



CYCLE TALK

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Conference Reports

Peter Hayman, CTC Councillor, Scotland

Three recent transport conferences in quick succession highlight how cycling has come of age as a serious contributor to matters of mobility, public health and the environment.

Cycling Scotland Annual Conference 2007

13 Nov: Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

CTC Scotland made its mark with five delegates attending, plus Roger Geffen and Dave Holladay from CTC National Office. A large part of the contributions and questions from the floor came from these and other cycle campaigners. This was useful to let CTC's voice some cyclist's concerns to other cycling professionals present and gave the conference more of an interactive 'Forum' feel than last year. The electronic voting system was used, at the end, to establish that a Scottish National Cycle Forum would be welcomed by those present.

Firstly there was a fine performance by Stewart Stevenson MSP Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change showing how cycling met all the Scottish Government's objectives as well as the three parts of his job title. However he was still looking for 'increasing sustainable growth' and when questioned, at the break, about possible dis-incentives to car travel to go with all the carrots to get cycling he said 'No sticks!' Eri Wilkie Chief Executive, Cycling Scotland flagged up a National Cycle Strategy with an Action Plan during his look for partnership working to make change happen.

Roger G got the Minister to agree that cyclists should be consulted on policy issues and there was lively debate about whether cycle provision should be on road or segregated.

There was plenty of technical input as well, ranging from a repeat of the welcomed re-jigging of STAG methodology by Stuart Knowles, to include health and environmental factors, to quite obscure outlines of the European perspective on connectivity (Polis) and EU work on urban planning (Pilot). <http://www.pilot-transport.org/> More familiar inputs from Sustrans, referring to continental examples, an amusing take on the economics of cycle tourism in Lancashire and a run down on assessing public health benefit in English cycle demonstration towns were rounded off with a passionate review of Scottish Cycling sporting successes. Finally we were shown how the Forestry Commission see Accident Risk and Business Risk as reversed for Leisure, Cross Country and Specialist cyclists. Power points of presentations should be posted at <http://www.cyclingscotland.org>

It was an interesting and relevant day, which was rounded off very satisfactorily by Spokes winning the CS Award for Cycling Innovation for their 'Polite' reflective arm/ trouser bands.

IT'S ALL OVER BAR THE SHOUTING!

John Taylor says "I'm sorry, it's not"

I have written a lot about the progress (?) of the Core Path Plan obligation on Councils that they should have them completed by the month of this issue of CT. They should all now be ready for the ministerial approval, and ready to get cracking on putting up the signs and carrying out the improvements. It will only take a few words to describe the unacceptable situation at which, in the event, this process has arrived.

First, not all Councils have met their Feb 08 obligation. Second, most of those that have done so, have fallen far short of the sufficiency that users, at least, were looking for, and what we believe the authors of the Act expected.

We can't alter that situation. We could object or demand that the Ministers reject them, but, either way, that would produce a lengthy delay in the deliver of what is there. So, probably our best tack is to reluctantly accept this as a first stage, and demand a process that will deliver Plans that do demonstrate sufficiency by about 2012. The user groups are likely to get together to pursue that aim.

The Scottish Transport Conference 2007

30 Oct: SECC – Ten Alps Events

This was the big (c400 delegates) more formal event aimed mainly at transport professionals and major infrastructure providers. Louise Bachelor BBC Scotland in the chair had a light touch. Stewart Stevenson Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change gave a robust keynote speech outlining the new Scottish Governments five criteria for progress and also a commitment to cut greenhouse gasses by 80% for 2050.

At questions, once the Aberdeen man's plea to speed up the by-pass work was put aside, Dave Holladay CTC public transport campaigns made some good points about cutting commuting times by use of a bike to start and finish and asking for better integration between modes. The rest of the morning dealt with Highland and Island transport and economy issues, the continuing development of rail in Scotland and some technical project management stuff.

A Seminar session after lunch showed the continuing rise of nasties in the air and the need to encourage alternative friendly transport. Bad things also drop from road and rail vehicles than wash into the environment, mainly dealt with by SUDS. There was a call for more speed cameras rather than bumps and less foodmiles.

Cycling permeated a lot of the contributions but the main 'sustainable' presentation was an outline of the Sustrans story.

Paths – A Transport Solution

09 Nov: Dunkeld - Scottish Countryside Access Network

John Ewing Dir of Transport SG gave an encouraging take on how the new government would interpret the Nat. Trans. Strategy with public transport, active travel and planning policies used to help cut CO2. £81m would go to LAs for access, setting their own priorities with £10/year for cycling particularly aimed at getting children riding. Progress on TS guides for trunk road paths and Cycling by Design, due by Christmas, were flagged up. By contrast the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport review of their RTP failed to show any significant way they are going to 'encourage' drivers out of their cars.

Paul Tetlaw Chair TRANSform Scotland gave a strong overview of the need to move to sustainable transport and John Nelson Service Manager SWESTRANS ran through the considerable work done on paths and bridges in D&G using multiple funding streams. In between Stuart Knowles Transportation, Fife Council illustrated his method of adapting the STAG appraisals to include health and environment factors. Using government figures turned the usual outcomes on their head, towards favouring cycling and public transport. John Ewing asked for a copy to show his SG economists.

Although nominally about paths the contributions and discussions kept returning to cycling as the main focus for consideration. Wheelchair users were also featured.

After lunch, cycling as part of tourism was highlighted in the Highland Council region and Cairngorms National Park. John Lauder Director Sustrans Scotland rounded off the day by showing the major, multifaceted contribution they make to sustainable transport.

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Web Sites

CTC Scotland: www.ctcscotland.org.uk

Cycling Scotland: www.cyclingscotland.org

Cycling Scotland AGM

Our members often ask what Cycling Scotland does. The report on its Conference should help you understand, and here we reproduce extracts from draft minutes from this year's AGM

Erl Wilkie's Report

He explained that Cycling Scotland is entering its 5th year in operation. Erl elaborated on the progress of the second national assessment report indicating that the analysis has reached the mid point and the expected findings will highlight a significant increase in the status of cycling and examples of good practice. Erl explained that Scotland has recently embarked on a new political administration at Holyrood whose five strategic outcomes are designed to continue to take Scotland along the path of sustainability, coupled with the recent news that Glasgow has been chosen as the host for the Commonwealth Games in 2014, the future is optimistic. Erl also explained that at the recent Cycling Scotland conference a vote indicated that Cycling Scotland should embark on the management of a National Cycling Action Plan. Cycling Scotland aims to work in partnership with all agencies to achieve this goal.

Erl elaborated on Cycling Scotland's future strategy by concentrating on the following areas:

- Management and co-ordination of the process of the development of a National Cycling Action Plan
- Commission guidance for monitoring cycle use
- Develop a cross-agency Communication Strategy with our partners
- The development of cross-agency workforce development plans to increase the quality and quantity of cycling instruction and cycling infrastructure by furthering the Making Cycling Mainstream Programme
- Widen the opportunities for individuals to develop as cyclists through training or guidance
- Further development of technical sheets, advice notes and good practice databases
- Pilot an action planning service for local authorities to improve their delivery of cycling policy
- To take an active part in the People Focussed Interchange project with our partners both here and at a European level

Cycling Scotland will continue with both its membership of the POLIS project and Seventh Framework programme.

Erl defined the above statement "as the catalyst for change necessary to place cycling as an important part of the solution against the serious problems we are facing today. They will have to be financed and therefore CS will be looking at ways in which this can be achieved both through funding from the Scottish Government and by other means. As I have already said we will have to work in partnership with many other organisations in many different fields if these aspirations are going to become reality".

East Lothian

Mark James

The **Cycle Forum** has been up and running for a year and has seen some very positive changes. After being set up by previous chair of the environment committee Norman Hampshire, the new administration has promised a 2% allocation of the transport budget as well as the appointment of a cycling officer. The departmental location of the post within the Council has yet to be decided, either focusing on infrastructure projects in transportation or the softer measures of promotion possibly in landscape and countryside. The Council have updated their cycling leaflet and the new edition of the Spokes map should be out in the spring.

The Forum and CTC are keen for more cyclists to give their opinion. We know through sales of the East Lothian Spokes map (sells more than West or Midlothian) that the county is a popular destination for cyclists.

You don't have to attend meetings of the forum but you can be on an e mail group and contribute to the general discussion either through myself, Keith Burns (your Right to Ride reps) or directly through the forum see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/elcf/>. You can see some of the previous minutes. Next meeting is in Haddington Wed

Questions on the Chief Executive's Report

Bill Wright read out the following question furnished to the A.G.M on the 29th November 2007 by Peter Hayman:

Local Authority Cycle Forums -

Under the company's objective 3.1 *To encourage bicycle use among all sections of the population.* and indeed all the other objectives (memorandum and articles of association) I would ask Cycling Scotland to consider ways to broker, facilitate and generally encourage the setting up, where they do not already exist, and active regular functioning of Cycle Forums within all Scottish Local Authorities.

These should preferably be chaired by a local Councillor. Among the possible stakeholders there should be included local cycle and walking activists and campaigners and elected Councillors as well as Local Authority Officers dealing with access, roads issues, planning and environment, health and education. Proceedings should be publicized locally and through Cycling Scotland news bulletins.

Peter Hayman acknowledged that communications had improved between himself and Cycling Scotland.

Erl explained that Cycling Scotland is not a regulatory authority and only the local authorities could take the lead on sustainable forums. Erl acknowledged that cycle sustainable forums, was an outcome of the last audit and indicated that CS would be happy to attend any subsequent meetings of forums if they are set by the local authorities.

Bridget Dales, (Scottish Natural Heritage) advocacy of the local authority cycle forums. Bridget explained that all local authorities must have a Local Access Forum in compliance with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The forums exist and operate in various forms and within this structure an opportunity exists to highlight cycling issues with integration being the key to walking and cycling.

Bill Wright, (Director, Cycling Scotland) explained that the recent B.O.D meeting on the 22nd November 2007 highlighted a discussion in respect of ring fenced funding. CS should consider ways to broker and generate local forums. Bill highlighted that the Board were not encouraged by funding at the local authority level.

Alan Malcolm, (Director, Cycling Scotland) asked if there was any merit in acknowledging good practices examples from various sources.

Erl explained that one of the outcomes of the national assessment is to highlight good practice.

Stuart Knowles, (Senior Manager, Fife Council) the lack of ring fenced funds is a key issue for any organisation promoting cycling in Scotland and questioned if all 32 local authorities were aware of how crucial this situation could be. Stuart supports CS involvement in the process and explained that in Fife cycling is integrated into the access forum. Their best practice sub group has developed a 'Charter for Cycling' to raise awareness of cycling. Stuart also explained that there is a statutory requirement for all local authorities to secure a core path network by 2008.

March 8th 2pm at John Muir House, Quarterly meetings alternate between evening and afternoon.

Family Rides - Musselburgh area

If there are members who would like to meet up around East Lothian get in touch. Rosemary Gray would like to ride with others, especially with young children, in the Musselburgh area.

Look forward to hearing from you

Mark James markjames2005@tiscali.co.uk 01368 864717

Cross the Water!

As many of us Scottish members are the nearest to Belfast, we should see if can make it to CTC's (National) AGM there on **April 26**. Why not make a short break of it? The AGM is followed by the Dinner that day, and next day there will be local rides.

To follow that, a **week's CTC Tour** that includes Donegal is available and **D&G Group is organising a mini-tour** from the Monday to Wednesday 28-30th on the NCR round Lough Neagh. Info about the last from John, 01556 670395.