

# Aberdeen Cycle Forum

## Minutes from monthly meeting Tuesday 30th June 2020

**Attendees** : Gavin Clark (Chair), Rachel Martin, Eddy Coman, Fiona McDonald, Liz Lindsey, Bob Pringle, Richard Pelling, Francesco Sani, Neil Robb, Dave Shannon.

Minutes from May meeting were accepted.

**Space for People Government funding** - to give more space to pedestrians and cycles during COVID-19 recovery.

Phase 2 - Union St the bus lane has been coned-off to allow greater space for pedestrians but possibly making it worse for cyclists - not entirely clear whether cyclists are supposed to cycle - in carriageway or on footpath? The law would say they can't, but so far no signage to make it clear, and lots of bikes seen using the coned-off lane.

Bus gate - Market St junction members not sure if there has been an improvement to barriers that are there but 'cyclists permitted' sign has been installed. NR offered to check this out.

Broad St - bus gate indicated on road.

Gavin explained that ACF is trying not to be too critical of ACC at present as they already have a lot of criticism from motorists. Will voice criticisms in private where possible.

Other cities are installing physical barriers and painting cycle logos - is ACC going to do this next?

Recent Council Committee meeting to discuss Spaces for People fund - unanimously that more people should be encouraged to cycle.

Gavin met with officials from ACC 2 weeks ago (1h TEAMS meeting with tech not working well). Unfortunately it was mainly focused on how people were going to get on and off buses. Another meeting is scheduled for tomorrow when Gavin hopes to get more viewpoints relating to the proposed cycling infrastructure across.

George St - ACC plan to take away a lot of on-street parking. Plans look like- 1 way for cars and 2 way for cyclists: cycle lane going north, cyclists with traffic going south.

New temporary infrastructure scheduled to be in place by 13th July. Not clear whether it was a 'consultation' open for comments due to the haste.

Discussions regarding proposed changes to Beach Esplanade - cycle lane doesn't extend beyond Hanover School - unclear why?

General consensus that cyclists commuting from Bridge of Don to the city centre would be unlikely to use the beach route as it is less direct and more exposed. Most would prefer if ACC looked at improving cycling infrastructure on Kings St instead. Gavin estimates (from google maps) Shell, Bridge of Don, to Castlegate - via Kings St 1.9 miles (11mins) or 2.6 miles via beach (17mins). However, plan for beach will give more space for cyclists and more space for pedestrians and will be an improvement for cyclists, even if mainly leisure cyclists. Concerns raised that the bike lane may be within the 'dooring zone' for parked cars? Rachel thought the segregated cycle lane would be an improvement compared to the current shared use footpath. Gavin has concerns that if the ACC prioritise this route, King St may never be improved.

Other concerns raised that the dangerous junction with Ellon Road is not shown. GC asked members to send comments to ACF via email to enable collated response for 3rd Jul & also to send in comments re George St asap.

NHS Grampian has also put in a bid for Spaces for People funding. Rachel asked if anyone knew whether there had been any involvement from cyclists with this bid. Fiona to ask James Norman about it.

### **Reclaim the Streets Event**

Rachel has had a meeting with ACC Events organisers about the Reclaim the Streets event. (Postponed until 5th October or potentially 28th March depending on circumstances.) Rachel reported the meeting was not that useful as it's not clear what will and will not be allowed at present. ACC events officials tried to convince Rachel to hold cycling lessons at Duthie Park rather than at the event in the city centre. Rachel argued that the cycle lessons would be a much more 'real life' experience if held on real roads with real junctions etc. Good for new cyclists if the roads are closed. Some of these roads are now closed anyway. Need to see what space there is left for cyclists once all the shops have opened up & more pedestrians are using the city centre. £5-6k funding secured for the event if the money is not needed to spend on closing the roads. Rachel asked for ideas on what else the money could be spent on for the event and Rachel is also going to attend a meeting with Paths for All which may generate some ideas. Ideas suggested included give-aways cycle products eg cycle locks/bells & one big prize - electric bike? Face masks with cycle logos/themes or snoods for face covering; sticker for bikes with campaign logos/messages. Dr Bike already organised with Angus Bike Hub but

members suggested other local mechanics that Rachel will contact. Rachel also said it might be possible to spend the money on Dr Bike stall for a number of weekends in the city centre.

Richard suggested ACF should be giving advice to new cyclists - suggested routes, times for commuting, especially to help people who want to avoid public transport. Case Studies were suggested - eg Mr X lives in BoD & works at X - he uses this route to get to work and it takes him X minutes. Or a blog/ testimonial about how cycling commuting has worked for them.

Discussion about how to encourage more cyclists - key is seeing more cyclists.

Neil suggested using animated videos & he plans to get a video cam for his bike and use it to film and then publicise good cycle routes.

Neil said more secure cycle parking was needed in the city centre with security cameras. Gavin said this had been in the recent ACF Spaces for People manifesto.

Gavin has audited Duthie Park for use as a cycling venue and he will share this with an officer from ACC for review before it is published.

### **Countesswells New Town**

Gavin brought up the new development at Countesswells and said although the layout is quite good with sustainable drainage and the masterplan was fairly green and sustainable there is little evidence of much cycling at present. Lots of houses seen to have 2 cars - sometimes with one parked on the pavement! (Gavin had contacted the developers to ask their policy about parking on pavements.) Link from Hazlehead can be very muddy and needs improved to make it a useful commuting link. Masterplan included changing Countesswells Road - closed to traffic and to cycling only so this should happen at some point, but perhaps not until later stages of the development.

Recent article shared online highlighting that 'Garden villages' which set out green credentials actually built in car dependency.

Gavin suggested a survey of residents of Countesswells, to try and find out what is preventing them from cycling more, or what changes are needed - how could we do this?

Neil highlighted that new petrol/diesel cars will be banned in 2030, only 10 years to plan new transport strategy. Discussion about how Aberdeen could be encouraged to transform to more sustainable transport.

How much money could you save if you didn't have a car - what else could you spend it on

Liz highlighted Co-Wheels - ACC supported community car hire - which has a very good range of vehicles - free fuel if you get the hydrogen cars.

## **E-Scooters**

Richard informed the group that rental e-scooters would be made legal in the UK from this weekend in specific trial areas. ACF need to consider what e-scooters (very popular in e.g. Berlin) will mean for Aberdeen and Aberdeen cyclists. For the trial, they will be classified as road vehicles and users will need a driver's licence which make them different from an e-bike. Richard said in his experience in Calgary they take up a significant amount of street-space - they don't stand up like bikes when parked. Home-made ones can go very fast!

Bob said he thought the e-scooter would be a complete game changer for cyclists. When roads were designed they were primarily used by buses & bikes (not cars). 20mph speed limit is critical. Sees this as an opportunity for cyclists - but need to reallocate road space.

Rachel will bring up with ACC tomorrow and ask their position on e-scooters. Apparently rental schemes usually work with a van that picks them up & charges them.

Neil would like to know the costs for the new temporary schemes. Gavin - we only know overall cost £1.7m. Rachel reminded that these are only temporary measures.

By way of example - Schoolhill improvements - widened the pavement - reduced road space - cost £1/2million - not an improvement for cyclists from ACF view. Proposed 2-way (permanent) cycle lane proposed for Craigshaw Drive is estimated as over £1m.

Bob asked if he could invite a speaker for the next meeting to talk about active travel for schools. School in Wales has had success when they enlisted cyclists & medics & parents & teachers in the project. Bob to give Rachel their details.

Gavin said he might also invite Sandra McDonald (Councillor) if the speaker was arranged.

Bob said he thought this was a historic moment following COVID-19 lockdown with the shrinkage of motor traffic - time for cyclists to take over again- now or never!

We all have a duty to ride our bike and share the message!

Getting support from a professional behavioural psychologist to work out how to change behaviour was raised as an idea.

**Next meeting** will be virtual again - 28th July.

## **AOCB**

Neil thinks the bike shops in Aberdeen are not providing enough choice for commuting/everyday bikes.

Gavin mentioned the idea of an Aberdeen Cycle Hub - social enterprise with outreach work, cycle repair, training & hire. Lots of other cities have these - why has Aberdeen so far failed?

Rachel said that it costs £250 for Doctor Bike - potential to organise every fortnight in Union St for a period.