

Aberdeen Cycle Forum

Minutes of monthly meeting

Tuesday 24th September at Belmont Cinema

Present: Gavin Clark (Chair), Rachel Martin (Communications secretary), Tally Yahya, Alex Jarvis, Kerr Milne, Nathan Gore, Andrew Bruce, Ian Mitchell, Andy Redmond. Apologies Fiona McDonald, Liz Lindsey

Introductions

Kerr is an undergraduate who is running a survey about cycling. It has been posted to our Facebook page.

Minutes from last meeting

Schoolhill and pavement widening. The changes have created a pinch-point which is dangerous for cyclists so you need to be really assertive and take up most of the lane. In town without my car day was last Sunday. We had a stand at the event and had one American lady who came and specifically raised the issue about Schoolhill. A bit of a loss about what we can do about it since it has just been completed. Later phases of the build might improve things but are uncertain and in the future. Gavin to followup with Sustrans about it. In the Masterplan it stipulates a two-way segregated cycle lane and one-way traffic for the road.

Consultations

Not that much going on right now except for Nestrans and National Transport Strategy. Closing date for National Transport Strategy is October 23rd. No closing date for Nestrans. Rab Dixon offered to have a meeting with us about the Nestrans strategy. Cycling UK have done a fair bit of work on the National Transport Strategy so we'll likely follow their lead for that one and focus our attention on the Nestrans consultation.

Would be good to get some feedback from the Council about our consultation submissions. Andrew Bruce suggests we could cc Cycling UK or British Cycling in on our consultation responses. Ian suggests we cc in the politician at the Council who is responsible for cycling which is currently Sandra McDonald (Transport Spokesperson). Impress on Sandra that we expect a response. Get the press involved? Could potentially point the press to Schoolhill and our consultation response from February. Alex asks at what point did they change the Masterplan? How did they get from their Masterplan to what was actually built? Gavin says that is unclear as the Planner we have been dealing with denies that what has been built is contrary to the Masterplan. We tried to get a meeting with the Council to explore those issues at the time but our request was ignored. A meeting has now been offered but we haven't taken that up yet.

Events

1. ITWMC We participated despite our reservations since it's more of a family fun day rather than something to promote active travel but it was one of the best itwmc days so far in terms of people we attracted to our stall. The banner of Union Street with a cycle path was a big drawcard.

Ian says it was definitely worthwhile doing and a lot of people came along and offered their views. Worth doing next year too.

Andrew Bruce thinks a lot of people would have left thinking bikes are toys rather than a legitimate form of transport. People cycling on Union Street were harassed by the Stewards for cycling on the street. Union Street was busier than Belmont Street. Nathan asked about the purpose of the bus? It created a bottleneck which meant the stewards were nervous about cyclists passing the bus.

Rachel says it was great for distributing postcards. Lots of people had never seen the postcards but took several to post to the Council.

Lots of positive feedback from people about the cycle paths in the two visualisations. Worth developing our relationship with Rab Dixon at Nestrans and also the new Chair of GCP - Tom Collier - who stopped by and chatted to us.

Someone from Transport London chatted to Rachel who suggested we try to partner with the bus companies and work together because we have lots of shared goals like reduced private motor vehicle use. Ian says bus drivers have very strict rules they need to follow and finds them more courteous road users than motorists. Gavin says they have previously campaigned to free the streets from cars so lots in common with us.

Alex had a look at the Masterplan document and it mentions removal of private vehicular traffic from bridge street to Castlegate so it should get a bike path. Rachel says there's no plan for a bike path which is why she started the petition for a bike path on Union Street.

2. PoP2020 We need funding - ask Sustrans, crowd-funding? and approach businesses who may have budgets for corporate social responsibility. We have renamed our event from PoP to Reclaim the streets and have planned for May 3rd 2020 11am - 1pm. Andrew Bruce - Boys Brigade - as part of the community badge they need to do charity stuff. Could get some of the groups in Aberdeen to come along if they were able to get bikes.

Alex - thinking in terms of dates should start crowdfunding as far back as possible just in case the lottery funding doesn't come through. Rachel to create crowdfunding page now. Gavin asked about AWPR bikes - Tally says those bikes will be repurposed and used by the Council to cycle between offices. PoP will still happen in Edinburgh. Ian knows about Scottish website that lists options for charity funding.

3. Campaigns and activities Both ideas from last month are now live. Best in Cycling Awards is now live. Need to publicise it. Will start after the cycling lessons. Will get winners to our meeting in January and hand out certificates. Cycling lessons are happening on Saturday 28th September. Nathan Gore is volunteering to take some lessons along with Adventure Aberdeen.

4. Any other business Ian was planning to look into an online map tool to allow people to share images of points on a map. Sent off an email to Google and got a response explaining how to do it. Ian hasn't had a chance to look closely at it yet but will do so before the next meeting.

Tally - Happy to help. Rachel suggested looking for places to apply for funding.

Gavin - approached by Old Aberdeen Community Council who have produced a locality plan which are issues the community experiences and some of these were cycling on pavements and bikes locked to drains. They want to understand how shared use paths works and also the beach esplanade and changes at Tillydrone. Gavin and Clare met with him and had a good conversation with them last weekend about it. Was able to point him to the website.

Also approached by SRUC at Craibstone. One of the lecturers approached Gavin about setting up a bike association for students. Asking if we could lead rides, talk to them about setting up a bike club.

Gavin also contacted about winterising of path at Westhill. Get hold of cyclists who work for companies out there and get the companies to write to the city council. Nathan suggested we write a template letter for them that they can copy and paste. Ian knows someone at Prime4 - a developer who has contacts of lots of different companies. Ian to investigate.

Kerr - undergrad from Aberdeen uni and doing a comparative study of Edinburgh and Aberdeen and on-road infrastructure. Council try to provide for what the public want but how much are they listening to the general public. Are they engaging with them and providing the right infrastructure. Survey up on our Facebook page. Edinburgh is becoming a cycling city but Aberdeen is far behind. Was hoping to put maps onto questionnaire but was keen to see focus on commuters and routes. Has some maps here and wants to get people to draw their route on the map and figure out roads that are used regularly and do they have infrastructure or plans for infrastructure. Gavin pointed out our annual survey counts which show Aberdeen hasn't seen any growth in cycling. Ian says the council also has data of cycling numbers from automated counters. Ian says you can get automated cycle council gear and put it on the road for a few weeks. Works off a mobile signal so can get it onto a website. University probably has some. Gavin asks what's the timescale? Kerr says due in mid-January.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 29th October and we expect to be back at the Belmont.