

Spokes Action-Update 21.08.26

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0. Finding your councillors

In Edinburgh, find your ward & councillors by typing your postcode on [this page](#) [or 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.

Three things for Spokes!

1. Spokes member survey

This autumn Edinburgh Council is likely to take major decisions on the future of **Princes Street/ George Street** and on the **tram north/south extension**.

Spokes operates through working groups of active volunteers, not referendum, but getting the views of members on these two controversial matters will help our Planning Group in their decisions, so please complete the attached survey.

The survey is very short, just covering the main points that will help us, although there is also space for comments.

All results, including comments, will be presented anonymously.

Important: this is a survey to get the opinions of **Spokes members only**, on two controversial topics. To ensure it is members only, the survey asks for your email address – the address to which this action-update was emailed. The email addresses will be checked to ensure replies are only from members, and that there is only one reply per address.

Enter the survey by clicking [here](#)

The main questions should take you just 2 or 3 minutes (unless you wish also to enter comments) so please do it now!

At the latest, please enter by Sunday 30 August

2. Spokes AGM, Wednesday 9 September

The Spokes 2026 AGM will be at 7pm on Wednesday September 9th in the Downstairs Studio, Augustine United Church, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL. All members are welcome to attend, but, whether you come or not, do anyway have a look at the papers at the link below.

As well as reports from Spokes Groups (Maps, Planning and Resources) and a finance report, members will vote on whether Spokes should apply to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), giving us charitable status. This would involve appointing trustees. The existing Groups would continue to operate as now, whilst trustees would have a new strategic and co-ordinating role in the organisation.

Background to this proposed change, and other AGM documents, are at: <https://www.spokes.org.uk/documents/internal-documents/aggm/aggm-september-2026/>

The AGM will also include short performances of the cycling anthem "Why can't we just do it like Amsterdam?" with comments from singer Daniel Abrahams; and "A Bikely Story" by theatre maker and puppeteer Hazel Darwin-Clements.

AGM contact: imaxwell@gn.apc.org



See 5 below for agenda

3. Spokes and Me – please enter our 2026 competition!

Spokes will be 50 in 2027! So, for our 2026 summer competition we'd like to hear any way in which **you** have benefitted from Spokes being around – whether it's recently, ages ago, or through the years. It could be as little as using a Spokes map to devise a great commuter route or for a brilliant weekend bike ride; or maybe you are a dedicated campaigner, past or present, who has, through Spokes, helped make your own small contribution to a better world.

As always, we've fantastic prizes, ranging from a £10 cafe voucher at the Water of Leith Centre, through a £50 Edinburgh Bicycle voucher, to a £1000 grant towards a cargo bike. Top winner chooses first, then so on. Full prizelist below.

Full entry details at:
www.spokes.org.uk/2026/07/spokescomp-2026

End date: 6 September

Each person can enter twice

Please also publicise:

[bluesky](#)
[facebook](#)

The competition is open to all: please tell friends & relations

3 (ctd) 'Spokes & Me' – our 2026 summer competition – prizelist

Top prizewinner gets first choice of prizes, and so on till all prizes allocated.

- [Museum of Scottish Railways \(Bo'Ness\)](#) Family annual pass to the extensive museum
- [Bo'Ness & Kinneil Steam Railway](#) Family ticket for one return trip
- [Edinburgh Festival of Cycling](#) Urban Arrow Cargo-bike day hire
- [Lanterne Rouge bike cafe, Gifford](#) £20 voucher
- [Water of Leith Visitor Centre](#) £10 cafe voucher
- [Ember Bus \[takes 2 bikes\]](#) £50 bus tickets credit
- [Edinburgh Bicycle](#) £50 voucher
- [Harts Cyclery](#) One-week ebike hire
- [Spokes](#) £1000 voucher** towards a cargo-bike
- [RUNNERS-UP](#) your choice of a [Spokes map or Edinburgh map-buff](#)
- [Laidback Bikes](#) Recumbent tour or cargobike hire
- [Camera Obscura](#) Family ticket [2 prizes]
- [Spokes](#) Set of all 4 Spokes maps
- [Spokes](#) £200 voucher** towards e-bike purchase

** These two prizes must be used at a local bike business (not a national chain) in Edinburgh or Lothian

4. Dates for *your diary*

* = with Spokes stall. *Come along and say hello – or email us to offer help!*

August 29 [Critical Mass](#)

Sept 1 [Tram/trains for Edinburgh](#) - public meeting by [TTfE](#), St. Bride's Community Centre Cafe, Dalry, 7.30-9pm.

A good opportunity to ask about bike/walk access to stations, bike carriage, and active travel routes beside new sections of tramline. The project now has a good head of steam (or should that be a full battery!) with government funding now agreed for an initial 'high level' study. They will also be speaking later this autumn at our own public meeting – see Nov 19 below for more details.

*Sept 9 **Spokes AGM and discussion of becoming a SCIO** – see 2 above and 5 below

*Sept 16 [Cycling Scotland conference](#), Perth

Oct 8 [People's Emergency Briefing](#) – climate crisis film featuring experts from a range of disciplines - screening and discussion led by Spokes member [Dr Scott Arthur MP](#), St Michael's Parish Church hall, Slateford Rd EH11 1NX

*Nov 19 [Spokes public meeting, Cycling & Public Transport](#)

Speakers on several public transport issues, followed by our usual one-hour QA. We hope the meeting will be positive, instructive and inquisitive, with a QA of constructive ideas / suggestions, not just complaints!

Scotland's Railway: John Lauder (who is also former Sustrans Scotland director) will describe the [Railway for Everyone](#) project, which seeks to improve access to stations and to trains, for walkers, wheelers and cyclists

Lothian Buses: A speaker from [Lothian Buses](#) and possibly Edinburgh Trams will tell us about their driver cycling-awareness training and discuss bus/bike interaction on the roads

Tram Trains for Edinburgh: Rob Falcon, a founder of TTfE, will describe [TTfE proposals](#) to re-open the South Suburban Railway to tram-trains, which could also use Edinburgh's tram network, and how to maximise the project's potential benefits for bike travel, which could include new bike route connections, active travel routes to stations, and bike carriage.

Note that some of the TTfE organisers are Spokes members, and **Spokes has been asked** if we could do a report [brief or detailed] on potential bike access routes to station sites on the proposed initial route (Portobello to Murrayfield, mainly using the South Sub rail route). A couple of members have volunteered to help with this, but it is unlikely to happen unless we have another volunteer with the interest, enthusiasm and time to take the lead. Get in touch if that could be you!

REGULAR EVENTS *[check before attending, and tell us of any changes]*

Tuesdays 5-6.15pm UK cycle campaigners '[Active Travel Cafe](#)' via zoom. News, speakers & discussion

Tuesdays & Thursdays [Edinburgh Dawn Patrol](#) Markus Stitz, founder of [BikePacking Scotland](#), runs early-morning rides, leaving St Andrew Square west gate at 5.40am, ending at Wellington Coffee

Wednesdays 3pm-9pm [Bike Kitchen](#) Fix your bike with help from qualified volunteers at [Edinburgh Tool Library](#)

Thursdays 5-8pm [Bike DIY repair](#) at the Wee Spoke Hub [tools and advice provided; book in advance]

Fridays 2-4pm until 30 October. Easy rides from Bridgend Farmhouse. admin@bridgendfarmhouse.org.uk

Saturday 2pm – last Sat every month except December – [Critical Mass community fun ride](#), also making a point

Saturday 10am – first Sat every month March-November – [Livingston 20-milers](#) relaxed, sociable not-fast rides, with trained ride leaders, mainly Spokes members, exploring in Livingston and the countryside around.

5. Spokes AGM 2026 - agenda

The 2026 AGM will take place at 7pm on Wednesday 9th September in the Downstairs Studio, Augustine United Church, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL.

AGM papers, including the draft SCIO constitution, background information and working group reports, are on the Spokes website at www.spokes.org.uk/documents/internal-documents/agm [2026 folder]. At the time of writing, some reports and other documents are still to be added. Note that the last 'AGM' was in 2015 (minutes at the above link). Given the time gap we won't seek approval of those minutes but intend in future to hold AGMs annually, and indeed this will be a requirement if we become a SCIO.

1. Introduction by the AGM chair, Spokes member [Brendan Paddy](#)
2. Summary reports from the Resources, Planning and Maps groups and from Dave du Feu on co-ordination work that he does for Spokes

3. Video of the cycling anthem [“Why can’t we just do it like Amsterdam?”](#) which was part-funded by Spokes and comments from the singer Daniel Abrahams

“Why can’t we do it like Amsterdam” is the opening line of an inspirational new song and video by Edinburgh musician and cycling activist [Dan Abrahams](#), supported by Spokes. The catchy song, which risks becoming your next earworm, continues.. “when I ride, I’m free ..”

Dan’s video includes images of various Edinburgh streets transformed into cycling and walking havens by celebrated German animator [Jan Kamensky](#). You can watch the video [here](#).



4. Report from the Treasurer, Paul Ritchie
5. Vote to approve accounts and elect/re-appoint Treasurer
6. AGM Motion: **“That this AGM agrees that Spokes should apply to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) to change its status from that of a Constituted Organisation to a Membership Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and that the draft SCIO constitution tabled at the AGM is submitted to OSCR with this application along with a list of initial Trustees which includes representatives of all the current Spokes Working Groups.”**
7. Discussion and vote on above motion

8. Performance by Hazel Darwin-Clements of [A Bikely Story](#)
Roll up, roll up, to see an unlikely spokeswoman spin a two-tyred tale featuring bloomers on a boneshaker! We'll cycle through time, examining the chain reaction caused by pedal powered people on the rides of their lives.

9. General discussion on how Spokes can work on issues affecting cyclists in Edinburgh and the Lothians in the coming year.



6. Maps Group report, Jan 2025 - Sep 2026

Since we have already received this AGM report, it is printed here. Others will be added on our website [here](#).

In the first few months of 2025, our excellent volunteer cartographer, Andy Follis, finalised updates to the [Edinburgh map](#). The new maps were received from the printers in May and we began promotion and distribution.

Peter Hawkins had intimated that he wanted to reduce the amount of work he did on distributing maps, so we revised the role of shop 'hustlers' so that they would take on a more active role in contacting shops and delivering orders. Robert Simpson wrote new instructions for hustlers; the process has been evolving over the course of the year. Unfortunately, the changes have led to some shops not being visited as frequently as they should and we will start emailing shops as well to ensure they know how to order our maps.

We also put out an appeal at the Spokes Public Meeting on 30 April 2025 for more hustlers and for volunteers to assist with admin work. Celia MacIntyre volunteered to assist Anne Douglas in the Spokes office - which was extremely fortuitous as things turned out.

Meanwhile, Andy Follis finalised the full 5th revision of the [West Lothian map](#), implementing the changes identified by our volunteer surveyors during 2024, and information on new developments from West Lothian Council. We held a launch event on 11 October at the West Lothian Bike Library in Livingston [\[picture\]](#), attended by [Kirsteen Sullivan, MP](#) for Bathgate and Linlithgow, and Deputy Provost of WLC, Councillor Peter Heggie, plus local volunteers and Spokes members.



It was a lovely event, with great scones, and got good coverage in the local press.

Photo: Bob Douglas

Sadly, shortly after this, Peter Hawkins suffered a stroke and had to cease the many tasks he had been performing for Spokes maps [see [here](#), section 6.5, for an appreciation]. We held an emergency meeting in November 2025 to agree how to deal with map orders, manage the stock, the maps bank account, and set up a common method of issuing invoices, using an improved invoice form developed by Eric Ingram.

In February 2026, we held another meeting to discuss further financial arrangements and processes. It was agreed that the 'Constitution of Spokes (Maps)', drawn up in 2002 in response to specific financial circumstances at that time, was no longer relevant. Dave du Feu, Ian Maxwell and Peter Hawkins signed a document to state that the Constitution was ended. The Maps Group is now part of Spokes as a whole, as the other groups have always been. We also dropped VAT registration as it required quite a lot of work and we only recovered around £200 per year.

We considered closing the Maps bank account and having all transactions go through the main Spokes account, but decided to retain the separate account to make it easy to identify payments made (or not made). Some funds from the current account have been moved to a deposit account that earns a higher rate of interest. Many thanks to Ian Maxwell for dealing with the banking, constitutional and administrative issues.

Charles Wallis, the Spokes bike/rail representative, arranged for a new Edinburgh map to be installed near the cycle parking at Waverley Station, replacing a 2016 version. This had been on the list of things to do for some time, and many thanks are due to Charles for getting it done and establishing links with Network Rail.

We have discussed the possibility of enabling Spokes to sell maps online. This would involve changes to the website to make it compliant. Ian Maxwell is looking into what would have to be done and the likely cost.

This summer, Martin McDonnell has started the process of creating a digital archive of all past Spokes maps. This could be useful for Spokes' 50th Anniversary in 2027. We are also moving the map stocks from Jenners Depository to the Spokes office on Dalry Road which will save storage fees.

Future maps – [Midlothian](#) may need updating first as it was published in 2020. Andy feels that it will not require a major survey. Edinburgh is always the best seller – we need to keep an eye on sales and may have to update/reprint in 2028.

Generally, there is a downward trend in the sale of maps, although sales at festivals and other events have been strong. We have discussed the potential for Spokes to produce digital maps, but feel that our paper maps satisfy a particular need and help people to plan trips across geographical areas. The view at present is that other suppliers already provide good digital mapping and Spokes does not need or want to go into competition with them.

There was a healthy £42,320 in the Maps bank account on 31 March 2026. This is largely because Andy Follis does the cartography for free, where, previously, most of the maps income went to pay the designer. Some of the maps funds have been used to provide grants for cargo bikes. We welcome proposals for other valid uses for the funds.

7. Joined-up thinking – or not?

Recent weeks have seen *three examples* of minor changes to the road network which have introduced dangers for cyclists. In one case (Gilmerton Road buildout) we already know of one crash, which the victim has reported to the Council. All three, as we understand it, were implemented by different parts of the department (? signals, maintenance and events teams) not by the Active Travel team. Some were schemes to improve pedestrian safety – we very much welcome that - but the design must take account of cycling, and certainly not introduce potential new dangers or deterrents to getting about by bike. Designs which support both groups are usually possible.

Spokes has raised these specific dangers with the Council. But, equally or more important, *we are pressing for all future changes to the road system to be given a quick once-over by the Active Travel team* before implementation.

If any of these changes have affected you, please contact your councillors (see link at top of page 1) to report them, ask for improvement and, importantly, ask how the councillors will ensure that in future all such schemes get checked, before implementation, for potential new cycling dangers – or opportunities. Also if you know of crashes having happened at any of them, please let us know the details.



Gilmerton Road buildout into cycle lane – and on the Council's 'Primary Cycle Network.' For more on this, see [22.7.26 Action-Update](#)
pic: G McIntyre



Summerhall resurfacing project (with changed bike lanes). A left-turn car lane allows cars to emerge as cyclists have green 'ahead' lights, producing a severe left-hook danger
pic: Blackford Safe Routes



Greyfriars Bobby: the cycle lane now leads into a temporary footway buildout, during the Festival. Thanks to Spokes & others the 'no overtaking' sign was later added. But a safer solution should have been designed in from the outset.
pic: John Robson.

But, yes, the Council can get some things right! Here is a nice new walk/bike parallel zebra crossing at the south end of Turnhouse Road, part of Quiet Route 9.



pic: John Robson

Please respond as an individual to all consultations that concern you. And copy to Spokes, to aid our central response. We'd also appreciate volunteers to do initial draft Spokes responses, ideally joining our Planning Group

8. Consultations – Very few this month, but do respond to any that matter to you!

Keep up to date with relevant consultations, on our [consultations page](#)

8.1 East Lothian, Fisherrow Harbour to Links View - [Website & online survey](#) – **closes 19 Sept**

Proposed 4m-wide active travel route, forming part of East Lothian's planned route 3, Fisherrow Harbour to Prestongrange. On an initial look, the plans seem ok, although we wonder about the boat parking bays immediately adjacent to the route – might there be projecting bows/sterns into the cyclistroute? Spokes would welcome any thoughts that you have on the proposals.

8.2 Edinburgh City Plan 2040 – Ideas consultation – [website & online survey](#) – **closes 30 Sept**

The City Plan is an important document which lays out intended changes of use to land and related policies across the city, including transport uses. The Council has now embarked on the long process of preparing its next, 2040 City Plan. Links to the existing City Plan 2030 and the developing City Plan 2040 are on [this Council web page](#).

The first stage was an 'Evidence Report' which includes a massive amount of detail on the Council area as a whole and of individual wards – including, for example, an active travel map for each ward. See our [bluesky](#) for links and a couple of example extracts from the report.

The second stage, now underway, is the **Ideas consultation** above, open to individuals and organisations until September 30.

On the website above you can submit your ideas for **places** such as buildings, streets or neighbourhoods – for example you could suggest a local shopping street you use and say how you think it should be changed to prioritise walking, cycling and sitting. You can also suggest **policies** affecting places, anywhere in the city, or city-wide – for example you could suggest that all new developments, from shops to housing, should include secure bike parking or storage if not already available nearby.

If you belong to a community organisation, they could make a submission about issues of local concern.

Please also repost our [bluesky](#) about the consultation.

8.3 Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP2) – [website](#) – **closes 25 September**

This is Midlothian Council's equivalent of the above Edinburgh City Plan. However it covers the earlier period, 2027-2037; and it is at a more advanced stage than Edinburgh's..

The consultation asks you to comment on a whole range of proposed policies (such as [Sustainable Transport](#) and [Town Centres](#)), site briefs and Place statements, and **you can respond to any that concern you**.

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

- ◆ Edinburgh consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk
- ◆ Edinburgh [Edinburgh traffic orders](#)
- ◆ East Lothian www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk
- ◆ Midlothian www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory/33/consultations/category/182/categoryInfo/38
- ◆ West Lothian www.westlothian.gov.uk/consultations
- ◆ Scottish Government consult.gov.scot
- ◆ Transport Scotland www.transport.gov.scot/consultations
- ◆ Scottish Parliament consultations yourviews.parliament.scot/consultation_finder
- ◆ Scottish Parliament petitions petitions.parliament.scot
- ◆ UK government consultations https://www.gov.uk/search/policy-papers-and-consultations?content_store_document_type%5B%5D=open_consultations&order=most-viewed
- ◆ **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!)
- ◆ **Spokes website** We have a page of particularly relevant consultations www.spokes.org.uk/consultns

10. Climate Crisis

From the [National Emergency Briefing](#) by climate experts:

*“People across the UK are desperate for the government to deliver action that matches the scale of the crisis. That’s why Chris Packham’s petition calling for the government to deliver a televised emergency briefing is currently seeing **1,000+ new signatures a day!**”*

The petition now has over 100,000 signatures, meaning that it will be considered for a debate in the Westminster Parliament.

Sign the Petition

Edinburgh screening

There will be another Edinburgh screening of the film, and discussion, hosted by Scott Arthur MP on 8 October – see 4 above (dates for your diary).



Arthur's Seat, 19 July 2026

[pic: Lee Howard, via Historic Environment Scotland](#)



Chris Packham

11. Spokes Bluesky

Please check out these recent Spokes Bluesky posts, and re-post any you think deserve further coverage

- [Spokes 2026 competition](#)
- [City Plan – ideas consultation](#)
- [Dept for Culture, Media & Sport leaves X](#)
- [Cargobike sales up 36% in 2025](#)
- [Puppeteer Elspeth supported with spokes cargobike grant](#)
- [10-year anniversary of Edinburgh area-wide 20mph : parliament motion](#)

12. Local councils - Active Travel websites + Cycle/AT Forums

- **Edinburgh** – [main page: Cycling & Walking page](#) / there is no Cycle Forum
- **East Lothian** - [main page: East Lothian on the move](#) / [AT infrastructure](#) / To attend the occasional council AT/Cycle Forum [usually held in-person] email cmilne@eastlothian.gov.uk
- **Midlothian** – [main page: Walking, cycling, horse riding](#) / [active travel map](#) / To attend the (new in 2026) online council AT/Cycle Forum, email Thomas.Quayle@midlothian.gov.uk
- **West Lothian** - [Enquiries and comments about new roads, footpaths, cycle routes](#) / [current projects and completed consultations](#). To attend the online AT/Cycle Forum (which is run by WL Climate Action, but includes a council officer), email jocelyn@wlcan.scot
- **SEStran** (South East Scotland regional transport partnership) – [People & Place, projects & grants](#)

COUNCIL CYCLE FORUMS [generally open to anyone interested, living in the council area]

- **East Lothian** [usually in-person] For next date email cmilne@eastlothian.gov.uk
- **Midlothian** [usually online] For next date email Thomas.Quayle@midlothian.gov.uk
- **West Lothian** [usually online] For next date email jocelyn@wlcan.scot

13. Keeping in touch

- ★ Remember to check out our **website** every so often www.spokes.org.uk
- ★ We are active on **Bluesky** [@spokes.org.uk](https://bsky.app/profile/spokes.org.uk) Follow us, and repost posts that you support. *Note: There's a guide to migrating (eXiting!) from X to Bluesky [here](#).* And, if you are an organisation, remember to change any references to your X account on your website and all other platforms that you use.
- ★ 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.