renewal form both ask the above question. In 2013 over 160 members responded to this invitation, as summarised in the table below.

Numbers in brackets indicate number of comments received on any particular topic. Where members made several suggestions, each individual comment was counted. Unfortunately comments were often not detailed enough to say e.g. whether members were talking about segregated or on-road facilities, or about on-road parking or secure covered parking etc. However, they give a good general idea of members’ priorities and concerns and present some interesting and original ideas.

Summary of topics

About Spokes (51)	General (31)
	Governance (5)
	Campaigning (14)
	Research (1)
Infrastructure (59)	General (17)
	Specific city locations (30)
	Commuting/out-of-town routes (12)
Potholes (20)	General
Public Realm (17)	Parking (8)
	Speed limits (4)
	Traffic-free areas (5)
Attitudes/Behaviour (15)	General (1)
	Cyclist behaviour (6)
	Driver behaviour (8)

Detail on comments

Note that comments quoted are from individuals and so represent personal opinions which may or may not be widely shared but provide an interesting point of view. However, the total number of comments on any one topic may give some indication of the importance placed on it amongst the membership as a whole. Where many people made similar comments this is mentioned.

1 About Spokes (51)

a. General approach (31)

Virtually all the unspecific comments about general approach were positive. More than 20 comments stated, "Keep up the good work" or "Keep up the excellent work" or variants on that. Examples of other comments included, "Thank you to all active workers – your work is really appreciated," "Spokes does a fantastic job," "More of the same please!" "Spokes is exemplary," "My continued admiration for your excellent work," "You do a great job,"

b. Spokes governance (5)

Requests for a clearer system of accountability to members: on-line payment and membership, a Gift Aid facility and an improved website. One member thought Spokes should form a legal Cycle Union of Edinburgh.

c. General campaigning (14 suggestions)

Promotion (6) Spokes should concentrate on promoting cycling among the retired community, at nursery schools, to the disabled community, to businesses (through "green miles" incentives), and to encourage people to be active.

Political action (6) Spokes should keep up the pressure on politicians and police on issues of funding and safety

Planning issues (2) Focus on planning policy for delivering improved cycling infrastructure, cycle parking in new developments.

d. Research project (1)

Assess number of lives saved by spending on cycle safety compared with those saved by road spending.

2. Cycling infrastructure (59)

a. General comments (17) Themes included mandatory cycle lanes, no parking in bus lanes, continuous bus-lanes, more shared-use on wide pavements, more red-surfaced ASLs (plus a plea to abandon red-surfaced cycle lanes!), joined-up safe routes through the centre of Edinburgh, more off-road paths in Edinburgh. "Ensure proper Dutch-style 2-way joined-up segregated facilities with priority for cyclists at all junctions and a green 'all direction' phase for cyclists only."

b. Issues at particular locations (30) 11 of these were concerns about plans for Princes Street/George Street. In general people wanted to be able to cycle safely along Princes Street, although one member said "Stop going on about Princes Street and focus on the state of the other well-used routes." Other locations where problems were raised include Leith Walk (and routes avoiding it), links through Haymarket area, enforcement of parking regulations on the Quality Bike Corridor, cycle lanes on Lothian Road and on Craigcrook Road. Improved drainage on the N Edinburgh paths and a crossing to McKelvie Parade were called for, as were links between Roseburn Path and the canal, Wemyss Place and Rutland Square. 5 members had concerns about trams - mainly at crossing points.

c. Commuting/out-of-town cycling (12) The A90, A8 and A701 were all judged unsatisfactory for cycling: a good direct route to Midlothian was needed: an off-road coastal cycle route to North Berwick and a "proper surface" for the Water of Leith from Balerno and for the canal east of Ratho . One person wanted improved long-distance routes for touring (a bit outside Spokes' remit!) Another expressed disappointment about Transport Scotland's lack of support for cycling in the Highlands.

3. Potholes, road surfaces (20)

Among the many comments about the poor state of the roads were a call for priority to be given to potholes 1 - 2 metres from the kerb, for hot tar repairs to be used for all repairs, and for a campaign to make clear the safety aspect i.e. pointing out how vulnerable cyclists are to irregularities in the road surface.

4. "Public Realm" (17)

a. Cycle Parking (8) There were calls for more parking, including bike stands on poles and also for secure on-street parking for flat-dwellers. The "front gardens" initiative was praised and someone suggested the use of empty shop units for temporary secure cycle parking.

b. Speed limits (4) - more 20mph zones round public buildings, parks, residential areas, and better enforcement of limits: 40 mph limits on main roads to be reduced to 30 mph.

c. Traffic-free areas (5) One member wanted more pedestrian/cyclist zones in the city, two wanted Princes street motor traffic free, two wanted Holyrood Park to be permanently closed to traffic.

5. Cyclist and Driver Attitudes and Behaviour (15)

There was one call to improve safety by "considerate behaviour by all" but most members concentrated on one particular group.

a. Cyclist behaviour (6)

Bad behaviour by cyclists was a concern e.g riding without lights and going unreasonably fast on the towpath. There was one request for the Bike Polite campaign to be re-run as a way of making clear that Spokes disapproved of illegal behaviour by all road users.

b. Driver behaviour (8)

Calls (4) for campaigns to change the "anti-cycling culture", to promote the acceptance of cyclists sharing the road e.g. through the Nice Way Codes, to show cyclists as "human and vulnerable". Educate drivers (2), particularly through driving schools. Complaints about driver encroachment in ASLs (2) and a suggestion Spokes should do a survey on this.