

Aberdeen Cycle Forum

Minutes from monthly meeting Tuesday 26th May 2020

Attendees: Gavin Clark (Chair), Rachel Martin, Eddy Coman, Fiona McDonald, Liz Lindsey, Bob Taylor, Richard Pelling, Daniel Verhamme, Gavin Thompson, Francesco Sani

Welcome to the new faces - Eddy and Bob. Bob lives in Kingswells and can get over to Kirkhill and Cults on a mountain bike without cycling on a road or at least on a minor road. But he has to cross A944 - an inconvenient and dangerous cycle lane there that doesn't link to the next bit. Is there potential for linking things there. Could we have a corridor for cycling into the city centre.

Recap of past year

Gavin: I've been chair since September 2018. Prior to that a gap of 6 months with no one in the chair. Looking back at the year we had the PoP 2019 city centre circuit which was very successful. That partly inspired us to do the reclaim the streets event that was planned for May this year. We did "In town without my car day" in September - our stand was good and got great engagement with people. Other things we've done - our first sizable crowdfunding. This time we set out to see how much we could raise to contribute to closing the roads for a reclaim the streets event. We raised well over £5000 for the event from multiple sources - crowdfunding, city council, Cycling UK, Paths for All.

We got funding from Lush to the value of £6500 for two visualisation - Market Street and King Street.

Other things - at a meeting last year other members came and suggested ideas, one of which was to run cycling lessons for adults which we did on a very rainy day last September. Another idea was the awards which we ran over the winter and in the January meeting we did the awards presentation and announced winners. It was a bit of fun but with a serious message of rewarding good practice and highlighting examples that aren't so good.

Membership is growing - over 500 or so now. Did our last cycle count in May 2019 and that continued to show a very flat trend that cycling in Aberdeen is not increasing over the years.

Still not seeing improvements to cycling infrastructure.

City Centre Masterplan has delivered nothing so far and has been in place for 5 years. The most recent project - Schoolhill - has made it worse for cyclists. Continue to struggle in engagement with city council. They've been good at producing plans - eg SUMP - but they haven't yet implemented them.

Is it a funding issue? They don't always apply and when they do apply they're sometimes not awarded funding.

Currently there are four office holders at the Aberdeen Cycle Forum: chair, treasurer, campaigns and events, secretary. Claire is happy to continue. Gavin is happy to continue as chair. Rachel is happy to continue as campaigns secretary. There were no other nominations so the existing office holders were re-elected.

Consultations

New consultation on A944. It looks promising but it's still just another consultation. We have until 5th June to respond. Gavin to forward to Bob, Liz, and Daniel for comments.

We put in an objection to the Berryden corridor last month and that has linked us up with Transform Scotland who also put in a very good objection. They suggested we apply for a small grant to get an independent expert to review their plans

We were aiming to run reclaim the streets. It would have been the first one where we paid for road closure to close to traffic. It's on hold for now.

We have asked the council for data from cycle counters. Gavin asked about a month ago and then followed up again last week. We wanted to use the data to show lots of people were cycling and to argue for spaces for social distancing

Any other business

Social distancing funding announced today

Two weeks ago we had a meeting with cllr Sandra McDonald. she said she thought we'd be pleased when we saw it. Just before the meeting we published our 10 suggestions for cycle paths. Daniel says it's interesting the article says for the NHS. Good for marketing.

Richard says council has huge liabilities for parking in the city centre. This is a good time to push for congestion charges. Access to city centre car parks will be maintained with social distancing changes.

Eddy says it looks like the council are not spending it quickly? When compared with other cities in Scotland we've been quite tardy. They have to spend the money swiftly before restrictions are lifted.

David Sutherland is keen for us to challenge the council on small improvements like drop kerbs and pot holes. He suggests we maintain a spreadsheet as a project management tool. PWe can produce a list of things that we think they should be doing and the project management tracking tool will help to hold them to account.

Westhill cycle path petition has disappeared at council. It never went back to the committee. Gavin followed up with Sandra and it was removed because they started another consultation about the route.

Bob Pringle's idea - Bob is an interested party and has been lobbying for school exclusion zones. That was one of the things in our manifesto. He's been in touch with his councillor and was offering to set up a meeting with some officers. Liz - we have to wait and see what the council comes up with first with their £1.76m.

In the council papers - their spending plans for the year. It shows how much they plan to spend on Getabout and Craigshaw Drive (proposals for a two-way cycle path which will cost over £1m) Liz asks whether there might have been lobbying from Shell. A number of the funds seem to be saying the money will be spent in 2020 because they failed to do it in 2019. Does that mean they had the money and didn't make use of it?

North Deeside road obstruction - a mobile toilet block standing on the cycle path just near the library. Council says it has been risk-assessed and the roads are quiet so can just cycle around it. Daniel contacted the company and they said it's a council decision. Gavin got an email from Cllr Bell about it as he was wanting another opinion. Gavin replied and pointed out the problem with obstructions in cycle lanes and then discussed why painted lines aren't very good when people are allowed to block them in this way.

Bob suggested having something like a strava map for kids going to school where they can map the route they took and point out places on the map that have problems. Bob does the bikability training with the junior school and the mountain bike club. Eddy suggests Open Street Maps. Richard suggests mapping routes which then lets anyone download maps. If you find rideable routes you can put them in and other people can find them. Gavin mentions Civitas Portas which was EU funding for Aberdeen city for active travel. One thing they did was decide that Aberdeen needed an app for transport. A couple of months ago Gavin went to a meeting where consultants were asking what they wanted from an app and we said we don't really need an app, just infrastructure. But their remit was to produce an app and they've launched a trial version. Bob: Fix my street app has a whole bunch of things you can report from pot holes to dog poo. Bob has reported stuff in Glasgow and got a response from the local council.

Bridge of Dee - should be closed to cars. Could be a future campaign of ours.

Next meeting will be last Tuesday in June 30th 2020.