Spokes Action-Update 01.11.26

spokes.org.uk St Martins Centre, 232 Dalry Road EH11 2JG 0131.313.2114 bluesky: @spokes.org.uk

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.

1. Spokes Public Meeting, Nov 19 - *Cycling and Public Transport*

Spokes campaigns for cycling "*within a sustainable transport context*," not purely cycling for its own sake. We need to live in places which are safe, pleasant and easy to get around, and pollution-free. This means quality public transport and active travel, with private motor traffic a last resort. Planners and providers must ensure maximum possible integration and synergy between public and active modes, so they work together and minimise conflicts.

Our public meeting brings together speakers from the worlds of bus, rail and tram, to discuss the cycling /public transport relationship. As always, the second half of the meeting will be an audience Q/A, so do come along with constructive suggestions, and to give feedback on the speakers' introductory talks.



Lothian Buses, cycle awareness training. A fairly old picture, but we understand that on-bike awareness training continues

Obviously this is a huge topic. We decided to limit the number of organisations to three, to allow, as always, maximum time for the Q/A ... e.g. there is no ScotRail speaker. It also means that the speakers between them may not have responsibilities or answers for every topic that comes up, though may be able to pass things on.

Speakers – for more on the speakers and their topics, see our full meeting preview **here**.

- **John Lauder**, Network Rail, Programme Manager, Railway for Everyone
- **David Cameron**, Head of Operations, Lothian Buses and **Don McClurg**, Head of Safety, Edinburgh Trams
- **Rob Falcon**, Chair, Tram-Trains for Edinburgh

Arrangements

- **Where** Augustine United Church 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL
- **Date** Thursday 19 November
- **Time** Starts 7.30, Ends 9.30. Doors open 6.45 for coffee, stalls and chat, including a special stall to join Spokes or renew your membership
- **Questions** Questions for the speakers, can be emailed (at least 2 days before) to spokes@spokes.org.uk. However, questions in person from audience members are likely to have greatest priority on the night
- **Online** We hope to live broadcast on our youtube channel – and publish the recording a few days later
- **Social media** If posting about the meeting on Bluesky or elsewhere, use hashtag #SpokesMtg
- **More info** For queries about the meeting, email spokes@spokes.org.uk or phone Emma, 07982278936.

Your help needed

- ***Please help publicise our public meeting*** by reposting our Bluesky, passing on the link to the full website article, and/or liking on facebook
- ***We still need two helpers at the start of the meeting***, to help with stalls, refreshments, memberships, etc. You would need to arrive by 6.30
- ***Do you have tech skills? Or would you like to learn?*** Sam, who does an excellent job on the sound desk to live-stream and record the meeting, will be at this meeting, but is likely to leave Edinburgh before the next one. If you could take over, this would be a good opportunity to see how Sam operates. It would anyway be great to have two or three volunteers to share the load and ensure coverage if someone is on holiday or otherwise unavailable. There are normally 3 or 4 public meetings a year. Additionally, Augustine's offer induction and basic training on the equipment.

2. Spokes and Me – 2026 #SpokesComp results

Another incredible set of entries this year! It is amazing, wonderful and touching to read not just how cycling and cycle facilities locally have changed over the years, but how individual lives have changed too, sometimes substantially, thanks to Spokes being around.

The life of our **top prizewinner, Hazel**, was revolutionised thanks to a **cargo-bike** she bought, partly with a Spokes grant. Although purchased, nervously, for child-carrying, growing confidence in the cargobike led to extensive volunteer work, cycling instructor qualifications, and eventually paid work setting up and running Porty Cargo Bike Library. Not to mention family shopping, cargo-bike camping, giving friends lifts – and getting rid of the family car!

Second prizewinner, Mike, actually moved to Edinburgh in part thanks to the **Spokes Bulletin**! Visiting Edinburgh for a job interview he chanced to pick up the Bulletin on a cafe leaflet rack – and realised there was more to the city than his 'formal, pompous and pretentious' interview experience. Some months later, going freelance, he was able to move, and chose Edinburgh!… rapidly buying bikes for his daughters, and joining Spokes! Since then, "*cycling has been a central part of my life*."

For a full competition report including a downloadable file of all entries, see our website here.



First prizewinner, Hazel



Enjoying West Lothian



Maps through the ages



Family cycling

3. Spokes traffic count: heavy bike use in Princes St & George St

Our count on 24 September was conducted to add concrete evidence to the uncertainties over the future of both streets, with Princes Street likely to remain 4 lanes of tarmac for the some years to come and no funding available for the ambitious but extremely costly George Street proposals for a semi-pedestrianised '*cycle street*' (albeit with significant motor traffic at times!). Money previously intended for George Street will now go to repaving Princes Street footways with high-cost materials, an approach described by planning officers as "*ambitious pragmatism*", by Spokes as "*only minor change*" and by Cllr Lang as a "*glorified resurfacing project*."

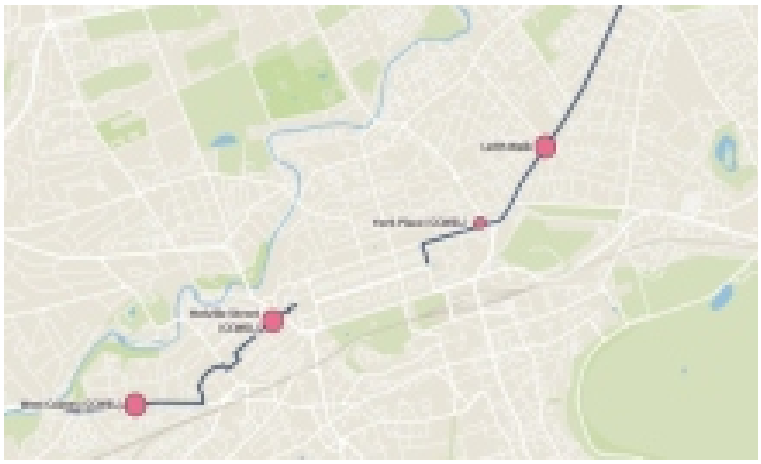
The levels of bike use counted, in relation to other traffic, are hugely impressive, forming 34% of all vehicles westbound and 30% eastbound in the morning peak. Only once in many years of traffic counts at Forrest Road and Lothian Road have bikes reached 30% at any location (May this year at Forrest Road), with averages over those two roads nearer 16%-20%. **Similarly at lunchtime, bikes averaged over 20% of all vehicles in George and Princes Streets**, compared to 10%-12% in our Forrest Road and Lothian Road counts.

For a full report on the count, with a link to all the data, see our website blog of 3.10.26.

We hope the results will help convince councillors, possibly at the 12 November Transport Committee, how important it is to complete the George Street CCWEL missing link (see drawing) especially now that Princes Street segregated cycling may be off the table for a while to come.

WHAT *YOU* CAN DO

Please email your councillors [section 0 above] **asking for urgent action to provide a safe cycleroute in George Street, to complete CCWEL**



CCWEL missing link - from this Cycling Scotland report

4. Spokes becoming a charity ??

As reported to members in our 1.10.26 Action-Update, following a decision at our AGM, a working party on Spokes future, which all interested members were invited to join, has been set up to discuss the proposal for Spokes to become a charity. In Scotland this is done through becoming a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).

This working group has now met, and agreed that the current Spokes constitution lacks sufficient clarity for continuity, transparency and governance, and that this is increasingly important now that several early members of Spokes, who play central roles in the organisation, will not be here indefinitely. The working party discussed various options, including becoming a charity (i.e. a SCIO), just revising the constitution, or becoming a Community Interest Company or a Limited Company, and it was agreed that becoming a SCIO was the best option and should be put to an online membership vote.

Advantages and potential drawbacks of becoming a SCIO were discussed in detail before this decision was taken. Some of the main ones are below

Advantages

- Protection for members and office bearers against personal liability if Spokes was ever sued – very unlikely but potentially serious if it did happen
- A board of trustees to provide continuity, stability, and coordination between groups
- Various financial advantages from getting charitable status. Day to day running of Spokes is well covered by member donations and map sales, but were we to undertake major projects requiring outside funding then charitable status would make it easier to get grants

Potential drawbacks, and how they could be addressed

- A limited increase in administrative work during the changeover. [Ongoing administrative work by the Trustees would be handled by the Trustees, thus not putting additional work onto working groups]
- A possible risk that trustees would intrude on or otherwise disrupt the operation of Spokes working groups [To avoid this, and to assist coordination with and between groups, each group would be asked to nominate a trustee from among the group's active members]
- Some people have also expressed a concern that charitable status is not necessary for an organisation which has been working well enough without this, and might be more restrictive than beneficial [but the group thought the advantages above outweighed such concerns]

Further background information is available on the Spokes web site, 2026 AGM page, here:
www.spokes.org.uk/documents/internal-documents/agm/agm-september-2026

The working party is organised by Ian Maxwell: contact him if you have queries. Email: *imaxwell@gn.apc.org*.

What happens next

We expect to send members an online poll later this year, with the question "*Do you agree that Spokes should apply to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation? Yes/No*

If at least two-thirds of the votes are in favour then an application will be made to OSCR to form the Spokes SCIO.

If any member cannot cast an online vote, you will be able to email spokes@spokes.org.uk with a note of name, address and postcode and how you wish to vote - or ring 0131 557 2440.

Further information is available on the Spokes website at the above link, and more will be added before the vote, including the final proposed constitution.

5. Spokes – help needed & other Spokes updates

5.1 Help at Nov 19 Spokes Public Meeting

See 'Your Help Needed' on page 1 – help with stalls & refreshments; also possible future tech person

5.2 Tram Trains for Edinburgh

As mentioned in our Public Meeting website article, a small Spokes subgroup has now been set up prepare a report on potential bike access routes to station sites on the proposed initial TTfE route (Portobello to Murrayfield, mainly using the South Sub rail route). With government funding now in place for an initial TTfE feasibility study, early input on cycling connections will be very valuable, rather than it being an afterthought as so often happens. If you are interested *and if you have the time to be an active participant in the working group*, please get in touch.

5.3 Spokes Membership 2026 → 2027

Our usual renewal process gets underway in the next few weeks. Members with a **standing order** will be renewed automatically, and informed when this has been done, so you will not need to take any action (unless you wish changes). Members who have **joined since October 1st** will also be automatically renewed, and informed this has been done (membership is based on calendar year, not date of joining). Other members will be emailed later, but please do not contact us about this until you hear from us.

As always, there will be a membership stall at our public meeting on November 19 [see page 1] which is another opportunity to renew, or, for non-members, to join.

5.4 Future online membership arrangements

For the future we are hoping in Spring 2027 to move to online membership [using Membermojo] where you would be able to log in and update your membership details.

If this goes ahead, you will be able to log in using your email address. There will be no need to remember a password, as you will be sent a security code to the email address each time you go to log in.

Your existing membership information will be transferred from our present Access database to the new system, so you will not have to re-enter anything or do anything. You will then be informed how to log in, should you wish to look up and/or change any information.

Note that membership information will from then be stored securely by Membermojo.

For any questions about data security and privacy, see..
https://membermojo.co.uk/mm/help/security and https://membermojo.co.uk/mm/help/gdpr

Spokes membership will of course remain open to all, on the present terms. i.e. you agree with our objectives. Also as now, there will be no compulsory membership fee, although we urge (and receive!) donations from all who can afford to, which is the vast majority of our members.

If you have any further queries about this, email membership@spokes.org.uk.

5.5 Spokes deputations to City Council: Congestion Charging & Car-Free Day

Spokes submitted two written deputations to the full Council meeting on 29.10.26, in support of motions by two councillors who are Spokes members.

Cllr Chas Booth's motion asked the Council to write to the Scottish Government asking them to reverse their decision effectively to ban Scottish Councils from introducing any form of road user charging, a decision which was even publicly condemned by the SNP leader of Glasgow Council, councillor Ricky Bell. Cllr Booth's motion was defeated and replaced by a much weaker Administration amendment, although it did still agree that Councils should have such powers, and that the Council would write to the Scottish Government about this.

Cllr Lorenzo Martinico's motion asked the Council to organise a Car-Free Day on the day of the Tour de France Grand Depart. This was defeated, although an amendment did ask for measures to "*encourage greater use of sustainable travel in the lead up to the next World Car Free Day on 22 September 2027*" whatever that means!

6. Dates for *your diary*

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

*Nov 19 **Spokes public meeting, Cycling & Public Transport – see page 1 above**

Nov 28 **Critical Mass**

Nov 31 **Tram-Trains for Edinburgh, public meeting**, 7-9pm, Eric Liddell Community, 15 Morningside Rd EH10 4DP

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 & Fridays *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.

7. Snippets

7.1 'Carrying Change' cargo bike report from the Bike Station

… unlocking the potential of cargo bikes in Edinburgh and the Lothians

The Lothians Cargo Bike Network is an informal coalition of organisations that hire out cargo bikes.

They have published this report, facilitated by the Bike Station and supported by Spokes, exploring the role that cargo bikes can play in supporting the critical transition towards net zero and reduced car use.

The report builds on an earlier pilot project, also supported by Spokes, which identified 17 different organisations which already exist, mainly volunteer-led, scattered throughout the area, to promote and lend out cargo bikes. These organisations operate largely independently and are based on local circumstances, but the fragmentation means that some opportunities are not being explored.

The Lothian Cargo Bike Network aims to address this by bringing these organisations together...

- to **share approaches, experiences and practical resources**.
- to **reduce duplication and build a stronger collective evidence base**
- while **retaining the local knowledge and flexibility** so important to community-led schemes.

The report draws on evidence from cities across Europe where cargo bikes are already more established within the transport landscape. It looks at how cargo bike use developed in these cities and the conditions that supported their growth including the role played by infrastructure, policy, funding and access to vehicles.

In describing our current local provision for cargo bikes, CARRYING CHANGE points out the massive potential for developing both personal and business use of cargo bikes in Edinburgh and the Lothians and considers what investment and support is needed to realise this potential.

CargoBike Carnival

The Network organised a fantastic family event in the Meadows on Sunday 11 October, with many organisations and individuals bringing along their cargobikes – including Spokes with our cargobike stall selling maps etc. There is a great drone-video of the event, by Edi.Bike, here.



CargoBike carnival - note the Spokes cargobike/stall, circled in red

7.2 Wee Spoke Hub, weekly open workshops

The Hub has expanded its sessions, which now run Thursdays and Fridays, 5-8pm. Go along to fix your own bike, with expert help and training on hand. Booking is highly advisable.

Booking, and more details at www.shrubcoop.org/events-at-wsh .

7.3 National Emergency Briefing … Parliament to debate need for a live briefing to the Nation by the Prime Minister and experts



"Over 130,000 people have signed Chris Packham's petition calling for a live emergency briefing to the nation on the climate and nature crisis, introduced by the Prime Minister and delivered by independent experts. Now Parliament is going to debate this, on 16 November at 4.30pm.

The government is unlikely to agree to level with the public at this stage. But a strong show of support from MPs at the debate will make the government take the idea seriously. It will also help establish, inside Parliament, that the public has a right to hear the full picture from independent experts.

We need as many MPs as possible to attend the debate and speak in support. Please ask your MP to attend and let us know what their response is. *Ask my MP to speak up*

We also have template social media posts you can use and tag your MP into, with accompanying images - along with some images for sharing with friends on WhatsApp. Please let us know if your MP responds. You might find our MP Dialogue page useful - our suggested responses to common reasons given by MPs for not supporting bolder action on the climate and nature crisis. *Suggested social media wording and graphics* "

7.4 'Covid' bollarded 'Travelling Safely' schemes

As you will know, the Council has promised a rolling programme, over a number of years, to install permanent materials on these routes, now that they have (after great angst) been made legally permanent. At the same time, they are to be upgraded, to further improve walking and cycling conditions.

The first scheme to get this treatment is planned to be London Road (effectively a network extension, linking to the Leith Walk bike lanes) and we are told the work is planned for "early 2027."

The timescale for other schemes (i.e. which financial year they are currently planned for) is in the table in this Spokes article.

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. Local Consultations – do respond to any that matter to you!

Keep up to date with relevant consultations, on our consultations page

There are no relevant consultations by the 3 Lothians councils at present, so Edinburgh only below

8.1 Granton & Pilton Connections – Consultation page *– closes 16 Nov 2026*

The Council is consulting on "*conditions for walking and wheeling across Granton and Pilton*" … "*making streets safer, more attractive and easier for you to get to all the local facilities that are important to you like schools, shops, community centres and bus stops.*"

It is unclear why cycling is not included!

The consultation page does say it will take into account the wider North Edinburgh Connections project, which covers *some streets* in this area, does include cycling, and to which Spokes responded here.

If this area matters to you, send in your comments as on the above consultation page, and also copy to Spokes.

8.2 Astley-Ainslie, draft 'Place' brief – Consultation website – *closes 11 Nov*

The old hospital site is to be redeveloped, mainly for housing, and the Council is consulting on a Brief which must be followed by developers. The draft Place Brief Is here. It includes walking and cycling links across the site, as in the drawing below. However you may have comments on the details.

Note that local people have already prepared a 'Local Place Plan.' Legally, the Council must take account of this in preparing its Place brief though they don't have to agree with it all.



What you can do

- Respond to the online consultation
- If there are points you'd like Spokes to make, email us spokes@spokes.org.uk

8.3 Bus Lane 7-7-7 *trial* – Info/consultation page – *closes 11 April 2027*

After literally years of campaigning by groups including Spokes, the Council is at last running a trial of a bus lane operating from 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week, under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order ETRO/26/16. The experiment runs from London Road to East Milton Road – but unfortunately will allow loading and unloading (outside peak hours) at many locations along the route.

It is worth recalling that Edinburgh bus lane times used to be much tougher than now, and did include some 7-7-7 lanes; but, for reasons that were never clear, the Council some years ago caved in to motoring demands to reduce bus lane times. It seems unfortunate that we are now having to experiment with returning to 7-7-7, rather than just going ahead and doing it!

You can find links to relevant documents in para 2609 here, including detailed maps of the bus lane locations. There is also a detailed Evening News article here.

- There will undoubtedly be opposition to the scheme, so please do send a quick note of support – or detailed comments if you wish. Send your email to TRO.Consultations@edinburgh.gov.uk saying that you are commenting on ETRO/26/16 and giving your full name and address. More info about how to comment is on this page.
- There is also a new method more user-friendly map-based method of displaying the details, and responding, here. It includes a response button at the bottom right.
- If you have any points of detail you would like to suggest for the Spokes response, please email us.

9. National consultations (Scotland or UK)

9.1 Safety at street works and road works code of practice - Consultation page *– closes 14 Dec*

The UK government is consulting on updating this Code of Practice, which covers the entire United Kingdom. Spokes has not yet looked at this, but we welcome any comments from members.

"We are seeking views on proposed updates to the safety at street works and road works code of practice.

The draft code of practice (which should be read alongside this consultation) provides statutory guidance on the signing, lighting and guarding of street and road works on public roads and highways to help protect workers, road users and pedestrians.

The proposed updates reflect changes in legislation, guidance and working practices since the safety at street works and road works code was last updated in 2013."

9.2 Outdoor Access in Scotland – Consultation page – *closes 23 November*

"The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gives people the right to access most land and inland water in Scotland, as long as they do so responsibly. These are known as Scottish access rights.

Guidance on enjoying these rights is set out in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

In February 2027, the Scottish Outdoor Access Code will be 22 years old. The Rural Affairs Committee is undertaking a short inquiry to understand how well Scotland's outdoor access system is working and consider whether changes are needed to ensure that it is fit for the future."

10. Spokes Bluesky

Check out these recent popular Spokes Bluesky posts and re-post any you think deserve further coverage..

- Spokes public meeting, Bikes & Public Transport
- Water of Leith path closure
- Spokes deputation supporting congestion charge
- Encouraging people to report pavement parking
- Cameron Toll to Bioquarter – Spokes response
- Spokes competition results
- Spokes at Cargobike carnival
- War on the Motorist?
- Spokes traffic count in George St & Princes St

11. 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

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
- W**est 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 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.