

Our main communication with Spokes members is now the electronic-only **Action-Update** which goes to all emailable members "roughly monthly," when there are enough important developments, news of forthcoming events, relevant road, traffic and planning matters, etc. Occasionally we need the circular on paper too (e.g. to use at public meetings). We then produce **Spokesworker** in place of the online-only Action-Update. Both documents also appear on our website, under the [Spokesworker tab](#).

So, to keep in touch with events, developments & opportunities... be a Spokes member and make sure we have your email address.

NEW FIRST MINISTER

Humza Yousaf MSP, the new First Minister, was Transport Minister from 2016 to 2018. In that time he greatly impressed us with **his understanding of - and commitment to - active travel**, particularly cycling. Whilst most Transport Ministers talk happily about the value of cycling in terms of health, climate, pleasant towns, and so on, few match the talk with significant action – especially when it might involve upsetting motorists. Humza Yousaf was one of the very few exceptions.



TRUNK ROAD EXPANSION

First, however, we should point out that Humza is also a good friend of **trunk road expansion**, for example signing off one of the early contracts for Sheriffhall flyover and strongly supporting full dualling of the A96 and A9, despite the huge costs, the encouragement of traffic growth, and further dispersion of homes and facilities. And despite the Scottish Government's 2020 commitment to cut car-km 20% by 2030, already a near-impossible ambition [[spokes.org.uk, 24.2.22 blog](#)].

The leadership campaign, with its hustings, encouraged all candidates to make road expansion promises, and Humza was no exception, promising 'urgency' on A9 dualling [[tweet 1.3.23](#)] and 'urgency and pace' for the A96 [[Aberdeen P&J, 6.3.23](#)].

Humza Yousaf has also frequently emphasised his convictions on the climate crisis, so there is a real conflict of principles here, and one of which he needs constantly reminded!

ACTIVE TRAVEL INITIATIVES WHEN TRANSPORT MINISTER

Most impressively, in 2017, Mr Yousaf criticised councillors from his own SNP party who were voting down segregated main road bike lanes. We said this [[Spokes Bulletin 127](#)] ...

Humza Yousaf MSP, the SNP Transport Minister, has displayed real leadership in standing up for segregated main road cycling provision after SNP councillors voted to rip out the Ayr Holmston Road scheme, and against installing phase 2 of East Dunbarton's Bears Way.

East Dunbartonshire SNP councillor Keith Small also wanted the existing segregated Bears Way replaced by painted onroad lanes, "We are not anti-cycling ... but we can't ignore that 18,000 cars use this road every day."

Some might think that 18,000 cars a day is a reason to keep segregation! Speaking later, Mr Yousaf agreed...

"I am disappointed at some decisions, particularly on segregated cycle lanes, which hinder our vision."

A Scotsman editorial later outlined the importance for reducing climate emissions and for preventing obesity of many more people getting around by bike [3.11.16] ... "Humza Yousaf is absolutely right to regard these lanes as an important factor for would-be cyclists."

He also persuaded the Finance Secretary to **double cycle cash** to £80m p.a. - the first really big rise – and created the **Active Nation Commissioner** post, occupied by [Lee Craigie](#).

Most innovatively, it was Humza Yousaf's initiative to commission the 20-bike ScotRail 'Highland Explorer' coaches [[scotrail.co.uk : cycling : Highland Explorer](#)] for the Oban service initially, now expanding to Mallaig, and hopefully further. Back in 2016 ScotRail planned to replace the Oban class-156 trains (6 bike spaces) by class-158 (2 spaces). Spokes publicised this widely [e.g. [spokes.org.uk, 18.3.16 blog](#)] resulting in massive concern, indeed outrage, from individuals, the tourist industry, the press, and Scottish celebrities such as Cameron McNeish and Lesley Riddoch. Mr Yousaf's response, to commission coaches with 20 bike spaces, caused astonishment and delight.



[NB: the 156->158 swap was later abandoned, so the 6 original spaces remained too!]

SNP LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN

Pop Scotland contacted all 3 candidates [[pedalonparliament.org 21.3.23](#)]. Humza Yousaf was the only one to reply. [He said..](#)

If elected, I will honour the mandate on which the SNP was elected in May 2021. This includes spending 10% of the transport capital budget on cycling and walking, and providing free bikes for all school age children who cannot afford them.

I appreciate sight of the wider issues you raised with me and as First Minister I would like to have my Government engage with you as soon as reasonably possible to discuss these matters and where we can go further to protect active travel.

OTHER TRANSPORT APPOINTMENTS

Minister for Transport - [Kevin Stewart MSP](#)

We know nothing about Kevin Stewart's views on transport, but his position as MSP for Aberdeen Central will certainly open him to some heavy local lobbying for dualling the A96.

Cabinet Sec for Net Zero & Just Transition - [Màiri McAllan](#)

Surprisingly, there is no one in the Cabinet with 'transport' in their title, but Màiri McAllan's responsibilities include this, so Kevin Stewart reports to her. However, it is good to see transport coming under the 'Net Zero' heading.

Minister for Active Travel (and more) - [Patrick Harvie](#)

Green MSP Patrick Harvie retains his position, but does *not* report to Màiri McAllan. His responsibilities also include Zero Carbon Buildings, and probably for that reason he reports to

Cab Sec for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work, Energy - [Neil Gray](#)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you wish to follow up any of the issues here, raise them with your own MSPs. Find them at [parliament.scot/msps](#).

TRAMLINE CRASHES

printouts: to see this in colour go to spokes.org.uk/spokesworker

As discussed in our [19.2.23 member Action-Update](#) and our [website blog \(23.2.23\)](#) Spokes now has an online tool for crash reporting. With 35 submissions already, we are seeing early results which back up most of the points that we had suspected – some of which may be unexpected.

They also support [our suggestions](#) as to how to reduce your chances of becoming a victim (find this in blog link above)

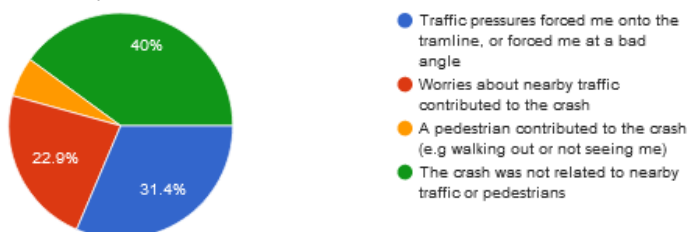
Here are some early results (*but be aware these statistics are only based on 35 cases so far, all self-selected*) ...

◆ Crashes are spread throughout the day, with only about 30% during morning or evening rush hour

◆ More crashes are to people travelling in the same direction as the tramlines than needing to cross them



◆ Traffic pressures contributed to over 50% of crashes



◆ Skidding was even more common than wheel-trapping



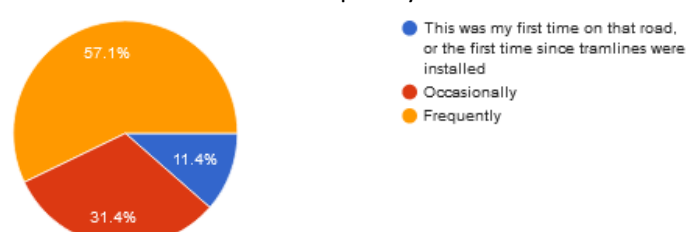
◆ Around 50% had suffered loss of confidence to some extent



◆ More than 75% now consider detours to avoid tramlines



◆ Most had used this road frequently before their crash



CRAIGLEITH RETAIL PARK

Spokes received the following from a member, copied from a message he left on their website craikleithretailpark.co.uk:

"Hello, some years ago, you erected no cycling / cyclists dismount signs on the only safe cycling path access to your retail park. Yet your website still claims "many route options for foot or by bicycle". Today I suffered yet another of many extremely frightening encounters with aggressive drivers whilst entering the retail park by road past the Sainsbury fuel station. This route is a toxic environment for cyclists, not least because of the volume and (often) excessive speed of drivers, the tight bends, the slippery surface due to regular diesel spillage and the "rumble strip" at the mini roundabout. Would it be possible to meet with someone from the retail park to discuss improving this situation? I fear a tragic accident, which I am sure the retail park wishes to avoid."

Spokes [tweeted the message](#), resulting in comments from others who felt similar, and from 2 local councillors who had raised the issue. **If you have similar views and/or suggestions**, we suggest emailing john.mcleod@savillspm.co.uk, the Park Manager, copying to Clr.Vicky.Nicolson@edinburgh.gov.uk, hal.osler@edinburgh.gov.uk and spokes@spokes.org.uk.

LOTHIANS

◆ **Spokes East Lothian Map** New edition expected in May !!

◆ **Winchburgh Main Street** consultation to create a more welcoming place for walking, cycling and lingering. Respond at winchburghstreetdesign.commonplace.is.

◆ **Winchburgh Rail Station** Lothians MSP [Foyso Choudhury](#) has raised in the Scottish Parliament the continuing hiatus over [the long-promised rail station](#) – meanwhile a new motorway junction promises to bring yet more cars into Edinburgh and to create a yet more car-dependent village. Send your thoughts to new Transport Minister Kevin.Stewart.msp@parliament.scot, copied to Foyso.Choudhury.msp@parliament.scot.

◆ **Love To Ride** More info and sign up for the annual workplace bike challenge at lovetoride.net/westlothian.

IMPORTANT EVENTS

For these & more links see the events column at Spokes.org.uk

◆ April 22 [Pedal on Parliament](#)

◆ April 29 [Edinburgh Critical Mass](#)

◆ May 24 [Spokes public meeting: Active Travel Action Plan](#)

◆ June 13 [Spokes bike breakfast](#)

WORK UNDERWAY

◆ **CCWEL** www.edinburgh.gov.uk/ccwel

◆ **South St Andrew St** tramline safety project, BUT the actual roadworks take you very close to the lines! – TAKE CARE.

◆ **Leith Walk** Officially-accepted defects on the cycleways are being corrected, and white lining installed

◆ **Leith LTN** (Low Traffic Neighbourhood) work begins 10 April.

CONSULTATIONS

◆ **Most important, please respond to the consultation on the spaces for people/travelling safely (bollarded) main road bike routes ETRO Orders.** We know that calls for removal are going in from opponents. We suggest asking for retention of the lanes but redesign to full segregation. There's an easy way to respond – see section 6 of the 19.2.23 Action-Update at spokes.org.uk/spokesworker

◆ For all other current local consultations, see the links in part 9 of 19.2.23 Action-Update at spokes.org.uk/spokesworker