

# Spokes Action-Update 20 March 2020

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## 1. Covid-19 : public meeting cancelled

Sadly, due to the virus restrictions, our March 23 public meeting on Local Bike Campaigning [is cancelled](#).

However, don't let this put you off from local campaigning, some of which can be done online! Check out our [Local Bike Campaigning factsheet](#) which is also printed as a pullout in [Spokes Bulletin 136](#) and contains the stories of individuals who do their bit in a multitude of different ways.

We hope to put on a meeting on local bike campaigning in the future, although this may not be until 2021 as we already have provisional topics for this year's other public meetings ... *if* they are still possible...

- ◆ **June 11 : Cross-Boundary Cycleroutes** with speakers from [SEStran](#) and the Lothians Councils
- ◆ **November : Global Cycling/Transport** – a meeting related to the COP26 climate summit – possibly speakers from other countries. If you are involved in COP26 and hear of any overseas delegates who have a particular interest/involvement in transport (especially cycling) please let us know.

## 2. Covid-19 : Cycling Advice & Info

There's an article on our website, [here](#). It may be updated further, but currently includes...

- ◆ **A link to Cycling UK advice** (also subject to updating) which covers a range of common questions including whether it is ok to cycle ..if over 70? ..with kids? ..if a cough? ..a chronic condition? etc...
- ◆ **UK/Scottish Government Cycling Policy during the pandemic.** Reactions in countries around the world range between the extremes of banning cycling through to converting vehicles lanes into bike lanes! We link an open letter to the UK government from public health and transport professionals and a Guardian article on this subject
- ◆ **General Covid-19 advice** – we list the reliable websites and how to avoid the scams and misinformation widespread on social media
- ◆ **Covid-19 and pollution** – toxic and climate pollution has fallen drastically in countries/cities where restrictions have resulted in drastic cuts in motor traffic and other fossil fuel use. We link some BBC research – and ask whether this will continue once the virus crisis is over.
- ◆ If you are on twitter, please retweet [our tweet](#) about this article.

## 3. Please remember, don't forget...

Our [recent SpokesWorker](#) (which was sent to all emailable members) included several opportunities whose closing date has not yet arrived, so please follow up those that interest or concern you, including the following. Note that the SpokesWorker has been updated since we emailed it, to cover the public meeting cancellation, and the addition of two new public consultations, which are also described in (5) below.

- ◆ **Cargo-Bike member offer** Closing date for applications **10 April**. Thanks to a kind very substantial donation we are again offering up to £1500 each towards the cost of a cargo bike for up to three Spokes member households. Details in the SpokesWorker. We received a lovely report from a member family who benefited from our similar offer in 2019 – it is printed overleaf.
- ◆ **Midlothian Map - photo competition and advance-order offer** Send us your photo by **30 April**.
- ◆ **Future of the City!!** Please, if you have not yet done so, comment on the **City Mobility Plan** and the **City Plan 2030** – both now close on **31 March** (not 27 March as previously indicated). See the Spokesworker for how to respond.

#### 4. Cargo-Bike member offer : report from a happy family!

Our 2019 offer to assist cargo bike purchase by 3 spokes members resulted in 2 purchases, with one unfortunately having to drop out. We have the following inspiring report from the first family to benefit ...

*Thank you very much for the cargo bike grant which we used to help with the cost of a Circe Helios compact tandem with cargo rack conversion kit.*

***We are selling our only family car and going car-free. We feel that owning a car in the city has become untenable due to the pollution and climate-heating caused, as well as the danger subjected to others. The Helios will now act as our family transport and for collecting the weekly shop***

*For the weekly shop, the cargo rack is fitted, shopping bought as normal and placed into reusable carrier bags, which are simply thrown on the cargo rack, just as you would loading the shopping into the boot of a car. Obviously we can also do other 'cargo' shopping or delivery/collection trips as well as the weekly shop.*

*Additionally, my wife and I now commute to work together, across town, on the Helios – journeys that would be difficult or impossible by car and saving around 30 minutes per day of walking for my wife.*

*At weekends, the kids love taking it for trips to the beach and attending their activities. They are able to ride independently on their own bikes, but with Edinburgh's lack of safe cycling infrastructure, the tandem is faster and opens up more routes and destinations.*

*The other cargo bike we looked at and really liked was the Urban Arrow. Unfortunately, we were not able to store it without keeping it on the street (where it would have been uninsured). So we opted for the Helios which has quick-release handlebars that can be rotated, allowing the bike to be stored "almost flat" inside our flat. The Helios is also better in terms of exercise, encouraging pedalling by the stoker/passenger.*

*Eddie & Vicki*



## 5. Current consultations

Note that Spokes has not yet finalised comments on any of the following, so the points below are just initial thoughts, but they may help your own response. Spokes would also welcome your thoughts on any. Click the title to take you to the official consultation page. There is also a Spokes website consultation page which will take you to our responses when available – click the [consultations tab](#) at [spokes.org.uk](http://spokes.org.uk).

- ◆ **Duddingston Road & Stanley Street 'Road Safety Improvements' – ends 12 April.** We are not yet sure of the background to these schemes, which do not originate from the Active Travel or the Roads Resurfacing teams. They look like low-cost schemes aimed to improve road safety. However, initial thoughts from members of Spokes planning group and Spokes Party suggest that a lot more should be done, especially for Duddingston Road - see the comments below. Again, these comments are thoughts from individuals, not a final Spokes response. Please submit *your* views to the consultation, and if possible also to Spokes.
  - **Stanley Street** – overall excellent, providing a traffic-free route from Hope Lane Bridge to the new High School. However 1.2m spacing between bollards is too low; the Scottish Government's *Cycling by Design* suggests 1.5m desirable and 1.2m an absolute minimum.
  - **Duddingston Road** – all comments below refer to the Duddingston Road proposals, which appear to have a lot of problems and to miss a big opportunity ...
  - *Road width/ central hatching* – probably the most important point is that there is considerable road width, so a much more bike and walk-friendly solution should be possible, eliminating the central hatching, and with segregated cycling provision. There is often on-street parking on both sides, with the hatched area then used as driving space, so a reduction in parking may be needed to achieve the full potential of the road as a more people-friendly street. However the parking is not too extensive, so this should be feasible without too much disruption.
  - *Junction radii* – to slow traffic turning at side roads, and to give pedestrians a shorter crossing distance, the radius is being reduced at Duddingston Av - but not at other side roads. Why not?
  - *Speed cushions* – to be converted to road humps, even though this is a bus route. The cushions are preferable, but if this is done then the humps should be the bike-friendly sinusoidal design.
  - *Outdated base plan* – note that the base plan, on which the proposals are drawn, is very out of date. St John's Primary is where the High School used to be - and the proposals do not appear to improve safety there or at the nursery – did the designers even know about this school?
- ◆ **New Filmhouse on Festival Square – ends 3 June.** This major (and exciting) project would occupy a good chunk of Festival Square. The 'Design Principles' include... *The outdoor landscaping must maximise the potential of the public space, be fully accessible, encourage sustainable transport use and create a welcoming and inspiring environment for all.* However no details of “sustainable transport use” are given, and there is no specific mention of cyclist routes.
  - Festival Square lies on the '**Exchange**' route which branches off from the Canal to West End route, and with long-standing ambitions (re-affirmed in the City Centre Transformation) to continue over a wide light-controlled crossing of Lothian Road. Almost the entire Festival Square will be dug up during building work, as the main screen will be underground and almost as wide as the square. Therefore the final landscaping has easy potential for a cyclist route segregated from pedestrians rather than being shared space. Given the large number of pedestrians likely to be attracted to the area, and many more cyclists when the Lothian Rd crossing and the promised 'Lothian Road boulevard' are built, a segregated cycle connection from the Exchange route would be a big improvement. Obviously detailed liaison and agreement with the Council's AT team will be needed, whether or not the route is external to the boundary of the development.
  - A **link to Morrison Street**, behind the existing Filmhouse, would also be valuable given that a segregated cyclist route along Morrison Street is likely under the City Centre Transformation. And of course there is need for considerable bike parking.
  - *To respond to the consultation* see the link above, and click the box called 'Tell Us What You Think'. Question 4 of the short Survey Monkey is a place to mention cycling issues.



- ◆ **Water of Leith Management Plan** – **ends 26 March**. This is an opportunity, amongst other things, to raise the disused rail line section from **Balerno to Kingsknowe**. Unlike most other rail paths in the city it does not have a sealed surface, and suffers frequent bad deterioration. The Balerno-Currie section is now in better condition, but recently surface water has been “wall to wall” in some other places. Most other rail paths in the city are managed by the Council's transport section, and being seen as having a transport as well as a recreational role probably explains why they are in better condition for walking and cycling, especially in wet weather.
- ◆ **National Planning Framework, NPF4** – **closing date extended to 30 April due to Covid-19**. The NPF is a long-term plan for Scotland's planning policies, including *where* development should take place. The Spokes response is not yet complete, but you will be able to find link to it via the [consultations tab](#) on our website. There is also a useful [background blog](#) by Prof Iain Docherty. Themes of our response will probably include...
  - As far as possible development should take place in brownfield rather than greenfield sites – i.e. in previously developed but now redundant areas, rather than on rural land. There is much more brownfield land available than is often thought, but developers usually find it cheaper to build on greenfield.
  - Development should incorporate high quality active travel and public transport infrastructure and minimise private car use. Basic facilities for residents (shops, school etc) should be easily accessible and within, say, 15 minutes on foot or by bike. This is much easier on brownfield land as this is normally in or adjacent to built-up areas. [Shared mobility](#) (car club, bike hire etc) should be the norm rather than private car ownership.
  - National infrastructure spending for many years has prioritised road travel *between* cities, lengthening and widening trunk roads, with much lower priority for local accessibility *within* towns and cities. It has encouraged car use and longer car journeys - often to accomplish activities which could be accomplished more locally. These priorities must be reversed.

## 6. Other consultations – **Check council, government & some other consultations here**

- ◆ **Edinburgh** [consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk](http://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk)
- ◆ **Edinburgh** [Edinburgh traffic orders](#)
- ◆ **East Lothian** [www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk](http://www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk)
- ◆ **Midlothian** [www.midlothian.gov.uk/consultation/open](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/consultation/open)
- ◆ **West Lothian** [www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations)
- ◆ **Scottish Govt** [consult.gov.scot](http://consult.gov.scot)
- ◆ **Transport Scotland** [www.transport.gov.scot/consultations](http://www.transport.gov.scot/consultations)
- ◆ **Just in case...** Transform Scotland keeps an updated page of current transport-related consultations... [transformscotland.org.uk/whats-new/action-alerts](http://transformscotland.org.uk/whats-new/action-alerts) Check it out in case there's anything important that doesn't appear in the website addresses above (there often is!)

## 7. Keeping in touch

- ★ Remember to check out our **website** every so often [www.spokes.org.uk](http://www.spokes.org.uk)
- ★ We are active on **Twitter** [@SpokesLothian](#). Follow us and ReTweet tweets that you support. Recent tweets also appear on our website in the right-hand column.
- ★ If you use **Facebook**, please like, share, etc the [Spokes Facebook page](#).
- ★ To campaign effectively Spokes needs as many supporters as possible. If you are not already a member, you like what we do, and you'd like to keep in touch with developments, please join Spokes. For details of membership and how to join, go to [www.spokes.org.uk/membership](http://www.spokes.org.uk/membership).