

Draft Minutes of the 2026 AGM of Spokes the Lothian Cycle Campaign

The AGM was held in the Augustine Centre, 43 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh from 19.00 to 21.00 on Wednesday 9th September.

ATTENDANCE:

James Addison, Robert Ainsworth, Ben Bate, Hazel Darwin-Clements, Dave du Feu, Andy Follis, David French, Lynn Grattage, Rosemary Gray, Katherine Ivory, Mies Knottenbelt, Simon Krone, Lorenzo Martinico, Maxwell, Ian Brendan Paddy, Paul Ritchie, Jane Robinson, John Robson, David J. Roy, Katherine Sturrock, Ken Talbot, Kate Tasker, Katharine Taylor, Emma Wild-Wood, Brian Wright, Stuart Younger,

The AGM was chaired by Spokes member Brendan Paddy. He noted that as the previous AGM was held in 2015 the minutes of that meeting are no longer relevant, but that one of the main resolutions about changing the structure of Spokes was being discussed at this AGM. More detailed versions of the following reports and full copies of the Spokes and Maps account are help on the 2026 AGM page on the Spokes web site

<https://www.spokes.org.uk/documents/internal-documents/agm/agm-september-2026/>

RESOURCES GROUP REPORT

Emma Wild-Wood reported that the group meets about every six weeks to manage stall sales, social media, public meetings, traffic counts and a range of other activity. Current issues include developing information on e-bikes and preparing for Spokes' 50th anniversary competition.

A public meeting is scheduled for November to discuss cycling and public transport.

Emma encouraged new members to join the Resources Group to help share out tasks and spread the load. She noted that it doesn't require cycling expertise, just enthusiasm about cycling.

PLANNING GROUP UPDATE

John Robson noted that the planning group consists of approximately 10 active members who meet monthly. They organise deputations to council meetings and respond to and consultations.

Recent work has shifted away from responding to planning applications toward addressing issues with Traffic Regulation Orders and roadworks in Edinburgh and the Lothians because the council's own policies are being implemented and enforced better by the council themselves in terms of building and construction projects.

Since 2020, the group has submitted 165 formal consultation responses, averaging 25 to 30 per year. John noted a lack of diversity within the group and invited people from different backgrounds or cycling styles to join.

MAPS GROUP ACTIVITIES

Katharine Taylor reported that since the start of 2025 the group released an updated Edinburgh map and a revised West Lothian map. Many volunteers helped doing the surveys for the West Lothian map.

The group holds meetings when necessary, less frequently than the other Spokes groups. After Peter Hawkins had to stop involvement due to health issues, the group altered administrative and financial procedures to spread the load differently and cover the many things that Peter had been doing.

Robert Simpson is to be thanked for organising the hustlers who go round shops to check if they need more maps and organising their orders. Thanks also to Anne Douglas in the Spokes office and more recently Celia Macintyre for dealing with orders. Since August 2025 Celia has posted out 122 maps and issued invoices for 1663 maps. Thanks also to Charles Wallis for arranging that a new Edinburgh map is now displayed in Waverley Station.

Future goals include selling maps online via the website and creating a digital archive of all past Spokes maps for the 50th anniversary.

At 31st March 2026 the group held £42,320 in its separate bank account, of which £40,000 has been moved to the Spokes deposit account. Thanks are due to Andy Follis who has now redrawn all the four Spokes Maps. He has done this design and cartography entirely on a voluntary basis which is why we have been able to build up such a reserve. Katharine proposed that £5,000 of Maps funds should be donated to support The Bike Station after its recent flooding, which was agreed.

COORDINATION AND WEBSITE CONTENT

Dave du Feu explained his role in linking various working groups to prevent overlaps or missed opportunities.

As well as co-ordinating between the three groups, he also links with Claire who looks after the membership database and Charles who is our bike-rail person and Guy whose team of volunteers organise the traffic counts in May and November.

He provided three recent examples of coordination: informing the Maps group that Spokes has a bike-rail specialist who could sort out the display of the Edinburgh map at Waverley Station; establishing a sub-group to draw up a report on potential active travel routes to tram train stations should this scheme go ahead; and avoiding overlap by picking up an issue that was being discussed by both Resources and Planning and finding someone to work on it in the Resources Group.

The website serves as an information repository for consultation records, traffic count data, grant histories, and map information, whereas day-to-day communication is carried out through social media channels on Bluesky (maintained by Dave) and Facebook (maintained by Rosie). He thanked Ben and Stuart who have recently made the website more user friendly by sorting display issues on mobile screens.

Dave highlighted the tramline crash reporting page on the website. Data from these reports shows that skidding is a more common causal factor for tramline crashes than wheels getting trapped in the tram rails, and that many of the reported crashes are by experienced cyclists rather than novices.

There were no questions about these reports.

A video of the song “Why Can’t We Just Do It Like Amsterdam?” which was part-funded by Spokes was screened. The chair noted that this new venture by Spokes was an important step towards reaching people’s hearts as well as their heads. A good argument will only take you so far and you have to reach people at an emotional level if you want them to connect,

Musician and composer Daniel Abrahams made a few comments afterwards about why he created the video.

FINANCES

Spokes Treasurer Paul Ritchie presented financial statements for Spokes and the Maps Group.

Spokes income is approximately £20,000 per year, primarily from member donations and subscriptions.

Expenditure includes insurance, office costs, and grants such as funding for cargo bikes.

The organization is currently breaking even or seeing small profits/losses and has surplus funds available for approved ideas.

It was noted that map sales margins are decreasing due to rising printing costs.

A question was asked about the nature of donations. They are annual donations from renewing members, although Spokes receives a few legacies.

Paul was also asked about the number of members – just over a thousand from just under thousand households.

ELECTION OF TREASURER

There was a show of hands which showed a clear majority to pass the accounts

A vote was taken to reappoint Paul as the treasurer which passed with a clear majority.

PROPOSAL FOR CHARITABLE STATUS

Ian Maxwell presented a motion to change Spokes from a constituted organisation to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organization (SCIO).

Suggested benefits include:

- * Improved continuity and succession planning through an elected board of trustees.
- * Increased transparency in decision-making.
- * Legal protection against personal liability for members and trustees.
- * Financial advantages including eligibility for Gift Aid, exemption from corporation tax, and access to more grant funding, although this is a less important aspect for Spokes given our current financial position.

Ian explained that the new constitution would follow the standard Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations model for a membership SCIO with purposes drafted to enable Spokes to do all the things that it does at present and framed to comply with charitable purposes.

During the subsequent discussion members raised concerns regarding whether becoming a charity is necessary given current organisational stability and success.

One attendee asked if being a charity might complicate the recruitment of trustees compared to finding volunteers. It was pointed out that a number of well-qualified members had expressed willingness to become Trustees of Spokes.

Another concern related to the dissolution clause in the SCIO constitution, which would mean that funds could only be passed on to other similar charities if the organisation closes.

A question was asked about whether charitable status might shift focus away from core activism toward administrative compliance. In reply, it was stated that the submission of an annual report to the Scottish Charity Regulator would not require a lot of extra work, and that we already have to prepare accounts and maintain records of members.

It was suggested that increasing member engagement would solve existing issues more effectively without introducing a new structure.

Some people spoke in favour of this change to the structure of Spokes and pointed out that many similar organisations are charities; also that the present arrangements expose central Spokes volunteers to liability risks which, although unlikely, could be very serious.

Ian agreed to revise the AGM motion to take account of points raised in this discussion

There was a performance by Hazel Darwin-Clements of her short mime show ***"A Bikely Story"*** between this discussion and voting on the revised motion

VOTE ON AGM MOTION

the AGM motion as tabled was revised to include extra consideration stages before any submission of the draft SCIO constitution to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

The revised motion below was overwhelmingly carried by a show of hands

"That this AGM agrees that Spokes should appoint a working group open to any member to further consider whether to 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).

This group will decide whether to submit this proposal to an online poll of members.

A 2/3 majority of the members responding to this poll would be sufficient to agree to the submission of a draft SCIO constitution tabled at the AGM to OSCR with this application along with a list of initial Trustees which includes representatives of all the current Spokes Working Groups."

The AGM closed at 21.00