

Spokes Action-Update 6 June 2021

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0. Finding your councillors

Find your councillors by typing your postcode on [this page](#). If you already know your ward, [go here](#). Note that everyone has either 3 or 4 councillors, usually from assorted parties.

1. Future of Spaces for People (SfP) – major Edinburgh Council decision soon!

One of the most important decisions of recent years, in terms of cycling as a means of travel, will be made by the Council Transport Committee on Thursday 17 June. Councillors will decide whether to start the legal processes to make SfP schemes permanent (with redesigns/ enhancements) – or to scrap them.

Like cities around the world, Edinburgh took advantage of national covid one-year funding to install extensive measures to encourage walking and cycling for everyday travel. For cycling this meant 39km of semi-segregated main road routes, plus traffic-restricted routes, i.e. the basis of a city cycle network. Also, safety measures from footway widening to road closures at some 70 schools, and a fair bit of footway widening in local town centres.

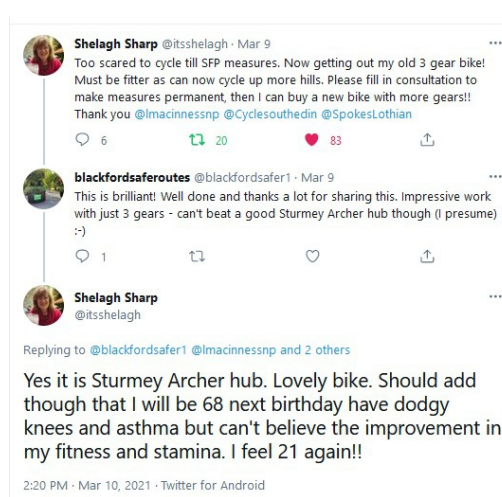
This is truly remarkable when you consider the many years of delays in finalising plans and permissions for one-off schemes such as the city centre west-east route CCWEL, or even Canal-Meadows. Indeed, unlike those projects, this embryonic network was not in any forward plan or strategy – it was an immediate response to an immediate need and to the immediate opportunity of substantial but highly time-limited cash from the government.

There is a [major Spokes article](#) about how the Council could build on this, in particular...

- ◆ **Creating links and extensions** - to form an ever-improving network
- ◆ **Tackling dangerous junctions** - to enhance the safety and thus the usefulness of the network
- ◆ **Revisiting existing Spaces for People schemes** – they had to be introduced rapidly, and at low cost, *or they would not have happened at all*. Furthermore, now that they are in place a great deal of experience has been gained. Finally, they all exist under *temporary* legal criteria, on the basis of Scottish Government advice to Councils, and to become permanent wider consultations and the opportunity for formal objections are necessary. For all these reasons, the schemes should and must be revisited – giving the opportunity for both early and longer-term improvements and redesigns.



the younger



the older



the commute

What **you** can do...

- ◆ Read our [article](#), which includes **maps** showing how the network could develop; **bike counts** on SfP routes; and many **social media postings** from members of the public (as above) who value the routes.
- ◆ Retweet [our tweet](#) about the article, or like our [facebook](#) (31 May) post
- ◆ **Most important!** - if you agree with our points, email your councillors as soon as possible, explain briefly why the SfP schemes need retained, enhanced and expanded into a fuller network, and ask that their party supports this at the Transport Committee on 17 June. If a particular scheme helps you, make sure to mention that, as well as any improvements you'd like made to it.

2. Cycling in the Pandemic – Spokes competition – results

Our thanks to everyone who entered or who helped organise or support the competition in other ways.

There is a [detailed report](#) on our website. Some example pictures from prizewinners below.

Some of the main themes to emerge in the entries were...

- *Rediscovering the joy of cycling*
- *Rediscovering the utility of cycling as a means of transport*
- *Feeling safe and relaxed thanks to [Spaces for People](#) schemes*
- *Helping other people – visiting, transporting, teaching*
- *Discovering sights, sounds and places we're normally too busy for*
- *The delight of traffic-free routes and places – with children and without*
- *How kids love to cycle – and love to widen their cycling experience*
- *Learning new skills and starting new enterprises*
- *Oh, and the excellence of [Spokes Maps](#)!*



The roads were really quiet, so it was really nice. I just love cycling!

I'm learning to cycle on my balance bike

I now cycle to work instead of the bus – it's much easier and much more fun!

3. Spokes map buff - it's here!

The buff contains a triangle of the Spokes Midlothian map between Dalkeith, Portobello and Musselburgh.

[More pictures and info](#) on the Spokes website.

To order – please email office@spokes.org.uk for details (preferably to pay by BACS). Prices are...

- ◆ One buff, £7 including postage; plus £3 for each additional buff
- ◆ If ordering one or more [Spokes maps](#) (£6.95 each) you can include buffs in the order at £3 each.

Please note – this is a buff/snood, not a medical mask



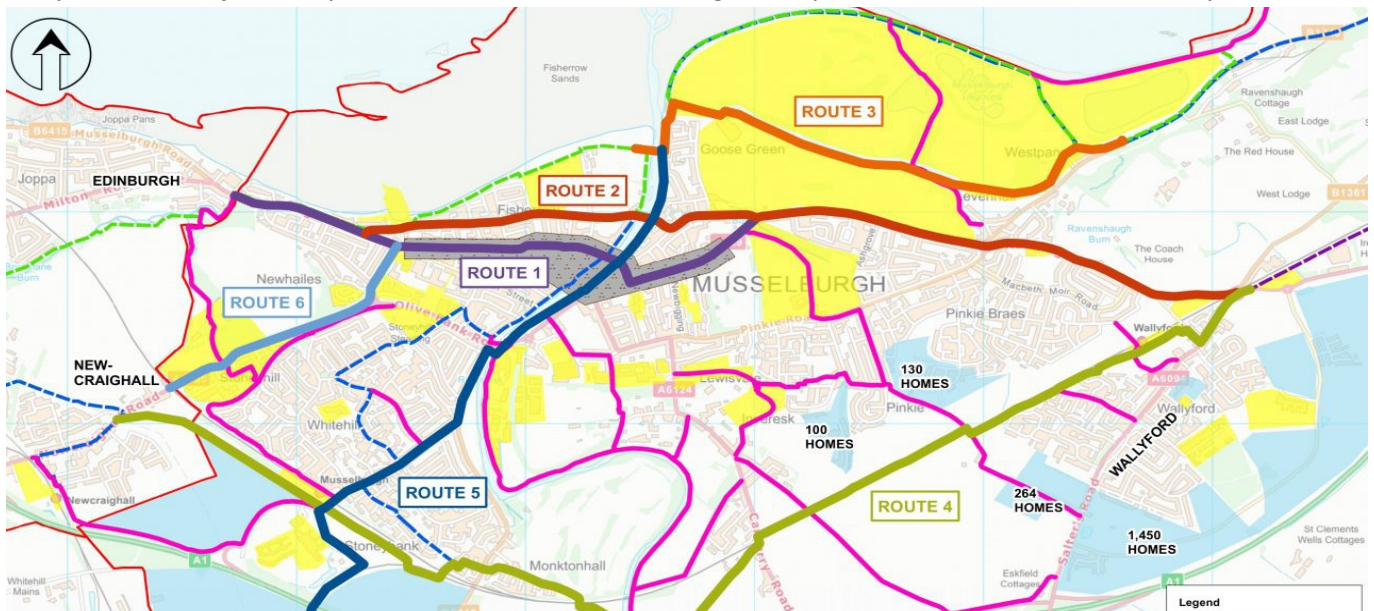
4. Major area-wide consultations

Please respond to any of the consultations below which cover areas where you live, work or visit. If you respond by email, please send us a copy - otherwise please let us have any main concerns or thoughts which you'd like considered for possible inclusion in the official Spokes responses. You may also wish to send your thoughts to your local councillors, and ask them to support you in their own comments.

Where we manage to prepare a Spokes draft response in good time, we will circulate it to local members for comments, but unfortunately we rarely manage this!!

Musselburgh Active Toun – ends 16 July Consultation website ... musselburghactivetoun.info

“The 2018 Musselburgh Active Travel Network Masterplan proposed a network of strategic active travel routes, and three of these are currently being taken forward by East Lothian Council to the Concept Design stage. The routes will connect key attractors within Musselburgh and provide greater accessibility between Musselburgh Town Centre and surrounding communities. The project has been awarded funding through the Places for Everyone scheme, funded by the Scottish Government through Transport Scotland and administered by Sustrans.”

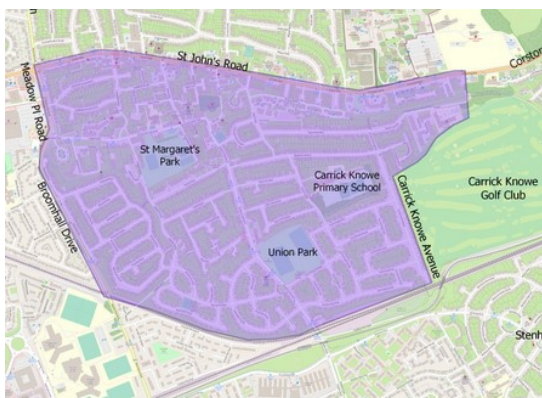


Low Traffic Neighbourhoods: Leith & Corstorphine - ends 4 July [Consultation website](#)

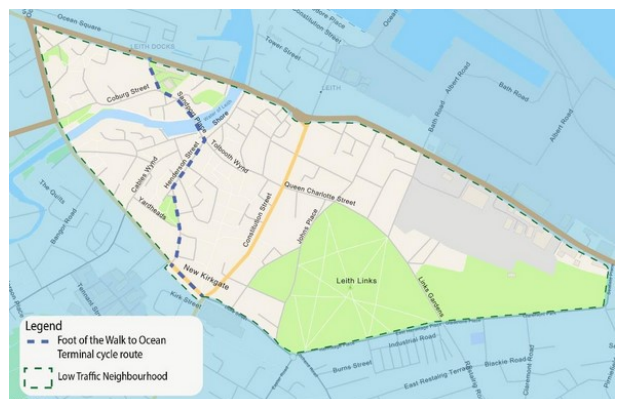
Spokes greatly welcomes these proposals which aim to create “a safer and more comfortable environment for walking, cycling, wheeling and spending time in local streets and outdoor spaces.” Of course, we can suggest improvements, so do send us your thoughts as well as making your own submission.

One member has already pointed out the following for the **Leith** consultation...

- ◆ The SfP Links Gardens closure is to be re-opened – it should be retained
- ◆ John's Place should be closed to through-motor traffic, to stop rat-running past Leith Primary
- ◆ A segregated onroad route is needed to connect Sandport (North Ed paths) to Leith Links (for Portobello)



'Corstorphine Connections' - proposed LTN area, bounded by St. Johns Rd, Pinkhill/ Carrick Knowe Av, Stenhouse Drive & Meadow Place Rd



'Leith Connections' - proposed LTN area, bounded by Salamander St, Commercial St, North & Gt Junction St, Duke St and the roads south of Leith Links

5. Take care!!

We've recently had reports of 2 bike crashes with serious injuries. Both were to **very experienced** cyclists, one a Spokes member. Please take note of the probable crash causes below – it could help you! Spokes raises such issues with the Council (more than once sometimes!) but if you are affected, please do contact your councillor.

George IV Bridge This is one of the few SfP schemes still using the old kind of lane dividers where the 'wand' is very easy to remove – we suspect the occasional driver who wishes to park by the kerb does this. Once the wand is removed, it is not easy to see the small black base, but if your bike hits it, you could have a nasty crash.



Spot the wand base!

We have written to the Council – they won't make any changes pending the June 17 meeting (see 1 above), when the future of all SfP schemes will be decided, but they have promised to inspect the road daily until then, to replace any missing wands. **NOTE** – it is very easy to replace these wands, and some spokes members regularly do this! One just inserts the wand into the base and then a twist should get it firmly in place.

Haymarket Station Tramline crashes continue here, though they are far far fewer than in the early days before the Council made a number of changes. Using the 'jug handle' lane helps you get a better angle for crossing the tram lines – do make every effort to cross at as good an angle as possible – on every journey.

You may know that the Council has [long-delayed plans](#) to make physical changes here (and at 4 other blackspots). The Haymarket scheme has now been moved into the CCWEL west-east cycleroute project, which means that work will probably not happen at this blackspot until autumn at soonest.

6. Philanthropist wanted!!

In 2019/2020, thanks to a kind surprise donation from a charitable trust, Spokes was able to offer grants of up to £1500 to Spokes member households towards the cost of a cargo bike (new e-cargo-bikes usually cost £5000+). This trust has an environmental outlook and their wish was to see more cargo bikes on Edinburgh's streets.



2020: £1500, Josie & family Urban Arrow cargobike [\[report\]](#)



2020: £1117, Eddie & Vicki's Helios tandem with cargo conversion kit fitted [\[report\]](#)

A couple of pictures are above, and more pictures and reports are on our website [here](#) (also pictures/reports from the separate grants that we offer to community organisations).

We'd like to offer another round of grants to Spokes member households (including anyone who joins) but the above charitable trust is now directing all its grants to covid-related work, so cannot provide another donation. We feel it would be inappropriate to devote ordinary Spokes funds to this purpose, so this article is just on the off chance that a philanthropically-minded Spokes member would like to donate say £5K-£10K for a household cargo-bike support offer (If the full sum not claimed, any excess would go to our cargo bike support for community groups).

Please contact Spokes if you would like to help and are able to do so.











7. Other current consultations – *please respond to any that concern you*

- ◆ **Aviation tax reform ends 14 June**
 - Currently there is no tax on aviation fuel, no vat on tickets, and sales are 'duty-free'. In contrast, when travelling by rail (or even car) you pay all these costs – despite the fact that you are creating significantly *less* environmental damage!
 - The UK government is consulting on aviation tax reform. But instead of rectifying the above, it is considering reducing the one tax that does apply, Air Passenger Duty.
 - The consultation is [here](#). Background [here](#) from the Aviation Environment Federation.
- ◆ **Granton Waterfront ends 20 June**
 - The Council is consulting on proposals for a large area of mixed-tenure homes in a development aiming to “*champion low carbon transport, active travel and sustainable development, supporting the Council’s commitment to achieve net zero carbon by 2030 and the emerging themes of the [City Mobility Plan](#) and [City Plan 2030](#)*”
 - Consultation [here](#). Even if you can't think of any improvements, a supportive comment might help!
- ◆ **Midlothian Local Development Plan register for info**
 - Midlothian is working on a LDP, which covers all uses of land, including transport. A [revised timetable](#) is being considered, so that the LDP can take account of the drastic changes resulting from covid 19.
 - You can register to be informed of opportunities for consultation [here](#).
- ◆ **Traffic Regulation Orders closes 30 July**
 - The current rules for TROs cause many problems. Some are in appendix 1 [here](#). For example, the intolerable 2-year delay caused to CCWEL, the council east-west city-centre route, by a small number of objections which were eventually [entirely dismissed](#) by the government. Similarly, making Sfp schemes permanent is going to require two legal processes (ETRO followed by TRO), on top of consultations already undertaken, instead of one single process.
 - In 2019 the Scottish Government refused to accept an amendment to the Transport Bill to rectify some of these problems. However, they agreed to consult on changes, hence this consultation in 2021. Spokes will be responding but has not yet considered the questions carefully – it is complex.
 - [Consultation here](#). If you are commenting you can at least point to the need and urgency for change.

8. COP26 International Climate Conference Glasgow November 2021

- ◆ **Official website** ukcop26.org
- ◆ **Climate Fringe** Environmental and social justice organisations across Scotland are preparing, including through events, lobbying, documents, workshops and more. See <https://climatefringe.org/>
- ◆ **Edinburgh Climate Commission** This is a powerful independent group, including the Council, universities and businesses, working “*to accelerate climate action and impact in Edinburgh.*” edinburghclimate.org.uk
- ◆ **COP26 accommodation needed** Can you offer accommodation to a climate campaigner who comes to Scotland for COP26? Spaces throughout the central belt, including Edinburgh, are needed. Even a floor or sofa may help, if spaces become very tight. A modest charge to cover costs is acceptable. Details here... www.jubileescotland.org.uk/become-a-host-for-the-cop26-homestay-network



	08 Can technology be a force for good in delivering a fair climate future? Jun 11:00 pm - 2:15 pm Organiser: Sustainability First Event Type: Webinar & Talks Theme: Climate Action
	08 Climate Reading Group: Letters to the Earth Jun 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm Organiser: New Writing North Event Type: Online Gathering Theme: Arts & Culture, Climate Action
	09 Global South: Climate change and conservation Jun 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm Organiser: York Festival of Ideas Event Type: Webinar & Talks Theme: Climate Action, Climate & Global Justice
	10 Fast Fashion: Global Icon, Climate Killer. Jun 3:30 pm - 6:45 pm Organiser: Grantham Centre for Sustainable Futures Event Type: Webinar & Talks Theme: Climate Action
	10 The climate crisis and gender inequality: an intimate relationship Jun 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm Organiser: Research And Postgraduate Office at London Metropolitan University Event Type: Webinar & Talks Theme: Feminism & Climate
	10 Session #6: Anticapitalism and Nature Jun 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm Organiser: The Left Book Club Event Type: Webinar & Talks Theme: Climate Action
	11 Greater Glasgow Climate Action Network Jun 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm Organiser: SCCAN Scottish Communities Climate Action Network Event Type: Open Meeting, Project: Open for Collaboration Theme: Climate Action, COP26
	11-13 Friends of the Earth Groundswell 2021 Jun 7:30 pm - 5:00 pm (13) Organiser: Friends of the Earth UK Event Type: Webinar & Talks Theme: Climate Action
	12 Our Climate Crisis: Youth in Action Jun 9:00 am - 4:00 pm Organiser: UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION CLIMATE AND OCEANS Event Type: Webinar & Talks Theme: Climate Action, COP26
	12 G7 - no 'greenwash', act now on climate change Jun 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Organiser: Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP Event Type: Edinburgh COP 26 Coalition

Climate Fringe diary

9. More and future consultations – *Check council, government & other consultations*

Note – there are very few consultations at present due to the pre-election 'purdah' period

- ◆ Edinburgh consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk
- ◆ Edinburgh [Edinburgh traffic orders](#)
- ◆ East Lothian www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk
- ◆ Midlothian <https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory/33/consultations>
- ◆ West Lothian www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations
- ◆ Scottish Government consult.gov.scot
- ◆ Transport Scotland www.transport.gov.scot/consultations
- ◆ Scottish Parliament yourviews.parliament.scot/consultation_finder
- ◆ **Just in case...** Transform Scotland keeps an updated page of current transport-related consultations... 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!)

10. Keeping in touch

- ★ Remember to check out our **website** every so often 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 and you like what we do, go to www.spokes.org.uk/membership.