



MAYNOOTH CYCLING CAMPAIGN NOTES

February 2019



Carton Avenue

The latest proposal from the Carton Avenue Preservation Society is to look for a reduction in the width of the “bridge” (which is really a gateway) from 4m to 2m. This isn't going to happen as their proposal will endanger pedestrians and cyclists. A bridge is a link between different parts whereas a gateway marks the border between two areas.

Political Lobby Day - Rise for Climate, Jobs and Justice

On 5th December, there was a politician lobby day in Buswells Hotel organised by Stop Climate Chaos (SCC). Representatives from several Kildare groups including Kildare Environment Network, Trocáire, Laudato Si as well as Maynooth Cycling Campaign came together to lobby our political representatives in the Dáil. The North Kildare TDs, Bernard Durkan and James Lawless attended. Frank O'Rourke was occupied with a committee in the Dáil but sent his PA and Catherine Murphy was indisposed but sent her apologies. SCC asked for Deputies to sign a letter calling on Richard Bruton, the new Minister of Communications, Climate Change and Environment to take measures to address increasing carbon emissions.

Motion on Cycling

Later that month, on the 20th December, Robert Troy, the Fianna Fáil spokesperson on Transport, introduced a motion on cycling in the Dáil and cycling campaigners including Maynooth Cycling Campaign were invited to the public gallery to witness the debate. The motion was a strongly worded critique of current cycling policy and lack of action by the Minister for Transport. Shane Ross claimed that he was already carrying out most of the measures outlined in the motion but argued against it because of the criticism of government. Cycling campaigners would beg to differ. There were also speakers in favour of the motion from Sinn Féin, the Labour Party, the Green Party and People before Profit. It was decided to put off a vote until after the recess in order to see if there could be agreement on an amended motion between government and the Fianna Fáil opposition.

On Thursday 17th January, as there had been no agreement, the motion with an amendment by the Green Party calling on the government to allocate 10% of the transport budget to cycling was carried. The vote is non-binding on the government but indicates a groundswell of support for cycling in the Dáil. We shall wait to see how the Minister reacts to it. Meanwhile the *#Allocate4Cycling* campaign will continue.

Growing Protest over Climate Change

Climate change protests are increasing world-wide and in Ireland.

On the 19th January, a Children's Rally for Climate Action gathered at the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, where some of the young representatives posted a symbolic message of concern to Minister Richard Bruton.

Then on 22nd January the government was in the dock at the Four Courts over their failure of the National Mitigation Plan to meet Ireland's commitment to reduce carbon emissions. This follows similar court cases in the Netherlands where environmentalists took the government to court and won.

Increase in Cyclist Fatalities

In January, the RSA and the government issued their customary report on road fatalities for the previous year. The report stated that the number of cyclist fatalities relative to the previous year had fallen. While this was true, the report failed to point out that the trend in cyclist fatalities has been increasing since 2011. In Kildare, there were 4 roads fatalities including 1 cyclist. Although only 3% of Kildare journeys are by bike, cycling makes up 25% of road fatalities.

Minimum Passing Distance Legislation (MPDL)

Early last year, in response to increasing cycle fatalities and pressure from cyclists, Minister Shane Ross announced that that he would introduce legislation to make illegal the close passing of cyclists by motorists. Some months later, Minister Ross disclosed that the attorney general had reservations about the enforcement of the proposed legislation although it has been introduced in a number of countries. Minister Ross has recently confirmed that he would be introducing alternative legislation to make the dangerous passing of cyclists a specific offence. Cyclists will wait to see the outcome.

MEPs Vote to Upgrade Rail Passenger Rights

Last October the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism (TRAN) Committee voted to support a proposal to introduce a **minimum** of eight bicycle spaces on all new and refurbished European trains.

In November, the European Parliament backed the proposal that will entitle passengers to take bicycles on board all trains, including on high-speed, long distance, cross-border and local services. Over to you Irish Rail!

Maynooth Cycling Campaign is a non-party political cycling advocacy group. Further information on meetings and activities is available on our website.

We are affiliated to Cyclist.ie, the Irish Cyclist Advocacy Network and through it to the European Cycling Federation.