

# Spokes Action-Update 20.01.24

[spokes.org.uk](https://spokes.org.uk) St Martins Centre, 232 Dalry Road EH11 2JG 0131.313.2114 twitter [@SpokesLothian](https://twitter.com/SpokesLothian)

## 0. Finding your councillors

In Edinburgh, find your ward & councillors by typing your postcode on [this page](#) [or [edinburgh.gov.uk](https://edinburgh.gov.uk) : Council & Committees : Find your Councillor]. Everyone has either 3 or 4 councillors, usually from assorted parties. For any Council, and to find MSPs, you can use [writetothem.com](https://writetothem.com).

## 1. Spokes Public Meeting, Thurs 29 February – for your diary

Where [Augustine United Church](#) 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL

When Starts 7.30, Ends 9.30. Doors open 6.45 for coffee, stalls and chat

More details later on our website, but put the date in your diary now for this major public meeting

### Edinburgh's 'Future Streets' Policy, and the role of cycling

- **Cllr Scott Arthur** - City of Edinburgh Transport Convener will outline the Edinburgh *Future Streets* policies (as far as that is possible in 20 minutes!), with particular reference to cycling
- **Laura Laker** - cycling, transport, environment journalist will critique the proposals. Laura researches and writes on cycling issues extensively, including in national/international media such as [The Guardian](#) and [Bloomberg](#); and in specifically cycling publications such as [Cycling Industry News](#) and [Road.CC](#)
- **Ewen Maclean** - organiser of [Blackford Safe Routes](#) will then chair our always greatly anticipated hour of QA and discussion with the speakers

### Background

In late January Edinburgh Council is to publish its finalised Circulation Plan and associated Action Plans, including Active Travel (ATAP), following [last year's consultations](#). The complete set of plans is now called [Future Streets](#). The plans then go to the February 1<sup>st</sup> Transport Committee for approval and any amendments by the Committee.

The early draft of the new **ATAP** brought a major change in emphasis from previous versions, moving from wide reliance on off-road paths to the intention of *"a joined-up network of routes that feel safe to everyone at all times of day. This network will need to use segregated cycle tracks on main roads, as well as unsegregated on-street routes that have low volumes of motor traffic."* We say: this is great, but the devil will be in the detail!

The **Circulation Plan** is expected to have a major influence on how the city develops in terms of transport, and how that impacts on the life of local areas, shopping streets and the city at large. The [Dec 2022 early-draft Circulation Plan report](#) said that it *"... will form a strategic framework for all relevant investment programmes, including the major junctions review, the delivery of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, the road and footways renewals programme and the citywide roll-out of School Streets."*

A 'connected cycle network' is one important promise of the Circulation Plan. It is also expected to lay out *which transport modes will have what priority on which major roads*, particularly roads leading to the city centre – absolutely crucial decisions for cycling, as well as for bus, particularly where space is limited.

Spokes raised [some significant issues](#) during the early consultations, notably..

- What will the 'connected cycle network' mean? - the draft ATAP above certainly talks of main road segregated cycle provision, but what will happen at those main road sections and junctions where space is limited? Sharing a bus lane can be ok for confident cyclists, but cannot be part of a cycle network which is *suitable for all*, including families or indeed for the average member of the public. Will there be compromises which restrict the potential for large numbers of people to feel confident to switch to bike?
- The Council has a hugely ambitious target to *reduce car-km 30% by 2030*. It is hard to see how this can be achieved without considerable use of measures such as bus gates and modal filters so that, for example, local high streets and residential areas are seen primarily as destinations, with high pedestrian and cycle accessibility, rather than through routes for private motor traffic. Will we see this in the Circulation Plan?

There is more background in our article, [What's in Store for '24?](#)

## Public meeting help needed

- **Help at the teas/coffees stall** (you'd need to be there from around 6.15) email [spokes@spokes.org.uk](mailto:spokes@spokes.org.uk).
- Someone to look after the **technical side** of meetings. There is a comprehensive in house system (we provide a laptop). We use YouTube to live stream meetings and record them with cameras, sound equipment and mixing units at the venue - they help to set up. During the meeting we need to keep things working ok and switch between camera and other audio/video feeds. For more info, contact Martin at [McDBRISTOL116@hotmail.com](mailto:McDBRISTOL116@hotmail.com). See recordings of previous meetings [here](#).

## 2. Group member volunteers needed

Most Spokes activity happens through working groups which meet roughly monthly online. The two most central groups, [Planning](#) and [Resources](#), have both lost a couple of regular members during the last year or so. This has a clear detrimental effect on Spokes activity: most importantly we can't respond to all relevant council and other consultations; but also, for example, fewer volunteers to help at stalls and more strain on other group members.

*Please do get in touch if you'd like to try joining Planning or Resources.* Both have well-used email lists to keep in touch with ongoing issues between meetings. At meetings, don't be shy to butt in with your thoughts or asking anything that is unclear; groups are friendly and everyone starts by not really knowing what is going on!

Don't feel you don't know enough – it is by doing that you learn - and you would normally share with other members of the group. For example, on responding to a consultation in Planning Group, someone might draw up initial ideas, others could then comment and perhaps add useful references, leading to a final complete response.

## 3. Dates for your diary

- Events marked \* will have a **Spokes stall** – please volunteer to help! Or come and say hello anyway!
- Also, there are many **current consultations**, each with their own closing date – see sections 5,6,7 below.

Jan 27, Sat [Edinburgh Critical Mass](#) – and the last Saturday of every month

\*Feb 29, Thu **Spokes Public Meeting** – see (1) above

Mar 8, Fri [Infrasisters Evening Ride](#) – on International Women's Day

Apr 22 (starts) **Cycling in Edinburgh exhibition** at Museum of Edinburgh, Royal Mile [+ maps on sale in shop]

May 31 – June 9 [Edinburgh Festival of Cycling 2024](#) – great to see it returning!!

## 4. Snippets

### 4.1 Wee Bike Library

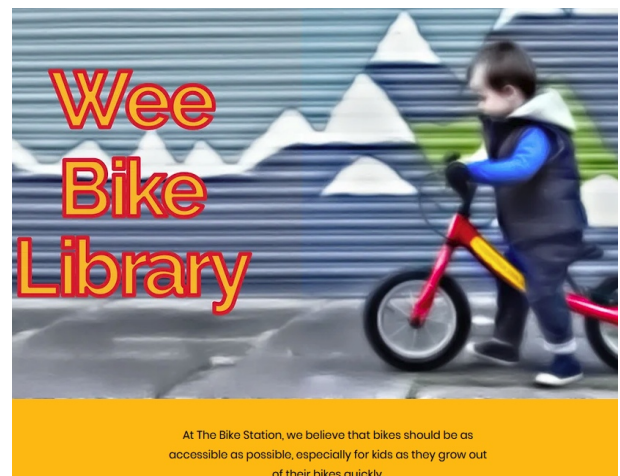
The Bike Station (Edinburgh and Perth bases) runs a scheme where you can borrow a child bike, and swap it for another as your child grows! And it's free until March 2024, when it may or may not be extended as it depends on grant funding. Details at [www.thebikestation.org.uk/weebikelibrary](http://www.thebikestation.org.uk/weebikelibrary).

Users say...

*"We've been without bikes for the kids for over a year and now have daughters aged 11 and 14 back cycling."*

*"We borrowed a bike for our grand daughter over Xmas. It was set up to fit her, and with lights, batteries and a lock."*

*"I'm a solo parent with a low income. It's a brilliant service as it saves me time and money."*



### 4.2 Portobello Climate Cafe

There's a weekly Climate Café every Sunday on Portobello beach front, from 3pm each week, near Towerbank & Beach Lane. Just drop by at any time - *"it's a great opportunity to sit down and have a blether about our climate and what's going wrong."* [www.facebook.com/groups/1151036858806619](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1151036858806619)

### 4.3 Transport Committee (TEC)

You may be aware that all Transport Committee papers can be found here...

<https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/ielistmeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=136>

Spokes attempts to follow each Committee, and provide a tweet thread of at some some relevant points and decisions. Click a link below, then follow up the way to see the entire thread for that meeting...

[TEC 11.1.24](#) [TEC 16.11.23](#) [TEC 14.9.23](#)

### 4.4 Incorporating cycling/walking infrastructure in road resurfacing

The Council has a long-standing policy to do this whenever possible (e.g. [Piershill](#)); though with exceptions such as when resurfacing is urgent and AT facilities would require traffic orders (which often take a year or so).

However there are increasing examples where the policy seems to be forgotten, e.g. [Seaview Terrace/Eastfield](#), [Craigleith Crescent](#). Now the Council may scrap the policy altogether for 24/25, on the grounds that an £11m increase in the maintenance budget means there is 'generally' only time for like-for-like replacements. A final decision will be taken [in the budget \(Feb 2024\)](#). **Contact your councillors if you are concerned about this.**

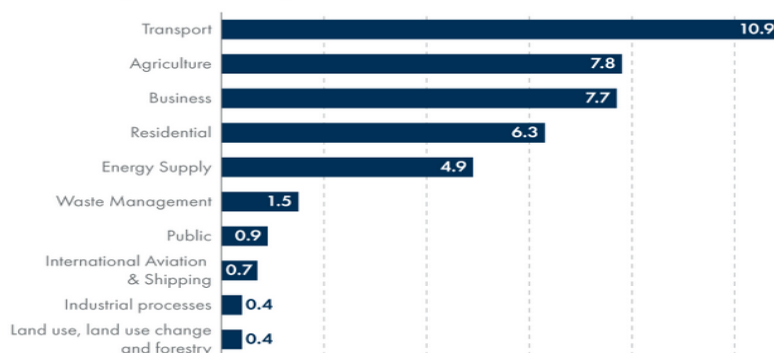
### 4.5 SPICe report on Scottish Government transport policy relationship to climate

[SPICe](#) (the Scottish Parliament Information Service) is an expert group, independent of the Scottish Government, set up to provide impartial advice to MSPs of all parties.

They have just published [this blog](#) on how climate policies relate to policies in a range of areas, including transport.

Domestic transport accounts for [26% of Scotland's total climate emissions](#), with cars responsible for the largest single share, followed by trucks and buses. Progress in cutting emissions has been slower in this sector than many others with the [Committee on Climate Change](#) (CCC) noting in their most recent progress report that 'plans to decarbonise transport in Scotland are falling behind'. Scotland's most recent data shows that transport emissions remain significantly above the expected emissions from transport set in the current [Climate Change Plan Update](#).

#### Greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland 2021 (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e)



### 4.6 Cycle commuting and mental health

One often sees reports on the health benefits of cycling, but the studies are often small scale, self-reported or have other aspects which reduce their statistical value. A new Edinburgh University study, ***Does cycle commuting reduce the risk of mental ill-health?*** is very different. The study is a major advance in methodology, linking census and medical records. It links 378,253 people aged 16-74 from the 2011 Scottish census with NHS prescription records for the following five years, so the results are very robust.

The result? *"Researchers found a 15 per cent reduction in prescriptions for depression or anxiety amongst cycle commuters in the five years after 2011 compared with non-cyclists."* [press release](#)

### 4.7 Charlotte Square

The Council has a series of plans for connecting CCWEL to George Street via Charlotte Square.

During March, resurfacing will be completed, and 'temporary changes' (unspecified) will be included for the link. Protected cycle lanes are planned to be introduced in summer 2025, subject to completion of the necessary Traffic Orders and obtaining the funding (presumably from bids to Sustrans or Scot Govt).

In the long term a high quality public realm scheme is intended for the entire square, incorporating the cycle connection, but this is likely to take 2 or 3 years of design, public consultation, traffic orders and fund raising.

### 4.8 Bike Buses

A new international survey has identified over 400 bike bus routes, in 13 countries. The report categorises the very different types and motivations of and for bike buses, but basically all are groups of children cycling together to a destination (usually a school) with adults accompanying.

The report is [here](#). Retweets welcome [here](#). There's also a new [Bike Bus page](#) on our website.

## 5. Edinburgh Consultations (including by developers)

*Please respond as an individual to all that concern you. Also copy to Spokes for possible use in our responses.*

**Note on PANs:** Developers of large schemes must now submit a PAN prior to a planning application. A PAN ('proposal of application notice') requires a public consultation, the results of which must then be submitted with the eventual planning application. The PAN consultations normally comprise drop-ins, an email address for enquiries, and a website. [There are PAN consultations at 5.4 & 5.5 below]

You can find out more about Edinburgh PAN applications, by pasting in their reference number at the Council's [Planning Portal](#). However, only scanty details are normally available at that stage, as it is basically just an application to the Council for permission to hold a public consultation. It includes information such as contact email addresses and outline details of the proposed public consultation, drop-in dates, addresses, etc.

One of our Planning Group members scrutinises the Council's weekly list for relevant PANs (and planning applications) and circulates Planning Group. There are frequent PANs relevant to Spokes (maybe 2 or 3 a month) but unfortunately we don't have capacity normally to notify local members and often not even to respond ourselves, though we try to do this for anything really major or where there are very clear bike implications. A new Planning Group member with time and interest to prepare drafts and coordinate such responses would be hugely valuable!

### 5.1 Workplace Parking Levy, should Edinburgh have one? – ends 6 Feb 2024

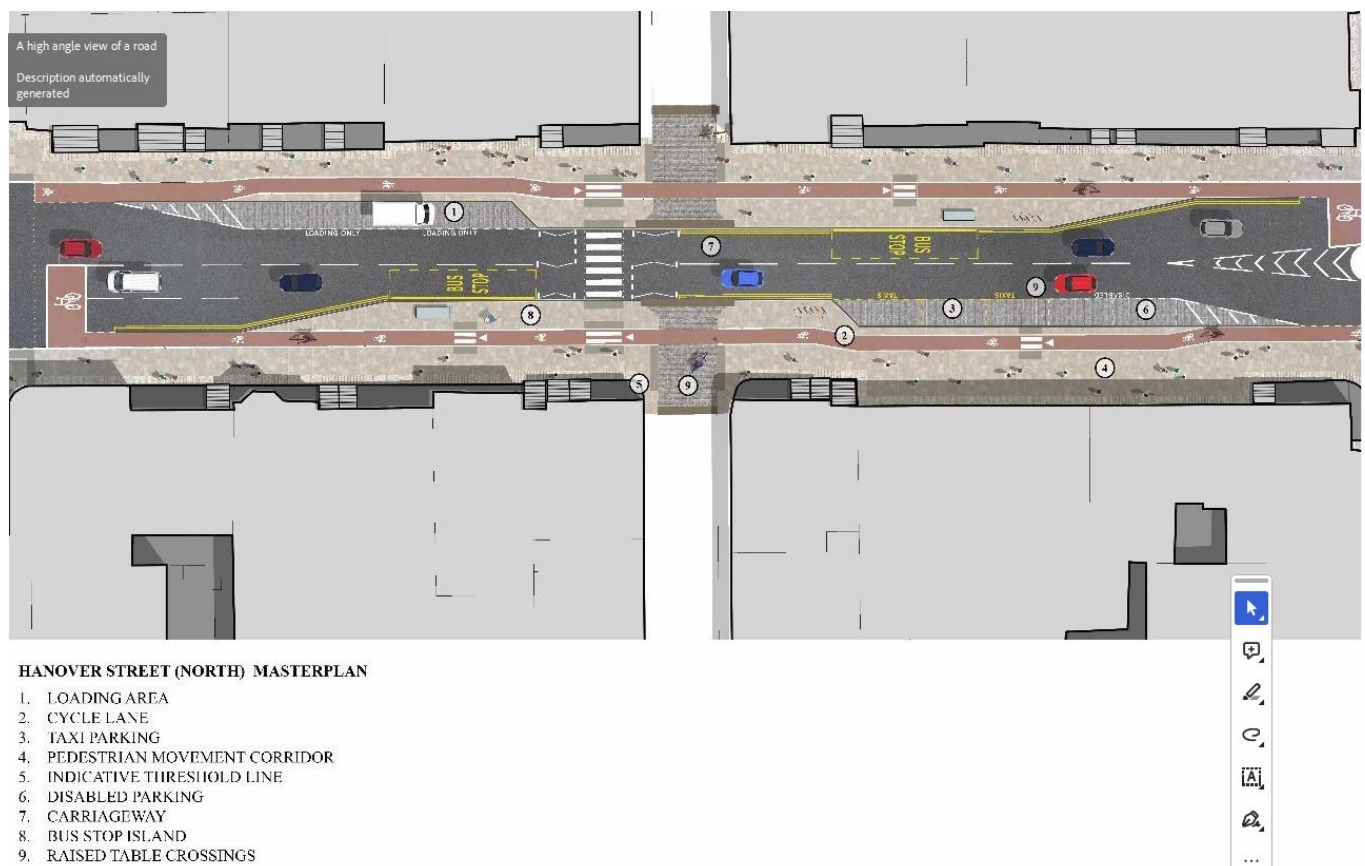
Council consultation [here](#). There is some background info on our website [here](#) (para 2311).

### 5.2 George Street project, design of cross-streets – ends 8 Feb 2024

Council consultation [here](#). The Spokes response is [here](#) (and tweeted [here](#)). The proposals for **Hanover Street** are fairly good, but need tightening up; whereas we are very disappointed with those for **Frederick Street**.

**Please have your say** – respond to the consultation.

There is more on this and the (many) earlier George Street consultations on our website [here](#).



Hanover Street proposals



### 5.3 Powderhall junction – ends 16 Feb 2024 [also a drop-in on Weds 24 Jan]

Plans for a major redesign of Broughton Road/ MacDonald Road junction and area around it, to improve conditions for walking, wheeling and cycling, including the link into St Marks Path, which connects to the railway path to Leith. [Consultation page](#).

Drop-in: Weds 24 Jan, 1530-1900, Broughton Primary School (Link Building), 132 Broughton Road

The consultation page is very long and detailed, but there is a [survey link](#) near the end of it.

Queries or email responses: [PowderhallJunction@Stantec.com](mailto:PowderhallJunction@Stantec.com) or phone 0131 335 4200.

### 5.4 Caley Brewery site 23/07312/PAN – closing date unclear. Drop-ins 7 Feb & 27 March

The large triangular brewery site between Slateford Road and Wardlaw Terrace is proposed for residential development. [Consultation website](#). Such a central location should be considered for car-free, or certainly car-reduced, development. Cycle access must also be considered from the busy surrounding roads. There may also be scope to improve local routes, though the rail line on the north is a big constraint.

The consultation website is currently rather bare, but more detail is promised after 7 Feb. You can also register for more info, or ask questions by email to [Lesley@streets-uk.com](mailto:Lesley@streets-uk.com). There will also be drop-ins at St Michael's Church, 1 Slateford Road, 4.30-8.30 on Wed 7 Feb, and also 27 March, 3.30-7.30.

### 5.5 Edinburgh Arena planning proposal 23/06913/PAN - ends 12 Feb 2024

The international entertainment group AEG, which runs the O2 Arena in London, is proposing an 8500-seater arena at Edinburgh Park. It would be by some distance the largest indoor venue in the city.

Drop-ins: **Mon 4 Dec & Tue 9 Jan**, both 3-7pm at 1 New Park Square, EH12 9GR

Enquiries and address for email comments: [consultation@edinburghparkarena.com](mailto:consultation@edinburghparkarena.com)

Website: [www.edinburghparkarena.com](http://www.edinburghparkarena.com)

Edinburgh Reporter article: [theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2023/11/edinburgh-arena-will-be-great-for-the-city](http://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2023/11/edinburgh-arena-will-be-great-for-the-city)

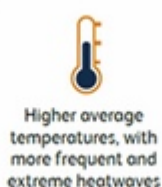
**Remarkably, the website says this on car parking:** *A car free arena development fully aligned with national and local planning policy requirements. The site is located adjacent public transport infrastructure/services (rail, tram and buses), that together provide fast and frequent connections to Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife, Glasgow, the Central Belt and beyond. Blue Badge parking will be provided, while drop off / pick up will be possible.*

There is of course a large nearby existing car park, but an 8500 seater without further parking is very welcome.

**We urge members to submit comments in support of this access/parking policy** – though clearly it must also build in cycle access and parking if it is to be “fully aligned with national and local planning policy requirements.”

### 5.6 Climate-Ready Edinburgh – ends 7 April 2024

Why and how the city can adapt to a future of increasing climate impacts. [Consultation page](#).



### 5.7 Leith Connections – ends 8 April 2024

[Consultation page](#). The Leith Connections project has 3 elements (see map [here](#)): a cycle route from Foot of the Walk to Ocean Terminal as an alternative to the tram route; segregated cycle routes along Salamander and Commercial Street; and a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) covering much of central Leith. The current consultation is only on the LTN aspect.

The LTN features, such as bus gates, motor vehicle prohibitions, contra-flow cycle route, etc are now in place under an Experimental Traffic Order, ETRO/23/20. There is a period until 8.4.24 for comments, support and objections to the ETRO. Councillors can then decide whether to remove, alter and/or make permanent the LTN. The address for comments is on the [Consultation page](#). Please copy your comments to Spokes also, so we can take account of them in the official Spokes response.

## 5.8 Spaces For People bike lanes, ETROs – *consultn postponed; new date still unknown*

The 6-month [formal consultation](#) [#6] for the *Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders* for the *Spaces-for-People/ Travelling-Safely* main road semi-segregated bike lanes has not yet begun, due to errors found in the originally published draft Orders. They will have to be re-issued, which is taking an inordinately long period. Spokes has been assured that comments already submitted will still be taken into account.

## 6. Lothians Councils Consultations

### 6.1 West Lothian Council - enquiries re new road & path developments – *no closing date*

The Council has a [webpage](#) for enquiries and comments about new roads, footpaths, and cycle routes; and also [a page](#) of current projects and completed consultations.

### 6.2 West Lothian Council – pedestrian and toucan crossings – *ends 16 Feb*

The Council is planning a series of crossings, as below. The plans are all available [here](#).

Send comments to: [martin.wilkinson@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:martin.wilkinson@westlothian.gov.uk) and please copy to Spokes in case we have the capacity to respond and can take your views into account.

From a very quick look there are several queries...

- Will the central islands be bike-friendly in terms of width/design of space between island and footway?
- Some of the toucan crossings near primary schools seem to end on footways, so presumably are intended for young children going to/from school?
- Would it make sense for any of the proposed pedestrian-only/puffin crossings to be toucans?

Location 01: A89 at Newhouses Road, Broxburn - Proposed 2.1m wide **Pedestrian Refuge Island**;

Location 02: Church Street, Addiewell - Upgrade Zebra to **Puffin Crossing**;

Location 03: Calder Park Road, Mid Calder – Proposed Dropped Kerb Crossing;

Location 05: Preston Road, Linlithgow - Proposed **Toucan Crossing**;

Location 06: Main Street, Mid Calder – Proposed **Puffin Crossing**;

Location 09: Hardhill Road, Bathgate – Proposed **Puffin Crossing**;

Location 11: A705, Redmill Court, East Whitburn - Proposed 2.1m wide **Pedestrian Refuge Island**;

Location 12: B8084 North Street, Armadale – Proposed **Puffin Crossing**;

Location 13: Murieston West Road, Livingston – Proposed **Toucan Crossing**;

Location 14: Kirkton South Road, Livingston – Proposed **Toucan Crossing**;

Location 16: Springfield Road, Linlithgow – Proposed **Puffin Crossing**;

Location 17: Lower Bathville at Heathervale Walk – **Zebra Crossing Upgrade**.

## 7. National Consultations

### 7.1 Ecocide (Prevention) (Scotland) Bill – *ends 9 Feb 2024*

[Monica Lennon MSP](#) is proposing a Bill to protect the environment in Scotland and deter environmental damage by introducing the crime of ecocide into Scots law.

[Read about the proposed Bill in this Consultation Document \(791KB, pdf\)](#)

There is also a feedback survey here: [Consultation Survey](#)

### 7.2 Guidance on inclusive design for town centres and busy streets – *ends 29 March 2024*

The Scottish Government has developed draft guidance to ensure that the design of town centres and busy streets takes account of the needs of all members of the community. In particular “the premise that if the area is designed for disabled people, then the majority will benefit.”

[Consultation and response page](#) Queries to: [accessibletravel@transport.gov.scot](mailto:accessibletravel@transport.gov.scot)

## 8. Cargobike grants for Spokes member households

Thanks to kind donations and a surplus from our maps sales, we are reopening our offer of grants to help Spokes member households who need a cargobike. Four grants will be available, each of £1500 or 50% of the cost, whichever is least.

There are several criteria which you must meet to be eligible. As long as you meet the criteria, it will normally be first-come first-served. Going by our previous offer, applications may be fairly slow, as getting a cargobike, including how to store it securely, are big decisions. In the unlikely event of too many applications early on, we will take into account what you say in your application about why you need the cargobike, and how and how much it will be used. **Find out more, and how to apply**, in the *households* section of our [cargobike web page](#). With help from Galashan Trust we also offer cargobike grants to *voluntary organisations* and *microbusinesses* - details also on the above website page.

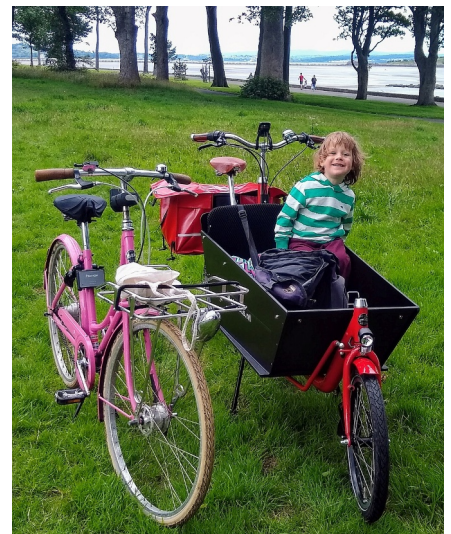
Below are some households who have benefited from previous Spokes cargobike grants – most use the bikes for shopping as well as child transport. You may have seen them on the roads. Read their reports and be inspired!



[Claire's report](#)



[Charlotte's report](#)



[Lauren's report](#)

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

- ◆ Edinburgh [consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk](https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk)
- ◆ Edinburgh [Edinburgh traffic orders](#)
- ◆ East Lothian [www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk](http://www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk)
- ◆ Midlothian <https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory/33/consultations>
- ◆ West Lothian [www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations)
- ◆ Scottish Government [consult.gov.scot](https://consult.gov.scot)
- ◆ Transport Scotland [www.transport.gov.scot/consultations](http://www.transport.gov.scot/consultations)
- ◆ Scottish Parliament consultations [yourviews.parliament.scot/consultation\\_finder](https://yourviews.parliament.scot/consultation_finder)
- ◆ Scottish Parliament petitions [petitions.parliament.scot](https://petitions.parliament.scot)
- ◆ Just in case... Transform Scotland keeps an updated page of current transport-related consultations... [transformscotland.org.uk/whats-new/action-alerts](https://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!)
- ◆ Spokes website We have a page of particularly relevant consultations [www.spokes.org.uk/consultns](http://www.spokes.org.uk/consultns)

## 10. 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](https://twitter.com/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](http://www.spokes.org.uk/membership).