

# Pedal on Parliament 2016 – what the politicians said



The fifth annual ride by cycling enthusiasts and campaigners took place in the capital at the weekend. The purpose was to call on the Scottish Government to spend 10% on cycling from their transport budget.

The cyclists convened at The Meadows in record numbers from all over the country to cycle to Holyrood by way of the Royal Mile.

Some of the politicians who are currently campaigning to be reelected to Holyrood arrived on bikes too.



Kezia Dugdale leader of Scottish Labour, Willie Rennie of the Scottish Liberal Democrats who had cycled from Fife and Patrick Harvie the co-convener of the Scottish Greens all took their places in the ride with thousands of others.

At the Parliament building in Edinburgh the rally was

addressed by speakers from across the political spectrum but Addressing the crowd, Transport Minister Derek Mackay joked "This is the first time I've ridden in Edinburgh and if re-elected I'll tarmac the cobbled streets." More seriously he said "We will match current record spending on active travel, revisit the CAPS and implement the walking strategy " He reaffirmed the government's vision of 10% of journeys by bike by 2020

Speaking ahead of the event, Sarah Boyack said, "A Labour Scottish Government will put cycling back on the agenda. We know investing in cycling is investing in public health and the environment, making our town and cities cleaner and more active. We need sustained year on year investment nationally and locally to create the safer routes that will encourage more people to cycle." At the parliament she said "10% of journeys cannot be reached without investment – Scottish Labour will invest in health and active spending and integrated transport – we will bring more space for cycling in our towns and cities. We need to invest right across our transport networks -including in active travel. We will work towards 10% of funding for active travel"

For the Liberal Democrats, Willie Rennie said, "I want to make a firm commitment for the Lib Dems of an extra £20million of spending on active travel to meet that 10% of journeys by bike because it's not enough now. We can make a change now and reach that target. "

Speaking for the Conservatives, Miles Briggs referred to images of a taxi driver assaulting a cyclist and said, "We need to develop a safe network for all road users be they on two or four wheels. Scottish Conservatives want to see investment in active travel and the development of at least one segregated cycle route in each Scottish city – linking outer city limits to the city centre. At this election we are proposing a £100 million roads maintenance fund. Edinburgh has some of the worse roads in Scotland and it is time for action

to make our roads safe. There is cross-party consensus that we need to see more investment in cycling.”

For the Greens, Alison Johnston said “It’s fabulous to see so many people here today – but isn’t it frustrating that we have to keep campaigning for the most affordable democratic form of transport there is – Scotland must do better and we need clear leadership.” She called for presumed liability and announced that the Green party would invest 10% of the transport budget on cycling and walking which is essential if we’re remotely serious about making Scotland a country where cycling is the norm for short journeys. By making cycling and walking the easy options we can cut air pollution and improve public health. Greens want 20mph zones rolled out in residential areas and we have a manifesto commitment to presumed liability. The ongoing obsession with massive new road projects stops us developing an equitable transport system fit for now and the future.”

Denise Marshall, Pedal on Parliament organiser and new mother closed the speeches explained how she loved to cycle with her toddler but found the roads terrifying, calling for roads designed with people in mind, not speeding cars. “The funding increases we’ve seen are not enough – every day I experience close passes because people are human – we need to follow Sweden and introduce a goal of no deaths on the roads. ”