

Cargobikes in Edinburgh – [Spokes Public Meeting](#) 2.9.25

Notes by Emma at the meeting

Four projects, helping to make the cargo bike transition in Edinburgh

Banzai, Carol – Bruntsfield Area NetZero action initiative.

How can we address the climate crisis? Most successful initiative is the cargo bike library, started in Nov 2024.

In 10 months – 75 uses, the bikes have been borrowed over 100 times. Uptake = brisk.

Funding from ???

Wanted to address the barriers to cargobike ownership e.g. space in tenements.

Freely available to local residents, not rented. Demonstrate that car is not necessary. Large number have not tried a cargobike before, and most return to borrow again. This helps shift the thinking. Sharing economy really helps.

Portobello Cargo Bike Library connected to Porty Community energy.

Jennifer Elliot -project worker, Poppy – director.

Three years. Rent out bikes. What's the future? How do you keep project going? Keep volunteers going? This year emphasised supporting carers to get out and using cargobikes.

Seen transformation in family life. How can we expand? How can bikes be in the right place?

Still need to work on bike infrastructure.

Poppy came to it from personal use, not being able to drive. Cargobike frames how she lives her life.

As a peripatetic art teacher, she saw the

Barriers: misogynistic men in cars shouting abuse or people not seeing it as normal, thinking it's an eccentric way of life.

Cycling Gardeners of Edinburgh – Callum?

Garden maintenance company emerged in covid. – 5-6 bikes being used every day.

We can do small, city centre jobs – most other companies won't touch them. We can get to places quicker than cars. We can carry many tools, but we can't carry much garden waste – so we have a day of week. Watching the big bike trailers coming along.

Insurance was a significant issue – took a lot of fighting – because so unusual.

Appropriateness of bike networks: they are aimed at bicycles – not big trikes. Don't want to provoke backlash from pedestrians on narrow shared paths. Yet also gardeners suffer harassment on roads from drivers. Policy is to ask drivers to contact the company rather than for the gardeners to engage.

But, getting on the bike, one feels relaxed even if running the business can be stressful. Such a joy, and its improved family life as well as the business.

Bike Station -Ian Maxwell on behalf of Sasha Taylor (maybe asked Ian for notes he had).

Set up as bike refurbishing outfit – from a Sciennes school project more than 20 years ago. Now includes free to access bikes, recycling, and affordable bikes. Bike station is now the custodian of the cargobike movement in Edinburgh. It has a wee bike library for kids and it now has 15 cargobikes on a monthly loan to family. Data solve logistical issues, esp. for women. Building evidence base on barriers: the costs incurred for free-to-access bike school = significant. Hopes to facilitate meetings between all the key players in this field – in October. Also trying to use them to move own stock between 2 Edinburgh bases. They want to set up two more hubs in the next year.

Questions & comments from the floor

Council and parliament don't seem to care. How do we make them care?

Bikes need to be part of travel hubs that are being talked about, not just commuter bikes but libraries at travel-hubs.

Political side is important – lobby to get more happening, e.g deliveries to homes by cargo bike. Lots of concern about the food delivery bikes and methods in which people are employed. Actually, need to criticise the exploitative structures, and incentivised to cycle fast.

Council tends to make these things a service, but when hubs are at the heart of the community it works much better.

Angus cycle hub rep. from Dundee: going for over 10 years and have a very good relationship with the council, and can expand operations, esp. safe bike storage, at the moment. We have had success in finding a councillor who believes in the cause.

What lending period has been most successful in getting people onto bikes? Party – lent weekly, because on Fridays the bikes are used for food collection. But loaned daily, most often. E-bikes are loaned monthly but have to come in after 2 weeks because of insurance. People like to try out range of cargobikes to see which works for them – but some people have no storage or limited means.

Bruntsfield green councillor was very helpful in finding premises and getting set up.

Laidback Bikes rep. -finance is the main problem. Energy saving trust used to give interest free-loans, but this has stopped. Some people trade in a car for a cargo bike, others find £6,000 difficult to find in a one payment. Rolling rental has been used, up to the point when they have bought the bike. FedEx was using cargo bikes, but that seems to have disappeared. Couriers use bikes but not cargo.

Edinburgh council initiatives seem to have fizzled out -e.g. cargobikes used on Leith Walk whilst tram infrastructure was being built. What happened to this? Also, suggestion that cargo bikes be used for park maintenance but has not materialised. Used to be a councillor as a cycling champion.

Need to think of cargobike as a cheap car, that's fun, healthy and green.

Cargobikes are eligible for the cycle-to-work scheme, like ordinary bikes.

Shrub Coop foodshare use cargobikes, saving food from shops and taking it to people who need it.

Need to remove motor vehicles from city centres before cargobike delivery because they get squeezed from vans and from ordinary bikes.

Inspired by Europe – so many places are so far ahead of us.

Reclaiming the streets for people – not just bike lanes, but opening streets only to pedestrians and bikes, spaces for play, reducing pollution.

Security of parking is a big issue, cars are more secure. E-bikes are being targeted, but cargobikes too. Community is important for lobbying, getting things done.

Conclusion: Lots of potential in Edinburgh, on the cusp of things happening.