

# Spokes Holyrood 2021 Hustings, 15.4.21

## Notes by Mies

### Ash Denham (SNP)

- Need for experienced leadership and benefited from it recently. SNP introduced: record NHS funding, bus travel, free tuition, prescription charges, baby box, Scottish Child Payments (= 'game changer', bringing 30k children out of poverty)
- Prioritising investment in NHS, business and jobs, climate change into legal framework (net zero by 2045) – transformative action
- 100 new policies to make realise this target including:  
car use down by 20% by 2030, Zero emission busses, Investing in ac travel (walk/cycle as most popular short journey, Scottish cycle repair scheme, Active Travel Commissioner, £50m for Places for Everyone, segregated routes and safer junctions, £30m for Spaces for People
- Now also announced: free bikes for primary school kids who cannot afford it
- Build back better has been an opportunity

### Chas Booth (Greens)

- Apologies from Alison Johnstone who is double booked (stopped airlights over Edinburgh, cross-party transport convenor)
- This election is super important as a last chance before climate chaos
- In transport, emissions continue to rise, fuelled by SNP policies
- Greens managed to get through: free buses for young people, money for walking /cycling, 20 mph, installing infrastructure, 15- min neighbourhoods, expanding the network, safe to school scheme (2 miles around the school gate), pavement parking and online police reporting
- Pandemic – some positives to build on: better air quality, cycling increases.
- Need for a green fair recovery by investing in warm houses, green energy – Vote green as our future depends on it (see our track record, we get things done).

### Jill Reilly (Lib Dems)

(Pre-pandemic I cycled a 3mile journey to work)

- LibDems active travel policies. Recovery first – transport connects people and needs to be sustainable – least progress made (need to get away from fossil fuels):
- Local oversight of public transport, confidence in electric vehicles – chargers, re-open rail lines, integrate different ticketing systems
- Active travel: changes to make planning easier, fund for employers, decarbonising e-bikes, network to suburbs, 4% kids now cycle to school – more training by end of primary all kids
- Ask people about their transport choices: bring them with you by consulting and listening.

### Malcolm Offord (Conservatives)

- Cycling is good for people and environment. Priority is to invest in local public transport.
- Your 3 asks, I agree with these. We would support increasing budget to 10% to £140m, and local schemes suitable for all.
- Spaces for People to become permanent where they are effective impact to create low-traffic neighbourhoods and lower emissions, but in consultation with people and businesses.
- Busses: address the gaps in services, control to local councils. Transport partnerships to integrate different services, Investment in hydrogen buses to address the emissions problem with loans and leases.
- Support for all users (disabled).
- But all this is a luxury in austerity which will come in an independent Scotland.

## **Sarah Boyack (Labour)**

- On her record: 20 Plenty, free buses
- Next parliament has to be about recovery (economic inequalities and energy efficiency). Walking, wheeling is important in recovery. Spaces for People has been good but need to do more.
- Common growing spaces, greening economies, and safe infrastructure
- Support 10% of transport budget to active travel. More support for Council to maintain the roads, introduce young people free buses so they do not see car ownership as an aspiration (enable more car renting), local ownership of bus companies and enable (skills) local council to do these things, address bus usage drop.
- Invest in capacity. Real alternatives to the car and joined up to make it easier to do the right thing. Plan and invest in communities (no new-builds without facilities and public transport links).
- Recent hustings – public transport needs to be the key, part of well-being agenda emphasised by labour.

## **QA session chaired by Dr Caroline Brown**

### **Q: What would you do about discouraging car use?**

Ash: Not keen on sticks

Positive choices: 20-min neighbourhoods, accessible public transport, infrastructure for cycling, 10% (of transport) active travel budget

Chas: We have to have sticks: if you continue to make car-use cheaper, there won't be a modal shift.

Parking levies (for supermarkets, employers). Introduce congestion charging without vote, like Stockholm: show benefits and people will like it.

Jill: Carrots: easier public transport, Park&Ride, make it easier to walk and bike as in EU.

Malcolm: incentivising but it is hard to redesign our old cities in short term: need ten-year plan investment and capability. Some people need cars, therefore electric cars and not penalising.

Sarah: we tried parking levies and congestion charging in 1999 when other parties would not think about this. In other countries, this happens alongside more and better public transport.

Stick first then carrots: need trains and buses in place and a joined-up approach.

Buses need bus lanes and yet alongside cycle lanes, which needs joined up design of cities. Need low emission zones to keep air quality. Policy issues to make trains more affordable to increase access for all.

### **Q: What do you do about pavement parking?**

Sarah: Empower local authority to impose more double yellow lines, but persuade carers. Aging population who needs to be safer and protected from this. Needs to be done urgently.

Malcolm: Fines redesign needed. Part of the ten-year redesign plan which won't happen with independence because there will be austerity and no money for this.

Jill: Street clutter is a problem for all users (e.g. prams). Stick needed. Also need to maintain roads for cyclists.

Ash: Prams is a problem, there is a hierarchy of priorities and need to invest in this.

Chas: Address pavement parking by closing loophole in enforcement for serial offenders. Raise the penalty (has not been raised for 20 years) and enable local authority to control this.

### **Q: What do we do to enable kids and other nervous cyclists to cycle on the road?**

Ash: Safety means segregation. I can identify with this as I had an accident and now not cycling.

Jill: Investing in proficiency for Primary kids and also training for adults. Support for e-bikes to help with hills and encourages elderly to cycle.

Chas: Need training and pay for it (don't leave it to volunteers), alongside decent infrastructure otherwise it won't work.

Sarah: Agree with Chas. And need to promote cycling in schools. Better infrastructure for risk-averse (and women are), celebrate and enable all (a range of) cyclists also by championing the diversity proactively. Point to drivers being too close and support people to do habitual cycling, community-based.

**Q: We have suggested helpful things here: What can you do to persuade your colleagues to support the same enthusiasm for these measures?**

Sarah: Put people on the relevant committees and make the party accountable for their manifestos

Lobby for resources and put it in the manifesto so all sign up for it

Use rebuilding for a healthy post-pandemic and climate chaos as levers.

Jill: Bring people with you by public consultations, so we can make tough decisions taking them with us. Within the party: active travel policy and implementation. Climate emergency persuades people.

Chas: In other parties it depends on who you get. If you vote green, you know you'll get it right. It's in the manifesto and we have a track record.

Ash: Awareness raising campaigns. It's in our manifesto, we are committed.

**Q: As to implementing these initiatives, how will you persuade your local authority?**

Ash: As part of strategic approaches around access and inclusion, carbon reduction, input into local public transport. Planning what happens between cities and their surroundings, workplace parking, 20-min neighbourhoods and planning all this in advance in a joined-up way.

Jill: Speak to people who are affected by those changes and consultation with particular communities. Local government needs to understand this before making changes.

Chas: In Edinburgh we have the opposite problem: Local Council wants to make changes, national gov holds us back (taking out infrastructure, not investing...). Our government is too centralised: need to empower local gov to raise their own taxes, as in Scandinavia, and they will use it responsibly.

Sarah: Local gov has been stripped of funding with immediate effect on social care budgets. Cyclists suffer from this. Bill passed to increase budgets and respect local gov. Having a good cycling lobby (Edinburgh is unique in this) has really helped. Big cycling events that councillors feel obliged to sign up for also make a difference.

**Q: Spaces for People have sometimes raised objections from pedestrians. What can you do to help reduce conflict road users?**

Sarah: Involve other organisations (e.g. disabled) in design, who need to be involved. Bad behaviour is often due to bad design, so improve that.

Jill: [waffled]

Chas: This is about design. Disability and access panel involved. Greens manifesto revised the national framework so that it's inclusive.

Ash: Great to have the Spokes lobby. Agree with Chas.

**Q: Should the bad behaviour of cycle deliverers be the responsibility of the companies who employ them?**

Ash: Companies have the responsibility for this. Not sure if wider regulation is needed.

Chas: Politicians should not be telling cyclists how to behave. Design should do that. This is not about cyclists' behaviour but motorists who endanger them for real. Design should encourage safety for all road users.

Jill: We don't need specific regulation for this: same for all road users, whether deliverer or commuter.

Sarah: Usually cyclists stick to the rules. If there are particular issues about deliverers, then ask employers what they think needs doing, if anything. The priority is on more dangerous road users to not endanger others.

**Closing statements**

Malcolm (left early, 8.30, making this statement):

We need to clean up our cities and invest in a longer term plan. Stay in the UK otherwise this won't happen.

Sarah: In the past I was the pioneer, now we have come a long way. Supporting 20% of the transport budget for Active Travel. This would be a challenge and needs to be talked about everywhere

Jill: I have learned that we need carrots and sticks, cannot only do it with carrots alone. That we need to empower local gov because the focus is on local changes needed, and that we need integration of transport policy.

Chas: Thanks for hosting this: good to scrutinise claims and actions. This is a climate emergency and Greens will and have delivered. Clock is ticking. Vote Green.

Ash: [similar]