

ACF Meeting Minutes

25th January 2022

Attendees: Gavin Clark (chair), Rachel Martin, Nicolo Silvani, Daniel Verhamme, Fiona McDonald, Ian Yuill, Hanne Bruhn, Francesco Sani

Minutes from the last meeting have been posted and Rachel will take minutes this month.

Consultations

a) Strategic Transport Project review 2

A national-level consultation by Transport Scotland looking at all modes of travel across the country. This has just launched in the last week and is open until mid-April. We'll digest it over the coming month and discuss again next meeting.

Daniel says Nestrans made a summary and highlighted active freeways - long-distance cycle routes like A93 and A92

Gavin says these are strategic projects to be delivered in the next 20 years. Daniel says the summary is on the Nestrans website.

b) A92 corridor

We've been approached by Jacobs about this consultation which is coming up. It is Mucar to Bridge of Dee but via Parkway and Anderson Drive. They've given us a map and have asked to meet with us before the consultation is launched.

We have been approached before about a route for Anderson Drive and we've never been very enthusiastic because it's hilly but the more cycle

paths the better as long as it doesn't replace a north-south route on King Street. It could act as a route to get to Hazlehead Park or the hospital or Robert Gordon. Hanne noted CTC Grampian had also been approached by Jacobs in the same way.

Fiona cycles regularly from Mannofield to the hospital and is not keen on cycleways next to dual carriageways as they're unpleasant compared with quieter roads. However, she also says joining up routes to important destinations is useful.

A bike path is to be built from Braemar to Invercauld. This is the first stage of a wider strategy to extend Deeside to Braemar.

<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/apps/news/release.aspx?newsID=8417>

Engagement with ACC / Councillors

We struggle a bit to find good ways to communicate with the council however last week Gavin attended the ActUp (Aberdeen City Transport User Partnership) meeting. These are monthly meetings that include people representing lots of travel modes including buses and taxis. Gavin says it provides quite a good venue to feed in ideas and points so one of us should go in the future.

The Make Aberdeen Accessible campaign was shared with the council so they could follow up on the problems we identified. Gavin wrote to Sandra Macdonald and Martin Ford but hasn't had a reply from either of them. If Gavin hasn't had a reply by the next ActUp meeting he'll raise it there.

Ian says in Aberdeen it would be really helpful from his point of view to rather than write to just one Councillor, to write to all five different groups. Don't just email the administration - email all of them. Gavin says the rationale for emailing Sandra is she's transport spokesperson.

Ian points out that we lose nothing in sending an email to five people rather than just one.

Gavin says we have the May 2022 elections coming up and the campaign group Pedal on Parliament (PoP) have worked on putting together messages including how best to engage Councillors and they also came to the same conclusion to email all party group leaders.

In the past, we've gone to individual parties and asked for their manifesto and we'll probably do something similar.

Campaigns and events update

The No-idling campaign banner has been on loan in Newmachar and is about to go to Dyce. We have a waiting list of two or three other locations after that. It's mostly being displayed at primary schools.

Ian says he has raised this with council staff in the past. Here's the response he got:

In relation to vehicle engine idling, at this moment in time any complaints of vehicle idling are investigated on a case by case basis.

This Service has run targeted initiatives to tackle idling vehicles at primary schools.

Current strategy is to educate drivers on the legislation and the benefits of not allowing engines to idle unnecessarily.

Information on current air quality levels in Aberdeen and what steps are being taken to improve air quality are available in the latest air quality progress report available at:

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/air-quality-aberdeen/air-quality-reports>

If your constituent would like to discuss specific engine idling issues that they have concerns about they can contact this service directly on 03000 200 292 and speak with an officer.

Gavin asks why do City Wardens not have the powers to do enforcement while environmental health officers do but are too slim in numbers to have an impact?

Rachel asks whether the schools have noticed any success or change of behaviour with the banner? Gavin says he's had mixed feedback.

Francesco asks why the police can't deal with it and Rachel reads an email response she got from the police explaining they don't have the authority.

Gavin talks about Dundee council proposals to put in traffic bans around schools in Dundee.

Art project

The application to Sustrans is underway and they're very supportive as is the council because the bridges over Deeside Way frequently suffer from graffiti. Nico suggests it could be included in the Nuart map.

Communications

Gavin sent out a newsletter in December with a summary of our achievements in 2021. Daniel had responded and suggested we should make more use of Twitter. Hanne says there should be a way of linking social media accounts so when you share something on Facebook it adds it to Twitter. Ian says you can use a tool called Buffer. Gavin would be happy to put stuff on Instagram and is happy to do most of the Facebook stuff. Rachel will get back on Twitter. Nico will look into Buffer.

Francesco asks about posting regular updates about Forum members – to highlight the variety of people who cycle and what type of cycling they do.

Gavin asks Hanne about the award she received and suggested she could be the first member to have a post about her. Francesco has also offered to write a profile

Any other business

1. Grampian Cycle Partnership has its AGM next Monday. Gavin thinks one of us should go and will try to go next week.
2. Cycling without Age – someone from the council is considering bringing it to Aberdeen and are asking for interested cyclists to get in touch. They didn't send it to us but Gavin wrote and requested they keep us in the loop.
3. Gavin has had three requests for more adult lessons for beginners. Rachel says we could potentially run it again over the summer.
4. We put in a planning objection for Deeside Brae a housing development off the Causey Mounth road, and it has been rejected.
5. Inquiry from a lady yesterday who was asking for bike lockers in or around Union Square. She didn't feel comfortable leaving her bike there without putting it in a locker. Could we email Network Rail and ask them to install some there? Nico says they're refurbishing the station so may be included as part of the development. Rachel will email Scotrail about it. No lockers as per here <https://www.scotrail.co.uk/plan-your-journey/stations-and-facilities/abd>
6. Drive-through venue (Starbucks) at Queens Links is to be built in carpark. Gavin suggested we should object because it's a bad idea to design in car-dependence with drive-throughs at a time when we're trying to encourage active travel and healthy lifestyles. Consensus that we should object.
7. Francesco discusses hydrogen bus.

8. Fiona asks Ian Yuill about his objection to pedestrianisation of Union Street? His response is that when the temporary closure was put in place it was done in response to a pandemic and would be removed when the public health emergency was lifted and they think the council should stick with what they said and have it removed. The current arrangement isn't working for a number of people in Aberdeen because the diversion isn't great. People with disabilities and older people are excluded from the city centre. The diversion route isn't very suitable for bus stops and it's a fair hike from Guild Street. He thinks temporary restrictions should be removed. What he wants is a city centre that's accessible to people and is a pleasant place to be so you're not breathing in diesel fumes or taking your life in your hands when crossing the road. Ian says he's in favour of pedestrianisation but when there are proper routes and bus stops for buses particularly on Bridge Street and Market Street. He doesn't want buses stopping to hold up other buses and cars. Gavin says he's sympathetic as he knows not everyone wants to cycle and public transport is an important part of the strategy. Gavin says the closed-off part of the road is not great as a shared space for cyclists.

Francesco asks about low-emission zone and congestion charges - Ian says it will come into play in 2022 but not with congestion charges. If we had road pricing it would disadvantage Aberdeen economically, unless implemented in other cities too.

Fiona appreciates the disadvantages to old people and disabled but there are many children who don't have a voice and we have to think of them too. Rachel agrees with Fiona and says she really appreciates that closed-off part of Union Street for both shopping and cycling because there are no cars and no fumes and she feels safe with her children.

9. Franceso shared about the hydrogen cargo bikes and suggested we could advertise on the side
<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/environment/3855990/hydroden-powered-ecargo-bikes-coming-to-aberdeen-in-uk-first-pilot/>
10. Nico wants to share a site where you can do social mobility courses and they're free and very good - <https://urbanmobilitycourses.eu/>

Date of next meeting is 22 Feb