

Aberdeen Cycle Forum

Minutes from meeting on 27th October 2020

Attendees: Gavin Clark (Chair), Liz Lindsey, Nico Silvani, Nathan Gore, David Shannon, Daniel Verhamme, Rachel Martin, Fiona McDonald , Francesco Sani

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Notes from previous meeting and actions arising

Fiona reported that she had written to the headteacher at Countesswells School and sent on the details of the first active travel school for Wales and suggested that Countesswells may wish to emulate this locally. No response received as yet.

3. Cycle lessons & Dr Bike – reports so far & lessons learned

Last bike lessons and Dr Bike session for 2020 are due to be held on Sat 31st October in Duthie Park. Gavin felt we should wait until Spring and warmer weather before organising further sessions. Last Dr Bike session in October wasn't well attended, possibly due to weather or just the clash with the school October holidays.

Bike lessons – some people are booking more than one lesson (one beginner lesson and one refresher lesson). It was agreed absolute beginners, may need a 2 - 3 lessons. There is still plenty demand for lessons and all those we have organised have sold out quickly.

Big Bike Revival funding also covered insurance for these events.

Gavin congratulated Nathan on being the instructor who taught Naomi to cycle & who has gone on to be featured in a Cycling UK news article and undertaken a number of cycling challenges.

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/real-life-stories/naomis-confidence-boost-thanks-big-bike-revival>

Nathan is happy to do more training sessions next year. There was some discussion about how to provide bikes if 'in-house' instructors were used rather than Adventure Aberdeen.

The new ACF snoods/buffs were given out to all the new trainees and seemed to be well received.

Aim to run more lessons in March next year.

4. Future Events & Campaigns

Rachel has suggested doing a litter pick on the Deeside Way to improve relationships with other users and show community spirit. Gavin pointed out that ACF currently does not have insurance for events like this but maybe this is something ACF should look into.

Other suggestion was handing out and/or fixing free bells for cyclists that don't have them.

Fiona asked whether one of the Dr Bike/lessons could be arranged at Countesswells next year. Gavin said he had set up a meeting to organise this but it had to be cancelled but hopes to rearrange.

5. Spaces for People

Beach Esplanade

Recent update sent by Gregor Whyte from Council. Although cycling levels were up significantly during lockdown, traffic levels are now back up to the same levels as pre-lockdown.

Cycle figures will be based solely on off-road data counters eg Deeside Way, Shell path and therefore may not pick up decrease in cycle commuters. Cycle commuters felt to have decreased while leisure cycling has increased.

Nothing significant reported about Hazlehead to Rosemount Viaduct proposed scheme.

Daniel reported he had cycled the Beach Esplanade and thought the new cycle route was good. Nico also thought the beach route was reasonable but thought accessing the esplanade from the city centre was pretty difficult for families as no good route.

Gavin has been down to the beach several times and usually goes down Marischal Street and then along Regents' Quay then past the old Neptune Bar. Big wide road and at weekends it's not too busy. Discussion over whether this route should be suggested to the council as a possible alternative route and way of bypassing the very busy and intimidating roundabout where Beach Boulevard meets E North St.

There was also discussion over use of the over-bridge which crosses the dual-carriageway (Commerce St) just south of the roundabout at connects to Castlehill. It is useable, but not particularly direct or appealing (dark, secluded and prone to broken glass)

Francesco left the meeting.

Nico and Liz thought Regent's Quay would be very busy during the week.

Gavin reported there is often a lot of illegal parking on Regent's Quay on double yellow lines both on road and on the pavement. He said he had asked a couple of community wardens whether they ever enforced this area but he was told the area was in the control of Aberdeen Harbour Board and not the council and therefore enforcement of parking was a police matter (but probably not a police priority). Gavin asked whether we might contact Aberdeen Harbour Board to suggest they tackle this issue and improve the accessibility for cyclists and other pavement/road users.

6. Consultations

Low Emission Zone Consultation

Daniel mentioned the pollution issue caused by the ships in the harbour and wondered whether it was covered by the LEZ?

Gavin attended a stakeholder consultation meeting with Systra – consultants working on proposals for the LEZ last week. He asked about the pollution emissions from ships. Systra said that they did not think the emissions from ships were significant compared to the road traffic.

David went to a presentation in the past about the emissions in the harbour area but felt that the air monitoring in the Harbour area was inadequate. He has raised this before with SEPA and apparently it meets the regulated limits. Rachel mentioned that she did not think Market St was listed as a pollution hot spot - Daniel and Fiona thought it was.

[FM1]

Systra consultants felt Denburn/Guild St was a useful 'escape route' for vehicles who entered the LEZ by mistake and needed a way out. Even with fullest implementation of LEZ the levels of pollutants won't be reduced enough if this is the only measure. Other measures needed to reduce road traffic. ACF responded to the consultation and supported the implementation of the largest area and with the shortest timescale.

Problems with Idling

There was general agreement that idling was a problem, particularly around some schools and some taxi ranks. Likely the problem is worse in the winter.

Gavin had reported problems in his local area to the council. The council said that community wardens did not have the power to enforce the regulations around idling and that it would need to be enforced by environmental health. The net result is that there is no enforcement.

Council did run a campaign on local radio and social media in the last couple of years but nothing recently.

Gavin asked whether it was really a cycling issue?

General agreement that it was an issue that affected cyclists.

David suggested everyone should write to SEPA and pressure them into some sort of action. He highlighted a citizen science project which SEPA ran when they gave pollution monitors to schools in the central belt. David has asked why it wasn't carried out in Aberdeen but they said they didn't have money for it at the time.

Nathan asked whether this could be turned into an art project for school pupils? Design a banner which could then be hung outside the school to ask drivers not to idle. Rachel agreed ACF could easily fund this as a banner would cost £40.

Gavin wondered whether the schools would take it on?

Rachel suggested the platform she had used for the cycle lane design competition last year could be used for individuals to submit entries.

Nathan said that a good contact in the council would be Alan Findlay who sends messages out to schools on environmental issues.

Nathan volunteered to take this idea forward.

David volunteered to approach SEPA to see if they would be interested in supplying any pollution monitors to schools.

Paths for All funding or crowdfunding money could be used for prizes.

Money from Council needs to be kept for road closure – may need for a future event.

Active Travel Action Plan

ACF consultation response is now available on the website. Gavin thanked others for contributing to this.

NESTRANS Consultation

ACF did not respond to this.

30 traffic regulation orders posted yesterday for consultation. Gavin has looked at a few: new parking restrictions, enabling electrical charging points to be installed.

STAG Appraisal for Corridor between Ellon park and ride and Garthdee.

Invitation received from consultants to meet and discuss proposals. Gavin to either invite consultants to present at future ACF monthly meeting or may set up a separate meeting and ask for volunteers from this meeting to attend.

Nico is the new campus cycling officer for RGU and said he had looked at the route.

<https://news.aberdeencity.gov.uk/study-underway-to-consider-improving-active-travel-and-public-transport-from-the-pr-in-ellon-to-the-garthdee-road-corridor/>

AOCB

Daniel asked Nico about the Spaces for People changes in George St and whether road users had now adapted to the new layout. Nico reported that he has seen people unscrewing bollards and parking in the cycle lane. He has reported to the council but has not had a response.

Gavin also reported problems with car parking on the Beach Esplanade at Footdee.

David asked Nico whether RGU are accepting bikes for donation? Nico will check.. Nico reported RGU have a new venue for hiring bikes to students for a term.

Gavin reported that he had recently received an email from Jeremy Rushton, one of the founding chairs of ACF in 2003. He left Aberdeen in 2007 but was pleased to find ACF has a website and are still doing lots of good work. He has sent on minutes from 2003. Rachel is happy to add these to the website. He remembered Liz.

Many of the issues that were campaigned on in 2003/4 are still being campaigned on today.

Fiona mentioned the lack of targets in the active travel proposals. Gavin agreed and said this had been included in the ACF response which is now on the ACF website. Francesco provided a link to a similar document from Glasgow which had much better plans for measuring success of the proposals and this was included in the consultation response.

Date for next meeting is Tuesday 24th November.

[FM1]<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/fp/news/local/three-aberdeen-streets-ranked-among-worst-polluted-scotland/>