



BULLETIN - Spring 2009, Issue 6

www.aberdeencycleforum.org.uk

Welcome...

Welcome to the first Aberdeen Cycle Forum newsletter of 2009. As you will see, the Forum has been continuing its mission to improve cycle facilities and the safety of cyclists in Aberdeen. The Forum acts as a 'consultative body' so has the opportunity to comment on or object to changes in the road infrastructure, before they take place. For more information on consultations please see our website.

WEB-LINX

We can't fit everything in the newsletter, some web addresses are long and fiddly to type, so our solution is WEB-LINX. Where you see "WEB-LINX" in the text simply visit the ACF website, click the WEB-LINX button in the menu and enter the number to learn more.



Lucky winner Aisling Shannon receiving her prize

Film Festival - We are delighted to report that the two films screened during Bike Week were a complete sell-out. Apologies to those of you who did not get tickets in advance and were unable to get in. We hope to be able to arrange something similar in 2009.

News

REPORTS BACK FROM BIKE WEEK

Commuter Challenge 2008 - Results - Aberdeen cyclists clocked up 4,300 miles, at this rate these cyclists alone are saving the city an estimated 23 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year. commute distances traveled varied 0.5 and 20 miles with a median of 4.5 miles.

The lucky winner of the £220 worth of vouchers kindly supplied by Aberdeen City Council and Edinburgh Bike Co_op was RGU Student Aisling Shannon. When presented with the prize Aisling said:

"I commute to University by bike from King Street to Garthdee past the harbour, along the river Dee and then onto the Old Deeside Railway track. It is a really scenic and enjoyable cycle and gives me time to relax and think as I travel!"

YOU ARE NOT ALONE II

On the 1st and 2nd October 2008 following on from our April count ACF conducted Aberdeen's second cycle count. With more volunteers this time we were able to expand the network from the original 13 to 18 locations.

Despite the reduction in temperatures at that time of year the total number of journeys was almost unchanged, like last time Union Street was the busiest almost hitting the magical 100. The new sites this time included the Don and Queen Elizabeth Bridges (South end of College St), interestingly most felt forced to use the pavement here. Clearly this evidence supports our drive with the council to make these areas more cycle friendly.

A number of our counters remarked on the low numbers of female cyclists, only 18% overall in the average, if you have any ideas why or want to help improve this ratio then do get in contact, see our later article 'Ladies on Wheels'.

Many thanks to all our volunteer "bike spotters" who gave up their time to conduct the count.

More details can be found on our website.

WANTED: LADIES ON WHEELS!

With the annual cycling counts showing that ladies were poorly represented amongst the cycling fraternity, the Cycle Forum has launched a new group specifically to get ladies on their bikes; heels and handbags included! Whilst commuter cycling isn't for everybody, a cycle down to the shops or out with the kids might just be! Ideas such as a ladies only cycle rides during Bike Week and a promotional campaign are in the pipeline. But we are looking for YOU to help us! We are offering a prize to the lady who comes up with the best tag line for cycling in Aberdeen.

Email: ladies@aberdeencycleforum.org to put in an entry, or just let us know your ideas!

ON TRACK... Cycle Infrastructure Projects

The second phase of the Westhill - Kingswells - Aberdeen Cycle Route, is being build just now and looks to be on-track for completion this Spring. The crossing of the Lang Stracht arm of the roundabout is to be facilitated by a set of lights and a crossing which will stop the flow of traffic on the main carriageway before entering the roundabout.

The implementation of a Kingswells to Bucksburn path is showing progress. The results have now been published for the preferred option with Aberdeen City Council's North Committee unanimously agreeing the recommendations for improvements. 60% of people went for Option 2; the option utilising the Bucksburn Valley Paths. This route will now be the adopted Core Path as part of the Core Paths Plan. So what are the next steps? The Council are going to continue with minor path improvements for the corridor and design a new section of path between Greenferns Community Woodland and Bucksburn (the surface to be granite dust not tarmac) hopefully before the end of April 2009. A report will then go back to Committee in the Autumn highlighting the usage over the summer

months, and whether further work is required. Interestingly, the most popular response for what people would use the route for was recreational cycling! So what are you waiting for, get on your bikes and ride!!

Thanks to all who have put in comments and ideas; keep them rolling in!

WIDENED CYCLE LANES

Widened cycle lanes have been painted on Bedford Road through the 3 traffic islands / pinch points. These currently take the form of broken white lines which extend further out into the road than the existing red surface cycle lanes installed several years ago. They have the potential to improve the situation for cyclists particularly travelling up the hill.

The red surface lanes implied that there was enough room for a driver to safely pass a cyclist through the traffic island. There wasn't. It was easy enough to ensure that drivers could not pass when cycling down the hill by moving out into the centre of the carriageway, but much more difficult to do this at lower speed up the hill. While many drivers were willing to wait until the cyclist was through the island, a minority were not: often the minority who would be least likely to be paying attention to speed restrictions. It was not infrequent for drivers to pass cyclists on the wrong side of the island up Bedford Road.



The new broken lines extend far enough that a motorist needs to drive on them to get through the island. This sends a slightly clearer message that the cyclist has priority, and means a cyclist can cycle further away from the gutter with a bit more confidence. It's

also good that the widened lanes extend between 2 of the islands on the downhill journey, beside a row of parked cars with a cycle lane sometimes known as the car-door lane.

The widened lanes follow on from wide lanes installed at new islands on North Deeside Road around a year ago and should be part of a rolling programme at new installations and ultimately at some older ones. Please let us know what you think of any widened lanes already in operation.

ACF AWARDS FOR 2008 - The Winner

Well the Votes have been counted, and we are proud to announce announce the winner of the first ACF Awards for supporting cycling in Aberdeen is beCyCle Bike Recycling and loan project. BeCyCle came first with over 40% of the vote, highly commended in second place came the roads engineers at the city council for the new extra wide lanes through traffic islands

Since launching, beCyCle has put another 90 bikes onto the streets, with their the "open workshop" in Old Aberdeen regularly used to keep many more running smoothly. The project is run entirely by volunteers and ACF feels beCyCle is a worthy winner. You can learn more of the other entries and the results of the vote on our website.



BeCyCle's Daniel Grunfeld (left) is presented with the award by ACF's Derek Williams at the open workshop.

ABERDEEN'S SECOND BIKE RECYCLING SCHEME OPENS

After a bit of a delay, the BikeFit bike recycling

project is now up and running and accepting donated bikes. It is based within the Instant Neighbour premises on St Machar Drive. Aberdeen now has the luxury of TWO bike recycling projects, with beCyCle already established. Donated bikes will be repaired and refurbished by BikeFit and offered for sale, or free of charge in certain circumstances. As well as bike recycling, BikeFit services bikes and offers a mobile "Dr Bike" service. The workshop is managed by Peter Cooper a bicycle mechanic of some 36 years. Peter most recently worked with Bill Reid at Broomhill Road cycles, The details:

The collection of donated bikes is free.

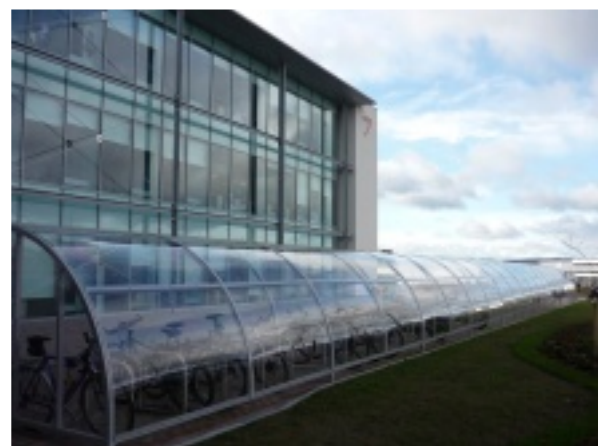
The basic service will cost £25 plus parts and is inclusive of VAT. The collection/return of bikes for servicing will incur an additional charge depending on distance. 'On-site' servicing at your wokplace etc. requires a minimum of 4 bikes.

BikeFit can be contacted at Instant Neighbour, 01224 489955, or call in 5 St Machar Drive, between 08:30 and 16:30

CYCLE PARKING

Subsea 7 - We are delighted to be able to report on the excellent cycle parking at Subsea 7's new offices at Westhill.

Thanks to Subsea 7 for allowing us to use this picture.



Making a Stand at Tesco - Tesco have recently expanded in Aberdeen with two new stores; the new Tesco Express in Mannofield, and the Tesco South, on Wellington Road, a former Somerfields store. As ever with these "new" developments, plenty of car parking spaces, but not a cycle stand in sight. Thanks to all who brought this to our attention.

So what happened with the new planning conditions requiring cycle stands that ACF worked so closely with the council on? The simple (and disappointing) answer is that they don't apply; as a conversion of an existing store Tesco South does not require planning permission.

The development in Mannofield of which Tesco is a part was granted permission on 3rd August 2006, before the new conditions came into effect. Plans did show stands, however discussions with planning officers indicated the provision of them could not be enforced! Undeterred ACF contacted Tesco, as with any large organisation this took some time - two letters and two emails vanished before our final attempt to Tesco PLC's director of sustainable development, Lucy Neville-Rolfe hit home. We are now in communication with Tesco's Scottish site manager and are pleased to report three Sheffield stands in Mannofield.



The provision of stands at Tesco South is under investigation. Meanwhile if you should find yourself, as one ACF member put it, "using a lamp post that had been used by a dog" customer comment forms are available in the store, ACF would encourage you to use one, as Tesco's own strapline says "Every little helps"

WESTHILL CYCLE ROUTE

The Westhill - Hazlehead bike route (Phase 1) was completed last year right up to the Lang Stracht turn off. Some of it initially uses the Old Skene Road, which is lightly trafficked; the rest is newly built, evenly graded and nicely tarmaced. The route is now being progressed town-wards beyond the Lang Stracht turn-off, presumably with a New Year injection of cash

into the Nestrans coffers. Some heavy plant is currently carving out a strip in parallel with the existing, but poorly surfaced, pavement in the Maidencraig area near to Hazlehead. What will happen to the 'old' pavement between isn't clear. Not a road-widening scheme hopefully, but the cars are getting wider these days!

Earlier concerns over the lack of assistance crossing of the Lang Stracht Arm of the roundabout have been addressed by the provision of traffic lights and a pedestrian crossing. Ed.

New in the Saddle?

RELAUNCH OF 'TRY CYCLING'

For over seven years the Grampian branch of the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) has organised 'Try Cycling' runs to encourage new or returning cyclists. These easy-paced runs, starting at Duthie Park every Sunday morning, visit various interesting places such as ancient cairns, march stones, churches, bird hides, a meadow with millions of wild flowers, etc. Many initially reticent cyclists have come on these runs for a variety of reasons: to gain on-road confidence in order to cycle-commute; to improve skills for leisure cycling; to improve fitness, lose weight, give up smoking; or just to enjoy a peaceful and interesting ride in the countryside with a group of friendly cyclists. Some people have just come once, others have come for many weeks, or even years. Several have moved on from 'Try Cycling' to other longer CTC runs. There are now several cyclists in the Grampian CTC who started 'life' in 'Try Cycling' and who go on long full day runs (including the 100-mile), go on cycle touring holidays, and also lead runs themselves.

One inherent weakness of the current 'Try Cycling' scheme is that the meeting point has always been at the same place, Duthie Park. This perhaps means that potential cyclists living in the north or west of the City are less likely to come, since they would either have to negotiate a longish cycle ride alone, or bring their bikes by car. In order to widen access, 'Try Cycling' will be relaunched in April with two new start points: Seaton Park and Hazlehead Park. The meeting time will continue to be 10.00 am on Sunday mornings, but the

meeting point will be Duthie Park on the first Sunday of the month, Hazlehead on the second Sunday, and Seaton Park on the third Sunday (then back to Duthie Park for any subsequent Sundays in the month). It is hoped to encourage families as well as individual cyclists to come, so there will be two Cycling Scotland/CTC trained cyclists on each ride (a leader and a 'sweeper'). The rides, lasting around a couple of hours at an easy pace on quiet roads, will include a coffee stop and plenty of halts at points of interest. 'Try Cycling' is organised by Grampian CTC, with the support of Aberdeen Cycle Forum (ACF) and Aberdeen City Council. It is hoped to publicise the new scheme widely, e.g. on CTC, ACF and City websites, also leaflets and posters to libraries, community centres, health centres, cycle outlets etc.

Come and Meet Us

ACF have been invited to take a stall at the following events:

- "getabout" active travel promotion on Belmont Street, Sunday 26th April; and
- Aberdeen Eco-city, at the Highland Games in Hazlehead Park on Sunday 21st June.

We will be there with leaflets, cycle maps and posters. Please drop by to say hello and give us your comments on the good and bad things about cycling in Aberdeen. Help us target the important areas for future improvements.



ACF stall at an earlier event.

Other dates for your Diary.

- 24 Apr-2 May - getabout Active Travel Week
- 22-23 April - Cycle Count
- 13 June - Bike Week 2009
- 14 June - Great Inverurie Bike Ride
- 16 September - European Mobility Week

And Finally...

Please acknowledge other cyclists as you pass even if its just a nod and a smile! With your help, Aberdeen can become known for friendly cyclists as well as being cycle friendly.

On a more serious note ACF recently saw some statistics on the causes of cycling accidents in Aberdeen. I was very suprised to see "cyclists dark clothing" as a contributory factor towards several of the incidents. This is one of the very few factors that we, as cyclists, can influence. If you don't already cycle in light coloured or high visibility gear please think about doing so. It doesn't have to be expensive cycling kit - a High Viz waistcoat from one of the workwear outlets or online will cost around £5.

BE SEEN - BE SAFE.

Ed.

About ACF

Aberdeen Cycle Forum (ACF) aim to encourage cycling of all types within Aberdeen, including; The promotion of cycling as part of a sustainable transport strategy for Aberdeen and to encourage the city council and other relevant agencies do the same. Campaigning for a safer cycling environment and improved cycle facilities in Aberdeen. Anyone who shares these aims is welcome to join in.

ACF Needs You

If you have views on issues like this, then why not get involved, It's free and you can give as little or as much as you want. Not sure what's involved, then why not drop in to one of our monthly meetings and say hello - Usually the last Tuesday of the month 19:30hrs in the Townhouse, check the website.

The SMALL Print

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