



DRAFT

Annual General Meeting

Sunday 25 March 2018, 2:00-4:30pm

Jesmond Library, Newcastle upon Tyne

Minutes (DRAFT) – to be reviewed and approved at AGM 2019

Present (49 in attendance including 34 members): Paul Adams, Ian Babelon, Tom Bailey, Anne-Marie Blackburn, Emma Bowen, Mark Brophy, Kieran Bythe, Scott Dawson (committee member), Tim Dawson, Bill Dodds, Nicola Frearson, Alistair Ford, Julie Hall, Jack Harvie-Clark, Rebecca Say, Cllr Rob Higgins, Graham Jellett, Philip Jones, Roderick Jones (committee member), Natalie Judson, Katja Leyendecker (committee member), Tom Maskell, Cllr Felicity Mendelson, Rita Mendelson, Jane Neatrou, Adolin Neatrou, Mark Nelson, Paul Newby, Rachael Newby, Tim Parsons, Sean Peacock, Cllr Stella Postlethwaite, Claire Prospert (committee member), Ed Smith, Juliet Smith, James Stanton, Armelle Tardiveau, Lawrence Taylor, Andy Thorpe, Ynsent Tse, Ed Wainwright, Peter Ward, Tony Waterston, John Watson (committee member), Crispin Welby, Jim Woodlingfield, Cllr Arlene Ainsley, Cllr Gareth Kane, Graham Grant (Newcastle City Council), Ellie (Arts Class)

Apologies (13): Nigel Bradley, David Moorhead, Melissa Wride, Malcom Farrow, Ruth Hayward, John Litherland, Cllr Nick Forbes, Tim Binks, Laura Wilkinson, Karen Elliot, Emily Pippard, Rorie Parson, Cath Scaife, and Peter Wesolowski

1. Welcome

Katja Leyendecker, Co-chair of NewCycling welcomed and thanked everybody for coming today.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Claire Prospert, NewCycling's Secretary, introduced the formal part of the AGM, starting with the minutes from last year. The minutes of the last AGM held on 1 April 2017 at Commercial Union House were approved as a true record with no matters arising.



3. Reports (for information)

Claire Prospert presented the annual report, which is now on the Campaign's website and briefly outlined the highlights of the year. Before the winter, we worked with Richard Grassick from Moving Films to produce a video about NewCycling, our journey of the last seven years, our experience about campaigning and why we are campaigning. We felt it was important to tell our story, as a group wanting to change how our roads are designed, how our urban space is used and how better it would be for all if we had space for cycling. Our infra team responded to the Streets for people consultation and continued to articulate our approach to networking. We launched the City4kids campaign, not just because Scott and Nicky were having a baby, and asked for stories and evidence about how it's like to cycle and walk as a family with children. We got inspired by the Kidical mass ride organised last July by a group of parents from Heaton and Jesmond. More about it with our City4kids manifesto later. She thanked our corporate sponsors: Apex Acoustics, the Cycle Hub and Saddle Skeddadle, fellow committee members for all the work they do for the Campaign, and all the members. Their messages, support and donations mean a lot.

John Watson, Treasurer, summarised the financial report which shows a healthy balance of £3,679.69 at the end of our financial year on 12 March 2018. In terms of outgoings (total: £1,580.75), we purchased two copies of the CROW Manual, the Dutch guide for designing cycling infrastructure. We also covered the travelling costs of Richard Grassick who made the new video about NewCycling. With regards to income, we are grateful for all the donations made this year, a total of £1,378. We now have 10 direct debits which provides us with a degree of visibility and financial security and allows us to plan ahead. We also had a healthy level of corporate membership renewals. Finally, we received a grant from Waitrose Community Giving.

4. Management Committee 2018/19

Claire Prospert introduced the process to appoint the Management Committee. As there were less nominations than places available on the committee, it will not be necessary to hold a formal election.

The following members expressed an interested to remain on the committee and **Claire Prospert** asked for members in attendance to second them:

- **Scott Dawson** – seconded by **Tony Waterson**
- **Roderick Joyce** – seconded by **Tim Dawson**



- **Katja Leyendecker** – seconded by **Alistair Ford**
- **Claire Prospert** – seconded by **Julie Hall**
- **Sally Watson** – seconded by **James Stanton**
- **John Watson** – seconded by **Mark Nelson**

The constituted posts and roles will be discussed and appointed at the first (newly formed) Committee Management meeting in April.

5. City4kids manifesto and Campaign plan 2018/19

Sally Watson set out the context for our City4kids campaign. Back in 2015, as part of the Cycling City Ambition Fund (CCAF) bid, Newcastle City Council illustrated the impact of infrastructure improvements by using cartoons showing people's reconsideration and new motivations.

The CCAF cartoon character is called Suzie. She is a young mum who drives her kids to school but doesn't particularly enjoy the experience. Through community events words spread, and she learns that changes are going to happen in her neighbourhood: protected bike lanes will be installed, and the local high street (Acorn Road) is going to be redesigned to reduce traffic. Even the city centre will be tackled meaning it's going to become possible for her to cycle to work. All this by 2018!

So how are things for Suzie in 2018?

Well things have started to change for the better, but it's still not great out there. Streets don't change overnight. Suzie has changed a few things about the way she travels but routes are not joined up enough for her to make cycling part of her everyday life. She still doesn't cycle to school or to work.

Following the description of Suzie's fictional journey in time and space, Sally showed pictures of the reality. How it is like to cycle to school with children: squeezed against the railings because of the car-dominated road environment. There are still too many cars parking on Acorn Road, jamming in cycles, cyclists at risk of being 'doored', and too much traffic to make it a truly pleasant area for pedestrians and cyclists. The 2-way cycletrack on John Dobson Street is great and enables families to cycle that short part of the journey to town safely but it's still far too easier to drive and park to make cycling the most convenient option. There's no cycling infrastructure on Percy Street, it's a terrifying experience to ride with children there.

Above all, Suzie doesn't understand why things haven't got much better; nobody told her what's going on. What are the plans? The Council hasn't kept her informed. People out there expects things to happen.



After that reality check, Katja took over to introduce our City4kids manifesto. We felt it was important to record people's stories and tell the Council about the findings and outcome. We want discussions about public space to happen and Councillors to be part of the debate. Our main question is how we can see our streets and roads differently – not as a space for cars, driving and parking but as a space for people. The streetscape has to change and the Campaign has, over the years, used many different angles, to kickstart a full debate about our city and its space. We are still awaiting the council to take on the positive and progressive narratives that we have suggested.

Engaging with members and talking to people, including those who don't cycle, has led us to the City4Kids campaign and today we proudly launch a manifesto outlining what needs doing now.

Councillors in particular need to engage and act.

Debating and discussing city space and its design should happen within the council without delay. We want to bring this to the fore, get people together and put some scrutiny into council practices. Newcastle council's CCAF bid had a detailed programme covering 10 years, a comprehensive schedule of schemes as well as an established governance (the Campaign was not part of it, unfortunately). This programme and its management board does not seem to function anymore.

Manchester are leading the way, with the support of Chris Boardman; they have now an impressive new strategy and ambitious plans of cycling infrastructure. Newcastle will be left behind if they don't step to. We also want to see experts to continue to guide and advice our decision-makers and officers. Child-friendly designs are not embedded in current practices. And we shouldn't forget that planners and engineers have had to design roads for cars for decades. Finally, civic society has to be recognised as an essential part of the process of change – it is there to support it.

Learning from 8 years of observing and communicating with the council, the city4kids manifesto has 4 asks:

- 1) **form** a city4kids design & implementation group, to ensure rigour in process, through Health / Equality Impact Assessments, a scrutiny/select committee and reviewing the highway appraisal procedure
- 2) **appoint** an urban design expert to instruct and oversee implementation, and guide and advise the council on matters of community and collaboration
- 3) **seek support** from, and work actively with, civic society groups
- 4) **make sure** council engineers and planners deliver child-friendly designs

The city4kids manifesto sets an agenda for the future – a brighter future for our children.



6. Panel debate

Katja introduced the participants:

- **Cllr Arlene Ainsley**, Labour candidate
- **Alistair Ford**, Green candidate
- **Cllr Gareth Kane**, Liberal Democrat candidate

Katja gave each candidate five minutes to outline their party policies about transport and whether they would support the city4kids Manifesto launched today.

Arlene Ainsley: “I’m one of the Labour Councillors for Jesmond and I have been the Cabinet Member for Transport and Air quality for the last 9 months. Newcastle is the only council in England which has a cabinet member with responsibility for air quality and this shows real political leadership, and how important this issue is for Labour. With all the cars on the road, air quality is really poor especially at various points in the city. Launching the city4kids manifesto today is very timely. Just yesterday with Cllr Stella Postlethwaite, I launched the playstreet scheme in Newcastle. This scheme will enable local people to close their road for free (it can cost up to £1,600 to close a street and funding has been put aside to cover costs during the summer) and let children play. At policy level, the council has recently joined the UNICEF Children and Young People Friendly City programme and a Policy Cabinet meeting will be held next week about it. This is another initiative which shows the Council’s commitment towards this important agenda. Moving to the city4kids manifesto, one point I would disagree with relates to the statement about families leaving the city. The city is a very welcoming place, we are building 20,000 houses, the schools are full and we keep receiving a high volume of applications. In relation to the 4 points in the city4kids manifesto, the council has already a group, the Transport Forum, which engages with civic society, for discussion and debating. Councillors are available to talk to groups. Getting external advice is always difficult due to the austerity measures and budget cuts. But I can assure you that the city planners and engineers are qualified and have expertise. They are also regularly trained. Overall, I’m supportive of the city4kids manifesto, as we already have 3 of your asks in place.”

Katja, for clarity, indicated that the reference to the families leaving the city comes from the Council’s own Local Development Plan.

Gareth Kane: “When the Newcastle Cycling City Campaign started, around 2009, I took a group of senior officers on a bike ride to the station which proved the point that our roads are not safe for cycling. Taking Councillors on a ride is a great way to make them understand what the problems are. I have always been very supportive of quality cycling infrastructure like we have now on John Dobson Street. I initiated the redrafting of the City Cycling Strategy. Without the LibDems, this wouldn’t have



happened. In 2011, I supported the NewCycling's manifesto which got cross council approval. I'm myself a cyclist and I also have 3 primary school kids. If our roads are good and safe for our kids to cycle, then they are good and safe for everybody. I fully support the city4kids manifesto, which is part of the LibDem Transport Manifesto. I want to see the city transform and provide different travel options the same way Dutch cities do. When I went to Amsterdam with my children, the worst part of our trip was to cycle to the Ferry terminal in North Tyneside. To me, the most important thing, which is at the heart of the city4kids manifesto, is that we need to design and build cycling infrastructure for those who don't currently cycle."

Alistair Ford: "I stayed in Groningen, Newcastle's twin city in the Netherlands, when I was 22. I got a bike and started cycling; it was a real eye opener: people in everyday clothes cycling, people of all ages, cycling was not something you do for leisure, it is a genuine means of transport. The whole city was designed so that it is easy and convenient to cycle.

It is quite a contrast in Newcastle.

The transport manifesto for the greens is really well aligned with the city4kids statement. Our transport system is broken, unhealthy, unequal and not sustainable. Streets provide too much space for cars and not enough for cycling and walking. We had enough of new road building, the council has to invest in sustainable neighbourhoods instead. As one of the founders of Space for Gosforth, I know that local people and communities support change. Vision and leadership is what we need in Newcastle, more than money. The city authority needs to show willingness to change for the better."

Katja thanked the panellists and said that she looked forward to reading the party's manifestos in the run up to the local elections. She invited the audience, in particular children and parents to ask questions to the panellists.

A mum asked "why do people drive to school?"

Arlene Ainsley: "Driving to school is a habit. People also have complex lifestyles which means that they have to do lots of trips during the day. It's faster."

People in the audience objected that cycling is faster than driving – referring to a recent study in London. Maybe that's the message to be put forward?

Gareth Kane: "kids walk but cycling is more difficult. My son will go to a different school next year and cycling will be more difficult. We need to build a cycling network that connects key destinations including schools."



Alistair Ford: “People drive because it’s the easiest and safest way to travel. Sometimes it is also the fastest way to get around. Cutting the rat runs and more generally making it more difficult for cars will address the current imbalance. Air pollution is at a tipping point, it has more impact on children and also affects children in cars. That’s an important message to communicate. We need to plan, design and build for alternative modes of transport.”

Another mum: “My son has always walked or cycled to primary school. He will go to another school next year in Heaton, which is further away. As a mum, I am worried about it, I am really not sure I’m going to let it do it on his own. My question is: as a councillor, what would you do to make my son’s trip happen?”

Arlene Ainsley: “I am committed to improving cycling infrastructure and creating the physical environment which enables children to cycle. “Build it and they will come”. We secured £15m from the City Cycling Ambition Fund to provide infrastructure. We provide cycling training too.”

Gareth Kane: “I would also support investment in safe quality cycling infrastructure and the development of a comprehensive network. There are walking buses to school, maybe we could also arrange to take groups of cycling kids to school.”

Alistair Ford: “Safety is a prime concern for parents and rightly so. Only quality infrastructure including protected cycleways can make cycling a safe option for kids. They are low cost measures including temporary infrastructure which can help too.”

Another mum: Roads are conflict zones and as a mum cycling with kids, I get often abused because I’m being seen as a careless parent. How can we break the division and animosity between road users?

Arlene Ainsley: “John Dobson Street is great for cycling; however after building it, we had lots of objection from disability groups, in particular from those representing visually impaired people. The design had made it difficult for blind people to go there and cross the road. Good communication is important, we need to tell people why we need to make changes and ensure they don’t impact on vulnerable road users.”

Gareth Kane: “We are at a tipping point – Cyclists are still a minority and there’s a lot of misunderstanding out there. People who cycle and drivers are very different. In the Netherlands, there is better understanding and more respect, because more people cycle and drivers are also cyclists. Some cities manage it better, it is difficult and it will take time.”



Alistair Ford: “At the moment there is no balance between road users. We need to address this imbalance first. Vision is important and it’s up to the politicians to show leadership. It’s not about catering for current needs and keeping the status quo – politicians are accountable for the needs of the future too.”

7. Update from local groups

Julie Hall said a few words about a new group: Space for Heaton. It originated from a group of parents after new cycling infrastructure was built by the St Teresa School on Heaton Road. This generated lots of hope to get more cycling and walking in their neighbourhood. Space for Heaton is community group about improving streets to make it easier for all, kids, elderly and disabled to walk and cycle. If you live in Heaton and would like to be involved, please get in touch. There is a lot of community support for better infrastructure and the group aims to make this more concrete.

Ed Smith introduced Space for Jesmond. Ed has lived in Jesmond since 2010; it is a good area for social activities and a very active community however space for people is an issue. Space was set up to deal with this, street design, air quality through engagement with the council, councillors and through consultation. The group is gathering momentum and he’s inviting anybody in the audience who lives in Jesmond to get involved (getting in touch via twitter is best: @spaceforjesmond). He is aware that in the local plan, the Council aims to retain families in the city. He knows families who have left Newcastle because of the low-quality urban environment. The group is about reclaiming the streets and enabling people to use other means of transport than the private car. He concluded by fully supporting the city4kids manifesto.

8. Conclusion and cakes

Katja thanked Julie and Ed and all the people who came along today. She noted that it was great to have so many parents and kids joining us today and contributing to the discussion. There are cakes at the back and more time to continue to chat about city4kids!