

Disbelief as operator set to cut spaces for bicycles on trains

A 'DISAPPOINTING' reduction in bicycle spaces on West Highland trains has to be reversed immediately, says bicycle campaign group Spokes, writes Sandy Neil.

Currently rail passengers can book six bicycles per two carriages running between Glasgow, Oban and Fort William, and on trains between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

But public transport operator Abellio's replacement Class 158 trains will reduce these six-bike spaces to two, plus two non-reservable spaces if the wheelchair area is free.

Scottish bicycle campaign group Spokes claimed Transport Scotland had not consulted on this 'tragic' reduction.

A spokesperson for the campaign group said: 'Even a small family of two adults and one child could not book space, let alone a group of friends.'

'It is not too late for Transport Scotland to rethink these disastrous decisions.'

'Cycle tourism is an important contributor to the economy of the West Highlands and islands, and the slashing of this provision will have an adverse effect on the income of many small local businesses.'

According to a 2013 report by Transform Scotland, *The Values of Cycle Tourism*, leisure and holiday cyclists spend up to £228million in Scotland each year.

Colin Howden, director of Transform Scotland, said: 'Limited bike carriage is already a key constraint to expanding bike tourism.'

'As such, it would be especially foolish to cut bike carriage on routes where there is significant opportunities for improving tourist economies by the promotion of bike tourism.'



Work has been going on for weeks to lay new pavements in Oban. The project is no

Splashing the cash Oban seafront re

The Oban Times goes out in the town to ask readers what th

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NEW pavements currently being laid on George Street became the talk of the town this week when members of the public shared their views on the multi-million pound CHORD sea-front development programme with *The Oban Times*.

Argyll and Bute Council's £6.5 million scheme is designed to bring a café atmosphere into the town centre.

The newspaper asked members of the public

to rate the work so far. Margaret Menessa from Oban, on Facebook, said: 'They look pretty but am sure the money could be spent on something better.'

Maria Leikert, 28, of Breadalbane Street, said: 'I think it looks lovely and you don't stumble.'

Ada Daley of Oban said: 'I think it's very nice indeed. I think it's a very good investment. As long as it's finished by the summer, it'll be fine.'

John Clare, 61, from Mull said: 'It looks nice but it's tak-

ing a long time. I hope it doesn't continue on until the summer, during the tourist season, but it is looking nice.'

In contrast Jo Markland of Pulpit Hill, said: 'Nothing much is happening. We haven't seen any plans. It'll be fine once it's finished. We really need to see what they're doing. I'll miss the trees as well.'

Mary Sullivan, from Mull said: 'I think it's fine. I hope it's done in time, though. It seems to be taking a long time. Just get it done.'

A reader who wanted to

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