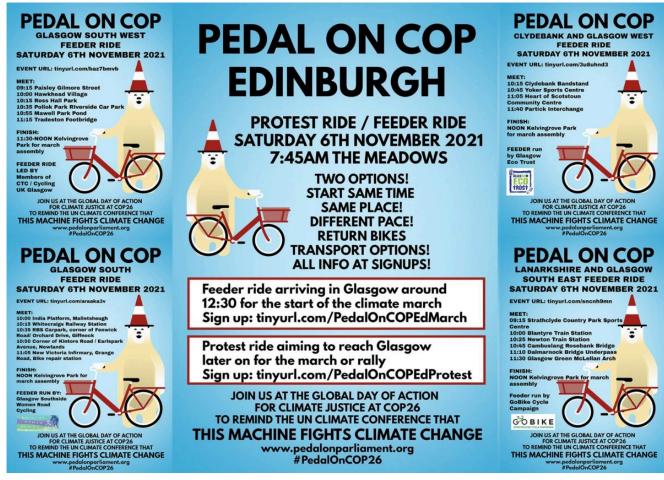
COP26 — Cycling on COP from all over Scotland on Saturday #PedalOnCOP26

A grassroots protest bike ride will set off from Edinburgh on Saturday morning, with some of the group aiming to reach Glasgow to join the march planned for the afternoon.

Cyclists will take an important message to the world's politicians: This Machine Fights Climate Change.

Over three hundred cyclists will leave the Meadows at 8 o'clock, covering 45 miles by road to demand action now to transform Scotland into a cycle-friendly country. Some will go a little faster than others. Some feeder rides already began cycling earlier this week, moving ever closer to Glasgow to arrive in time for Saturday. So far there has been precious little chat about cycling at COP26 with most of the discussion around electric cars as a viable alternative for everyday transport. The cyclists want to highlight that a bike — devised only 200 years ago — is the best option for those who can cycle, thus saving tens of thousands of motoring miles with the attendant congestion and pollution.



@cocteautriplets Andy Arthur designed the cycling polar bear for Pedal on Parliament

Organised mainly by <u>Pedal on Parliament</u> and <u>Edinburgh Critical Mass</u>, the campaign has also been promoted by Cycling UK (see their publication below). Several rides have been organised from points all over the UK and will rendezvous in Glasgow for a Global Day of Action for Climate Justice. There the cyclists will form part of the Cycling and Sustainable Transport bloc on the march.



PHOTO courtesy of Cycling UK

Under the banner This machine fights climate change", the cyclists — including disabled riders — will join thousands of others at a rally in Glasgow Green where they will walk with their bikes and take part in the march. Organised by the COP26 Coalition, the rally will gather groups, ranging from indigenous peoples to youth climate strikers, to press home the case for global climate justice as world leaders wrangle over cuts to emissions at the conference.

The organisers expect families, tandems with visually-impaired riders (VIE Velo), and cyclists of all ages and fitness levels who have signed up.

Organiser Amaya Bañuelos Marco said: "This conference is probably the last chance we have to stop climate breakdown. Many people feel desperate about the situation, but a massive shift away from cars and towards active travel is a really easy and achievable tool in the fight against climate change.

"Not everyone can come to Glasgow but most people could manage short everyday journeys by bike instead of the car, especially if there are good cycle paths and safe streets. We think there's too much emphasis by governments on electric vehicles instead of investing in cycling, walking and public transport, which have so many other benefits beyond cutting emissions. The Dutch, for example, have a cycling paradise, not because the country is flat but because of years of local campaigning and great urban planning."

Ride participant Katherine said: "I was knocked off my bike by a van earlier this year and it's made me more nervous of traffic when out cycling, but it's my way to get from A to B. The weather will be challenging in November and it's a long ride but it's such an important message. I hope it inspires our leaders to take cycling more seriously instead of treating it only as a leisure activity. It's not just about climate change — cycling reduces local pollution, noise pollution, helps create safer streets and is good for our mental and physical health."

The group invite everyone to join them, even for sections of the ride such as Edinburgh to Broxburn or Airdrie to Glasgow and they encourage anyone who sees them on the road to give them a wave and some encouragement as they pass.

There will be stewards guiding the route, and a local bike shop providing support with a cargo bike full of tools. Riders are asked to bring a spare inner tube or puncture repair kit, waterproof clothes and a packed lunch plus plenty of snacks.

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Pedal on Parliament takes place each year mainly in the Scottish capital, but with other rides which have developed over the years, to encourage more spending on cycling infrastructure PHOTO ©2013 The Edinburgh Reporter

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