

Aberdeen Cycle Forum

Minutes from meeting on 28th July 2020

Attendees: Gavin Clark (Chair), Rachel Martin, Liz Lindsey, Raymond Christie, Richie Brian, Ian Mitchell, Nico Silvani, Fiona McDonald

1. Welcome, introductions

All attendees introduced themselves and were welcomed.

2. Minutes from June meeting were accepted.

Liz confirmed that Bob Pringle, the contact suggested at the last meeting from Wales who has championed active travel to school has confirmed he can present at a future ACF meeting. Hoping that this could be a joint meeting with Aberdeen Climate Action to run as a bigger event. Possibly end of August – Tues 18th/25th Aug

Action: Liz to confirm a date.

Other actions from last meeting are covered in agenda items below.

3. Spaces for People

Areas currently affected:

- Union St
- Rosemount
- George St
- Beach Esplanade – expected soon
- Hazlehead to the City Centre via Queens Cross – expected soon

Members discussed their comments & observations of the measures currently in place.

Union St & surrounding roads

The new street furniture seems to obstruct cyclists. Extended footway is intended for pedestrians – not cyclists. Appears cyclists now need to share the carriageway with all other motor vehicles on Union St which is actually worse than before. Also poor signage for cyclists. Difficult (dangerous?) when exiting from Union St heading west from the end of the pedestrianised area. Again not clear whether cyclists follow the traffic lights for motor vehicles as motor vehicles are now not expecting traffic from the lower end of Union St or use the pedestrian crossing lights which could cause issues with pedestrians.

Market St – Union St – Castlegate section is meant to be for authorised vehicles only but seem to be quite a lot of cars using it.

Beach

? sorry I didn't actually record any notes for this section

Hazlehead Active Travel Corridor

(Queens Road – Carden Place to Rosemount Viaduct)

ACC plan to remove on-street parking which should be an improvement. Discussion about the cycle lane. Gavin confirmed likely to be a painted line - no bollards or physical segregation. Bus stops would remain in situ. Members felt that some segregation even if not continuous would be of benefit.

No cycle infrastructure at Anderson Drive roundabout –could temporary traffic lights be installed at the Northern side of the roundabout?

At present a shared bus/cycle lane but often this is abused by car drivers.

George St

George St measures have been delayed – originally intended to go in 15th July. This delay was queried and the council stated they have experienced difficulties in obtaining the materials required due to national shortages.

Nico reported that some of the measures are being installed at present.

Plan is for a cycle lane going north, cyclists with traffic going south.

ACC have taken away 10-12 car parking spaces and loading bays.

Nico stated the measures look good but not yet finished and not observed with heavy traffic yet.

No bollards; segregated cycle lane is just painted line. At busy times vans/cars may well park on it. No physical separation at present but project not yet finished.

Bus stop is in the cycle lane.

North Deeside Road

Next project is an active travel corridor along North Deeside Road. Mandatory cycle lane rather than advisory cycle lane ie solid line rather than dashed line. Discussion ensued about how many cyclists/drivers will know the difference between these painted lines and whether this will make much difference.

There should be improvements in terms of removing parking with these active travel corridors but with a lack of physical infrastructure it will still leave dangerous junctions/roundabouts.

General comments

Disappointment expressed about the lack of joined up routes. For example, Cycle lane stops at Rosemount Viaduct - no continuation – to cycle lanes at eg Schoolhill/George St. This had been suggested by ACF.

Cycle lane from Rosemount also stops at Rosemount Place roundabout.

Ian explained that Spaces for People funding is meant for low cost /temporary changes to deal with COVID-19 management. In a year's time these changes could be removed. He suggested that bus lane cameras should be used more proactively and bus lane times should be extended to improve conditions for cyclists. Eg 7am to 8pm.

Richard reported that drivers on Auchmill Rd regularly avoid the cameras by entering the shops at Evans Cycles & then exiting to avoid the queues. Ian thought funding on more temporary cameras might be useful.

Gavin suggested that the new City fibre network/5G might provide opportunities to increase camera use with real time fines? Ian thinks the cameras use a 3G network and as system is already in use this is unlikely to make much difference.

Rachel thinks traffic cones would be the cheapest temporary option to provide physical separation for cyclists but perhaps best to request both measures.

Bollards felt to be a very useful visual reminder of cycle lane for drivers and some bollards are better than none. With lots of driveways and exits bollards would need spaced out/gaps.

Nico reported that in Glasgow new cycle lanes have a small hump on the edge of the cycle lane to provide separation and alert drivers if they encroach it.

Gavin reported that in his meeting with AAC the national shortage of all materials had been discussed – they were having to use what they could get their hands on.

Action: Gavin will respond to future consultations with input from regular contributors – deadlines often pretty tight.

4. Campaigns & Events

Rachel stated that a reporter from DC Thomson media wants to interview cyclists in Aberdeen about cycling in the city and surrounds before, during and after lockdown He's based in Dundee and has already written some great features on cycling in Angus, Dundee and Perth for The Courier. Pandemic pedalpower:

<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/tag/pandemic-pedal-power/>

Action: All members invited to contact jbrady@dctmedia.co.uk if interested in participating.

Paths for All

£5k funding needs to be spent by April 2021.

Reclaim the Streets - big event seems unlikely in October 20 or March 21.

Rachel attended a meeting arranged by Paths for All to discuss other ways to spend the money. Suggestions included promoting 'Ways to work from home' and cycling lessons.

General agreement that regular cycling lessons would be most benefit as this would be of real benefit to encouraging and enabling new people to cycle.

Suggested cycling lessons every 2 weeks until the end of October.

~£200/couple of hours – 4 people per session

Agreed Duthie Park still probably the best location as there is parking available.

Likely there would still be extra money to spend.

Agreement that the following options should be explored/arranged:

- Adopt a bike ie Dr Bike
- ACF branded items such as buffs and cycle bells.
- Consider slap it on reflectors (long ones) and spoke reflectors

Action: Rachel to organise cycle lessons, Dr Bike sessions and branded items.

Awareness Raising

Nico highlighted that Glasgow group have recently put up new Go Bike posters around the city to promote safer streets and encourage new members.

Gavin reminded the group about the ongoing postcard campaign. Rachel has more postcards that can be distributed. Attaching labels/postcards to bikes is possible but onerous and make have unintended consequences such as littering.

It was suggested that the postcards should be distributed via colleges/universities.

Ian suggested spending the extra money on another street visualisation. Agreed this option not to be taken forward as expensive and as 2 visualisations recently done it may have less impact.

Note: Cycling UK have also contributed money for cycle lessons.

It was suggested that the Active Travel reps at ACC be contacted to make aware of the cycle lessons.

Action: Ian to find out the contact details and forward to Rachel.

5. Other Recent Correspondence

Beach Esplanade

A lady had contacted ACF because she had almost been run down by a rogue cyclist who was going too fast. There was also a similar story in the press the next day about a different cyclist. Last year someone had written to ACC about a very similar issue and ACC had compiled a report but no action was taken.

Gavin responded and included the report from ACC. The lady was shocked by the fact that the lower path is a shared path and that ACC saw no requirement for a segregated path.

However, it now looks like ACC will be creating space for a new segregated cycle path which may resolve the issue

Grampian 50+ Network

ACF were also contacted by a lady from the Grampian 50+ network who was concerned that there were too many cyclists in the city on shared use paths. Older members of the population are feeling uncomfortable about this. She was asking if ACF could join a campaign to improve courtesy among users of shared paths.

Lots of discussion. General consensus that cyclists should be encouraged to ring their bell to alert people (doesn't always help if people are deaf/wearing headphones) and respect other users. There are cyclists who cycle too quickly on paths like the Deeside Way. Should ACF be promoting a maximum speed on shared paths? Not felt to be the best way forward.

If paths are wide enough and segregated, many of these issues would be resolved. If cyclists need to be told to slow down it's usually because the infrastructure is insufficient (Designing for Traffic). However, Gavin said that widening the Deeside Way had been discussed previously but was unlikely to happen for biodiversity reasons. Commuter routes required on roads –active travel corridors may help.

Better signage & reminders for people to be courteous would be helpful. Some small posters have appeared due to COVID on Deeside Way but difficult for cyclists to read.

Countesswells

Gavin has had a response from the developers at Countesswells to his letter in which he had complimented them on their landscaping, eco drainage etc but noted the issue of too many cars parking on the pavements (high car use).

The developers said yes the wide pavements are intended for cycling and will form part of painted cycle route to school (shared use). The developers hope when the marking goes down that people won't park on it.

Countesswells Rd is due to be closed to through traffic eventually but not any time soon – 2-5 years. Construction is recommencing including a west link road to A944 Westhill Road on Aberdeen side of Kingswells roundabout. This will have a dedicated cycle path beside it & a dedicated bus route. Cars will be segregated from bus/cycles.

Gavin wondered about a survey to residents – what could be done to encourage them to cycle? Dr Bike/lessons at Countesswells ?

Ian said there should already be a travel plan written as part of the planning application which would likely include a plan to reduce single occupancy car journeys.

Action: Gavin/Ian to obtain copy of travel plan.

6. Duthie Park Cycle Audit

Gavin with assistance from Rachel & Francesco has finished Duthie Park cycle audit. Overall conclusion is that it is a nice place for cycling but some improvements could make it a lot better. Response from council officers was disappointing in that their main point was that ACF hadn't identified where the money for improvements would come from.

Gavin suggested we publish the audit results at an appropriate time in the future.

Main improvements suggested:

- very little cycle parking (some recently removed)
- access points – badly laid out for cyclists

Action: Request for volunteers to help with Hazlehead / Seaton Park audits

Gavin could provide copy of Duthie Park audit to help with structure.

Richard highlighted that Seaton Park had some good cycle routes around and thought it with good links from Beach up to Muggiemoss Road.

7. Any Other Business

National Cycle Network (NCN) routes are being declassified

Richard highlighted that Sustrans have made the decision that much of the NCN is currently not suitable for a 12 year old child to ride on their own and therefore it should not be classified as part of the NCN. There will now be large breaks in the NCN ~4000miles to be removed.

Richard agrees it is a good decision but unfortunately there is no action to upgrade/replace these sections.

For example the A92 – Stonehaven to Montrose is to be declassified with no alternative routes. Aberdeenshire Council have said they will prioritise segregated off-road paths. Sustrans have said local authorities can take over ownership but unlikely Aberdeenshire will do this. Sustrans may well prioritise these routes for funding in future years..

Bike Hire Scheme

Nico asked if there were any bike hire schemes in Aberdeen.

Gavin explained there is currently nowhere in Aberdeen to hire a bike commercially. ACC put out a universal hire scheme to tender last year but there were no bids. ACF response to this was that there are not enough safe places to cycle a bike in Aberdeen yet. Aberdeen needs safer infrastructure first.

8. Date for Next Meeting

Tues 25th Aug (possible joint meeting with Aberdeen Climate Action)