

Spokes circular to members outside Edinburgh, in or near the Lothians 4.6.2014

Note: If you wish to progress or comment on any of the items below, email your local councillors and ask them to follow up the matter. Find them at www.writetothem.com.

Paras which may particularly interest you if you live in the council area specified

A-F, I-J West Lothian

F-I Midlothian

F&I East Lothian [not much news this time!]

F-I Borders [nothing specific, but you may be interested]

F&I Fife [nothing specific, but you may be interested]

I&J Falkirk/Central

A. Urgent: Linlithgow Thurs 5 June consultation/ exhibition

Developers are proposing a large residential development at the Cemex Site, the old quarry between the A706, the river Avon and Mill Road, the B8029. There is an exhibition at Linlithgow Burgh Halls on Thurs 5th, 1pm-8pm. **Please go along and leave your comments. If you can't go**, email comments/ queries to the developer, alan.farningham@farnmac.co.uk.

In our view, **if** the council grants permission then the developers should be required to provide a segregated 2-way cycleroute along the north side of the A706 from canal Williamsraig bridge/towpath, alongside the development, to the B8029 roundabout, with a crossing of the A706 to the Leisure Centre etc. The 2-way cycleroute should also be continued along the edge of the development on the west side of the B8029.

Rural A roads, such as the A706, are by far the least safe places to cycle – see the articles and statistics in Spokes 119 p6 and Spokes 118 p7. A segregated cycleroute here would be great for the new residents getting into town, or going west to join the towpath to Falkirk, and would be a useful link for many other people, and given the government and council's wish to greatly raise cycle use, no major new housing development should be allowed without such facilities.

B. West Lothian Sustrans Community Links funding

WL Council has been incredibly successful in its bids to Sustrans for cycle project funding for 2014/15 and 15/16. It has won £1.8m (for 10 projects) - more than any other council in Scotland except Fife [and Edinburgh, depending on how you look at the figures]. This represents 7% of the entire Sustrans budget for Scotland. It also means that WL Council has to come up with £1.8m of its own money, as 50/50 is a condition of the Sustrans funding - so total cycling investment will be £3.6m. At the time of the bids, Spokes, LCAG [Linlithgow Cycle Action Group] and some individuals wrote letters of support to accompany the bids. This may have helped, so thanks if you did so!

There is info about the successful project bids in the new Spokes Bulletin (currently being distributed) and on our website..

www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/2014/06/spokes-bulletin-119-3m-win-for-lothians-councils

and

www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/documents/members-campaigning/west-lothian

If you are emailing councillors with complaints or suggestions about any cycling issues, and want to start with something positive to put them in a good mood, you could congratulate them on this!

The Linlithgow Cycle Action Group will be following up the 3 projects in its area, including a Bathgate Hills quiet roads scheme of which we currently have no details at all. If you live locally, please think about attending LCAG meetings (every few months).

C. Linlithgow Canal towpath

The above funding does include projects to link the Leisure Centre and the Academy to the towpath. However, a disappointment is that the bid by Scottish Canals for 50/50 Sustrans money to surface the towpath from the canal basin east to Maidlands (for Springfield) did not succeed.

Richard Toleman of Spokes and LCAG has discussed this with Scottish Canals, and they are apparently talking to the council about seeking funds elsewhere to surface at least from the basin to the existing tarmac (but very steep) St Magdalene's ramp.

If you'd like to see the towpath surfaced – at least to St Magdalene's, and ideally to Maidlands for a Springfield link – please email your local councillors and ask them to do all they can to identify funding to progress this.

D. B8046 northwards from Ecclesmachan to Threemiletown

The Ecclesmachan and Threemiletown Community Council is concerned about danger to cyclists and walkers on the B8046 north from Ecclesmachan to Threemiletown. Currently this road has no footway for most of the way, and certainly no cycleway, despite the fact that it is quite narrow, has blind corners and blind summits, and carries bus services. The CC chair, Gordon Allan, is trying to make the case for a footway or shared-use path along this stretch, and would like to hear from anyone who currently uses this road by non-motorised means, or would use it if it had a safe shared-use path. Unfortunately I don't have an email address, but the snail-mail contact is...

Gordon Allan

c/o Ecclesmachan & Threemiletown Village Hall, Byburn, Ecclesmachan EH52 6NG

E. Spokes mailing distribution

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those of our members who assist in the 3-times a year distribution of Spokes Bulletins and mailings. A special thanks goes to Eric Ingram of Livingston whose efforts are truly heroic, collecting boxes and piles from Edinburgh, taking the piles to local delivery volunteers in Broxburn, Bathgate and Livingston, then delivering the remaining half of the Livingston envelopes himself.

The **new Spokes Summer Bulletin** [No.119] highlights West Lothian's Sustrans success on page 1, with more info in a centre-page Sustrans supplement. We have lots of spare copies, so if you can use any – for local festival stalls, shops, cycle events, or to leaflet bikes at your local shops, workplace, etc, please get in touch. If you'd like a regular supply of each bulletin (3 times a year) that too can be arranged.

F. C2C Solway-Forth : meet the inspirationalists this Sun 8 June!

Spokes members get a free copy of the Solway-Forth map in their summer mailout. There's more on our website here...

www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/2014/03/free-solwayforth-c2c-map

Another 'trailblazing ride' to recce the route is happening on June 7-8, ending at the Hawes Inn, South Queensferry on Sunday afternoon [expected time as yet unknown]. **If you are interested to talk about the route you are welcome to meet them.** You could also join in with the ride at a point in Midlothian or Edinburgh. If interested, contact the organiser, David Gray of Chain Events. Email dapgray@yahoo.co.uk or phone 07770 623516.

G. Loanhead - Gilmerton

Work is underway on the long-awaited Edinburgh section of this route and is expected to be complete around the end of June on the first 3 items below. Any enquiries, please contact Callum Smith at Edinburgh Council, c.smith@edinburgh.gov.uk.

The work involves...

- a new cycle path along the disused railway line between Lasswade Road and the tunnel beneath the City Bypass. This will connect to the existing cycle path in Midlothian which offers off-road access to Loanhead and Roslin.
- refurbishment of the existing bridge over Lasswade Road to enable pedestrian and cycle access, and construction of a ramp to provide a link between the raised embankment and Lasswade Road.
- on-road improvements between Gilmerton Dykes Road and Moredun Dykes Road, including an upgrade of the existing pedestrian crossing on Gilmerton Dykes Street, so that it can be used by both pedestrians and cyclists.
- designs are currently being developed for a shared use foot/cycleway on Lasswade Road between Gilmerton Station Road and Gilmerton Dykes Road, and it is expected that this will be delivered later this year.

H. Midlothian Local Transport Strategy – comments by 29 June

Midlothian is consulting on the next stage in developing its Local Transport Strategy. There is a short online QA here... **Please make your own response.**

www.midlothian.gov.uk/transport-survey

and various background documents (including the previous LTS) here...

www.midlothian.gov.uk/consultation/35/book/6

Apart from the online QA it is also possible to make longer submissions by email to David.Kenny@midlothian.gov.uk, with Midlothian Local Transport Strategy in the subject line.

Spokes Planning Group hopes to make a submission, but we currently don't have a volunteer to do an initial draft which could be circulated for comments and **it would be great if someone could offer!** A local member has suggested the following points should be included in our submission...

- *Like Edinburgh has done, MC switching 5% of its transport budget to cycling and raising that by a further 1% annually for the next four years. We need a step change in getting people out of their cars and we need a funding switch to fuel that.*
- *Safer cycling route via A701 from Penicuik to Edinburgh esp around Bilston/Straiton*
- *Jointly with CEC, commissioning a feasibility study for a direct, traffic-free cycle route from Edinburgh to Eskbank, Dalkeith, Newtongrange*
- *Providing safer cycling access to Vogrie Park and National Mining Museum Scotland, Newtongrange; Asda, IKEA and Sainsbury at Straiton*
- *Building the first phase of the proposed Penicuik-Peebles cycle way, as far as Eddleston.*

I. Check your council website every so often for anything where comments may be useful. Here are the addresses we have...

Consultations

EL <http://eastlothianconsultations.co.uk/>

ML <http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/consultation/open>

WL http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/Council_and_government/consultations/

Planning applications – *see the latest lists below*

NB - there's a Spokes factsheet about commenting on Planning applications...
<http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/documents/advice/lobbying-councils/>

EL

www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/200192/planning_online/1374/planning_applications_and_weekly_lists

ML

www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/180/development_management_planning_applications/374/planning_applications-search_and_make_comment

WL www.westlothian.gov.uk/1210/161/PlanningApplications/

Points to look for... Do plans for new developments, shops, businesses, etc include bike parking and/or storage? Do new residential developments provide adequate and secure bike storage? What about access or connections to nearby networks, etc, etc?

J. A803 Linlithgow Bridge to Lathallan roundabout

Linlithgow Cycle Action Group is concerned about cycling safety on the above road. Rural A roads, such as the A803, are by far the least safe places to cycle – see the articles and statistics in Spokes 119 p6 and Spokes 118 p7. LCAG has written to Falkirk Council asking for a cycle route beside the road – as Falkirk Council has been doing in many other places. If you use this road, or would do if it was safer, please write to the council in support, and send us a copy. If you live in the area, contact your councillors. Otherwise, we suggest contacting the Council's cycle officer, george.callaghan@falkirk.gov.uk.

The LCAG letter includes...

This section of road is regularly used by cycle commuters to and from Linlithgow and Polmont/Grangemouth/Falkirk. This road however suffers from heavy and fast moving traffic which endangers existing cyclists and which undoubtedly deters many more cyclists..

*A cycle path from Linlithgow from the east would then link up with the newly constructed cycle path leading west from Lathallan roundabout past Gilston, into Polmont and on to the Helix. Lathallan roundabout is particularly dangerous for cyclists and a safe crossing there should be part of any such scheme. **This would then be a natural safe cycle route between Linlithgow and Falkirk encouraging and enabling more people to cycle, both for commuting and for leisure.***