

# LOCAL BIKE CAMPAIGNING

**More and more people want decent conditions for getting about by bike – for the environment and climate, for health, for towns and cities not dominated by the car and for a happier life.**

A Sustrans ICM survey found that 80% of Edinburgh residents “support protected cycle lanes even if this means less space for other road traffic.”

It's not surprising then that many people are motivated to try and improve things. Everyone is different, and this factsheet illustrates and celebrates the multifarious ways in which people do just that. The opportunities – your opportunities! – are endless.

## Varieties of campaigning...

- ♦ join a wide-ranging campaign group, like [Spokes](#)
- ♦ join a local-area subgroup, such as [Spokes Portobello](#)
- ♦ join a project-support group, like [Roseburn Cycle](#)
- ♦ join your [Community Council](#)
- ♦ create your own campaign on an issue that bugs you
- ♦ set up a school-based initiative, like a bike bus
- ♦ join a one-off time-limited protest, such as [Pop-up PoP](#)
- ♦ join a wider cycling or environment group which has campaigning aspects, e.g. [Festival of Cycling](#), [CCE online forum](#), [All-Ability Cycling](#), [Sustrans](#), [Friends of the Earth](#), [The Bike Station](#), [Transform Scotland](#), [CyclingUK](#), [WL Bike Library](#).
- ♦ as an individual, contact your councillors and/or MSPs.

## Spokes Planning Group

David French

[spokes.org.uk](http://spokes.org.uk) : documents : internal : planning

I got involved in Spokes after becoming infuriated at the total lack of cycling infrastructure in major proposals, including [Sheriffhall roundabout](#), near my home.

Planning Group responds to planning applications and consultations in Edinburgh and Lothian, and lobbies government on cycling and sustainable transport - everything from [climate policy](#) to [bike sheds in gardens](#)!

For example, recent planning applications in Burdiehouse include a new school and housing - an opportunity to improve a neglected path next to the school site and connect it to Shawfair-Roslin cycleroute, making bike-commuting easier. We suggested widening the path, removing sharp bends, and creating a direct link from the housing to Gracemount schools and shops.

Sadly, only minor points were agreed - this is common, and an essential side of our work is keeping up pressure so that opportunities are not forgotten. A great example is the [Forth Bridge to Edinburgh A90 path](#) which, despite government promises of rapid action after scrapping bridge tolls, needed frequent lobbying from Spokes and took from year 2004 to 2015 before final completion.



David French, Michaela Jackson and Dave du Feu give evidence on Sheriffhall at the Scottish Parliament

[Planning Group](#) meets roughly monthly in a member's house. **New volunteers are welcome and important!**

## Roseburn Support Group

Rosie Bell

[roseburncycleroute.org.uk](http://roseburncycleroute.org.uk)

In 2014 Edinburgh consulted on the City Centre West-East Link ([CCWEL](#)), a segregated route from Roseburn to Leith, also linking West Edinburgh and North Edinburgh Cycle Network to and through the City Centre. As the Council's first major onroad segregated route its success will be vital.

The Roseburn section was fiercely opposed - I was shocked at the shouting and obnoxious rudeness to Council officers at public meetings. I spoke up for the route, and via Spokes, found like-minded local people - and we formed the Roseburn Cycleroute Support Group.

As a formal group our Chair, Henry Whaley, sat on the Community Council, diluting some of the opposition. Our [website](#), [facebook](#) and [twitter](#) had objective evidence to counter the more hysterical and misinformed claims, and to help our 88 members and the public to support the route by contacting councillors and in consultations.

Henry and I appeared at the Transport and Environment Committee to give evidence - daunting but worthwhile, allowing Councillors to see local support.

[The Council approved the route](#), but rules on certain types of objections forced a lengthy [Government hearing](#). We get the result in early 2020 and are fairly optimistic.



A 200-strong support ride organised jointly with CCE forum [see p3]

# LOCAL BIKE CAMPAIGNING

## Corstorphine Bike Bus

Diana Farrell

I had been in Corstorphine Primary School's *Travel Action Group* for some time. Other members had read about Edinburgh school bike buses and were keen for us to try.



I was the obvious organiser since I always cycled my children to school. With support from the Group, the school, and other bike buses (ta, Niall of [D Mains bikebus](#)) the monthly [Corstorphine Bike Bus](#) began in Sept 2019. There's a nice stretch through a park but then mostly side streets where parking narrows the road to a single lane - but it beats Glasgow Road and Drumbrae roundabout!

A big asset is help from other adults; two [Breeze qualified](#) ride leaders (as am I) and some local cycle campaigners.

We are a modest group of 20 – 30 and I doubt we'll ever see the 100+ in some Edinburgh bike buses! **But what we do see is happy children loving the chance to cycle to school and happy parents supported to cycle with them.**

I'm a passionate advocate of bike buses! If you cycle to school with your children, why not encourage others to join you? Your children will love the chance to ride with friends and you'll make a real difference to people's lives.

### Edinburgh Bike Buses (as at end 2019)

- ◆ Sciennes [sciennesactivetravel.wordpress.com](http://sciennesactivetravel.wordpress.com)
- ◆ James Gillespie [blackfordsaferoutes.co.uk](http://blackfordsaferoutes.co.uk)
- ◆ Blackhall photos – [google](#) [catlin blackhall bikebus](#)
- ◆ Davidsons Mains twitter [#DMainsBikeBus](#)
- ◆ Corstorphine [cleanergreenercorstorphine.com](http://cleanergreenercorstorphine.com) : ideas
- ◆ Canal View [@CanalViewPSEdin](http://@CanalViewPSEdin)

### Resources...

- ◆ Guide to running a bike bus – [cycling.scot : resources : school](http://cycling.scot/resources/school)
- ◆ Edinburgh bike bus twitter account [@BikeBusEdin](#)

## Spokes South Edinburgh

Stella Thomson

In 2018 [Sally Hinchcliffe](#) made an inspirational speech at PoP [p4].

Basically: 'no one is too small to make a difference' (e.g. [Greta Thunberg](#)!)

Galvanised, I and another South Edinburgh local called a public meeting, inviting councillors, Council officers and anyone interested in safe cycling.

Blackspots were documented, but our area is not a priority for council infrastructure for *at least 5 years*. So we decided to seek Sustrans cash for a cycle network linking shops, schools etc, avoiding Fairmilehead/Firrhill dangers.



Group display in Oxfangs Library

## Spokes Porty

Kirsty, Jocelyn, Charlie, James

[Spokes Porty](#), a local Spokes group, has 4 core members and others involved when they can. We work to make walking and cycling safe, easy and fun for everyone in and around Portobello. Despite serious incidents locally, even fatalities, there have been few infrastructure upgrades.

Our first success was Brunstane Road, which had been closed by barriers. We contacted councillors, a bike gap was opened, and we were thanked by local cyclists!

We have been less successful with our first campaign – dropped kerbs for streets onto Portobello Prom. Despite initial positive Council noises, not a single kerb is yet dropped. Is it lack of cash or changes in Council staff?

As part of 2019 Pop-Up PoP [p4] we took politicians on the school run to Duddingston and St John's primaries. We commissioned a [film](#) of the event and used this in a Council Transport Committee delegation on school travel. The Council has agreed to narrow the road and improve road markings and signage. We are working with Sustrans, Capita and others to improve school routes around Portobello and we keep pushing for a Duddingston Road segregated bike path, vital for schools but not due to be funded for at least 5 years.



Our Jan 2020 [film](#) & [Porty Podcast](#) on the joy of cycling

We now plan a strategy paper, mapping of infrastructure problems, some films on the joys of local cycling; and achieving greater involvement within Porty community.

**There are links to our films and podcasts on facebook and twitter [@SpokesPorty](#). Email [SpokesPorty@gmail.com](mailto:SpokesPorty@gmail.com).**

Sustrans encouraged us to apply for feasibility cash - one of us is now on the community council where we hope to get support to apply and to help manage the funding.

We've also taken part in consultations and achieved improvements to cycling conditions...

- ◆ Braidburn Terrace will become one-way for motorists, with cyclist exemption. There will be a safer cycle link from Braidburn Park to The Hermitage, and a key Meadows link.

- ◆ A feasibility study for a walking & cycling path linking Portobello, the Infirmary and Swanston using green space along Burdiehouse Burn and Swanston Burn.

- ◆ Lothianburn Mountainbike Centre/ Hillend Snowsports Centre proposals, boosting the case for a bridge to safely connect south Edinburgh and Midlothian over the bypass.

Follow us on twitter at [@Cyclesouthedin](#).



# LOCAL BIKE CAMPAIGNING

## Festival of Cycling, EdFoC Caroline Brown

Edinburgh's great annual cycling festival includes many events which illustrate and inspire campaign activity, ranging from local infrastructure rides to international experts – for example, see Graeme Hart's article below. To get involved or suggest ideas see [edfoc.org.uk/about](http://edfoc.org.uk/about).

## Community Council Frazer McNaughton

I am a member of Portobello CC [[portobellocc.org](http://portobellocc.org)] which aims to understand and represent local community views. Active travel and public realm issues are often discussed. Primary school representatives recently raised concerns around the safety of routes to school. After talking with them, we wrote to the city transport convenor, seeking local solutions including parking enforcement, improved crossings and new active travel routes. Some valuable actions are now underway, including a Council led study of primary school routes in Portobello High School catchment. We also facilitate on-going discussion between schools on our internal CC information forum.

Concern by the public and local groups over caravans and carparking around Kings Place and Portobello Prom led us to run a survey. With over 1100 responses, we found strong support for improved connections and safer active travel. [The results](#) inform our dialogue with the Council, where we seek long term improvement in this important part of our neighbourhood.



Option 2:  
Reduce the number of parking spaces and connect the Seafield and Portobello Promenades

## The Bike Trade

All bike shops help support cycle use but some are more pro-active, with stalls at community festivals, bike breakfasts, Open Streets, etc. Generally **local shops** do much more than the big chains, and we particularly commend [Edinburgh Bicycle](#), [Laidback Bikes](#) and [Harts Cyclery](#) who also always advertise in the Spokes Bulletin!

## A Bike Shop with a voice Graeme Hart

I sell (and repair) bicycles - the salvation of our cities!! However my campaigning started when I heard Mikael Colville-Andersen's *Sermon on the Mound* at EdFoC: I was blown away by developments in other cities. I also had been a courier and as a young man didn't understand the fuss until I had a family – then a stark realisation!

I started going to [Spokes public meetings](#), chatting with politicians, taking the shop to local events - another chance to meet councillors and community activists.

In 2014 I became a [Gazelle](#) dealer, the ultimate in Dutch bicycles, a brand that really fits my advocacy. Councillors who I had chatted to understood my stance and I have

## CCE Online Community Chris Hill

[CityCyclingEdinburgh.info](http://CityCyclingEdinburgh.info), is 10 years old. It has been very successful, with random ingredients producing a rich, fruitful, cake (a cyclist's favourite!) There are only two *rules* - no personal insults; no swearing. They work well. CCEers are mainly bike commuters: most also car owners but making rational choices about commuting and getting around. Some are not yet confident about commuting, or unaware of route options or the 'best' sort of bike. CCEers discuss weather, bike provision at work, "N+1," cafes, Audaxing, politics (in a largely non-party-political way). As an online community there's immediate reaction to anything new on the roads – good or bad.



*Memorial for [Zhi Mni Soh](#), killed in a tramline-related crash*  
A big issue can prompt practical CCEer action, notably Zhi Min Soh's memorial or Roseburn cyclistroute protest [p1]. PoP [p4] was created by Glaswegian [Dave Brennan](#) but CCE enthusiasm/expertise helped make it a huge success. CCE member Algo recently posted - *"There's a tone of welcoming camaraderie and frivolity which allows people to engage both seriously and irreverently. There is real compassion, genuine help and serious, robust, debate. I also engage meaningfully and physically with forum members - it's not just a faceless online set of people."* CCE even helped create a book: [www.tinyurl.com/OverL-CCE](http://www.tinyurl.com/OverL-CCE).

now sold Gazelles to councillors from every party except the SNP – an aberration I'm sure will be rectified soon! Cllr Mark Brown has probably enjoyed the greatest transformation; thousands of miles on his ebike since his first trip to the shop, having not cycled since childhood.



*Cllr Mark Brown with his Gazelle e-bike at Hart's Cyclery*  
Thanks to all advocates (not least indefatigable Spokes) we're closer than ever to a true transformation of Edinburgh's cycling environment. It can't be soon enough.



# LOCAL BIKE CAMPAIGNING

## Pop-up PoP

Sally Hinchcliffe

[For many years](#) there was an annual 1000s-strong [Pedal on Parliament](#) ride to lobby politicians at Holyrood. In 2019, PoP instead stimulated 20 local actions across Scotland, highlighting local problems and opportunities. For example, the Spokes Party politicians school run [p2].



*PoP 2019 'protected' the Forrest Rd advisory cycle lane*

Pop-up PoP worked so well that it's happening again in 2020, on May 1-3. If you're short of time most of the year it's a great chance to join in or help organise a one-off action highlighting a local issue that really bugs you.

[pedalonparliament.org](http://pedalonparliament.org) / email [hello@pedalonparliament.org](mailto:hello@pedalonparliament.org)

## Slippy bridge campaign

Jamie Thin

I fractured my hip on a dangerously slippy wooden bridge on Brunstane Burn Path in August 2019. The fracture, bruised ribs and squashed lungs meant 4 weeks on crutches, 4 A&E admissions, a night in hospital and expensive scans. It took 4 months to get fit again. I'm now back to bike-commuting, but if I was 10 years older my injury might have ended my cycling.

As soon as I was out of hospital I contacted the Council Active Travel team to get the dangerous bridge fixed – it took 85 days, and that was after weekly chasing. Via the local cycling community and through messages to colleagues at the University of Edinburgh I discovered other cyclists falling here - including another broken hip!



*Jamie at the now grip-stripped bridge; but there remain other dangerous bridges, e.g. on Burdiehouse Burn cyclepath*

If a motorist has a serious injury due to a road fault it must be reported to the Police and rapid action taken. But reporting of cycle path injuries is not mandatory!

I was also shocked to find that half the offroad network comprises old footpaths tarmaced and signed for cycling - but not assessed for cyclist safety. The whole network needs surveyed - and the cycling community would help.

**If you take up a local issue my advice is - be persistent!**

I was bounced between departments, then there were delays appointing a contractor. When I heard of the second serious injury I went to the Evening News, my councillor, and finally the council leader and Chief Exec.

I have also raised a personal injury claim via Cycling UK's legal team - this is a good way to get Council attention - and they then have a business case for improvements to reduce claims. **I encourage all cyclists to report faults to the council, and make a claim if there is serious injury.**

## Drem-Gullane path

Iain Monk

Our campaign grew from a small group of Gullane commuters who daily cycle the dangerous main road to Drem railway station. In 2005, East Lothian Council's Core Paths consultation identified the need for a safe route here. 15 years on, the Council has still failed to deliver.

Our group's focus is clear - a safe Gullane-Drem path to encourage cycling, improve health, connect communities, and attract visitors for the benefit of local businesses.

We have used social media and public meetings to spread the word, but nothing beats the hours we spent pounding the streets, delivering leaflets, knocking on doors, explaining the need for a safe route.



*A demonstration on the route of the proposed path*

We have also built support from councillors, MSPs, MPs, landowners and cycling and walking organisations. It is crucial to nurture positive links with local media and we have even achieved significant national media coverage.

We have secured a small section, Gullane to the nearby hamlet of West Fenton, a major milestone. However, a 2019 East Lothian Council commissioned study, funded by Sustrans, concluded that the main options offered by a landowner were not feasible. But we continue the fight!

The campaign is a major part of my private time but is incredibly rewarding. We have had high and lows - the biggest threat is the frustration when there are setbacks.

**My advice - have clear objectives, be determined, don't take no for an answer, campaign with evangelical zeal.**

[sites.google.com/site/dremgullanepath](https://sites.google.com/site/dremgullanepath) Twitter [@dgcorepath](https://twitter.com/dgcorepath)



The Lothian Cycle Campaign

St Martins Centre, 232 Dalry Rd, Edinburgh EH11 2JG  
0131 313 2114 email [spokes@spokes.org.uk](mailto:spokes@spokes.org.uk)  
[spokes.org.uk](http://spokes.org.uk) twitter [@SpokesLothian](https://twitter.com/SpokesLothian)