



MAYNOOTH CYCLING CAMPAIGN NOTES

May 2019



Local Elections (May 2019)

Election time is an opportunity by cycle campaigners to reassess progress and to set out new goals for the future. From earlier this year, we identified one glaring omission in Kildare County Council's proposals for Maynooth. That concerns the failure to provide for cycling facilities to the two primary schools on the Celbridge Road. Planning for the first of these school commenced nearly twenty years ago with little consideration given to how children would cycle to the schools.

As it turned out, draft plans have recently been drawn up to provide cycle facilities on the Celbridge Road and we are grateful to Cllr. Tim Durkan for informing us. However, the use of the terms "provide" and "cycle facilities" are somewhat arbitrary. The proposed cycle track does not connect with the Straffan Road cycle track and doesn't extend as far as either of the two schools. It is also discontinuous at Greenfield Park and its effective width is 1.5m which puts it in the category of low quality. The County Council seems to think that cyclists have need to travel in one direction only as the cycle track is unidirectional. Overall, it is an appalling design and once again the council is "ticking the box" for cycling but doing nothing to enable people who want to cycle.

Maynooth Cycling Campaign proposes to lobby prospective councillors for 2m effective width of cycle tracks on either side of the road. The width of the proposed cross-section is 16m compared to the existing cross-section width of approximately 14.1m. Most of the additional space required is available or can be purchased by CPO but it is accepted that close to the junction with the Straffan Road a pinch point does exist which will require an imaginative solution. For some twenty years, Kildare County Council has been providing low quality cycle infrastructure which has had negligible impact on levels of cycling. If it continues to provide such quality, there will be negligible change in the next twenty years.

It is also proposed to lobby prospective councillors for the Maynooth Municipal District on their support for *Cycling for All* and to publish their names in due course. Only one Kildare councillor, Cllr. Pdraig McEvoy, is currently signed up but he will not be running for the Maynooth District.

(Note – Details of existing and proposed cross-sections on the Celbridge Road are available on our website here.)

Government Must Prioritise Active Travel

On 17th April, Maynooth Cycling Campaign through its membership of Cyclist.ie, the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network, and in collaboration with the Irish Heart Foundation, the Irish Cancer Society, Diabetes Ireland, Irish Doctors for the Environment, the Association for Health Promotion Ireland and the Irish Pedestrian Network, presented an open letter to An Taoiseach and Ministers calling on the

Government to ensure **that active travel forms an integral part of the All-of-Government Climate Plan.**

The National Physical Activity Plan [Get Ireland Active](#) recognises the benefits of the natural and built environment in promoting active travel and lists actions which would enable increased physical activity. These include walking and cycling strategies and the planning, development and design of towns and cities. Despite the clear awareness of the link between physical activity and the built environment, Active Travel is not being prioritised. As an example, the present level of transport funding allocated to cycling is less than 2%. This needs to increase to meet the United Nations Environment Programme recommended levels of at least 10%, and with at least 20% recommended for cycling and walking.

It is widely acknowledged that the government is not meeting its climate targets. Transport emissions in particular continue to rise. Insufficient thought has been given to the extent to which the take-up of active travel can contribute to emissions reduction. Furthermore the Transition Statement 2018, which sets out a path towards a carbon free future, contains no targets acknowledging that walking and cycling are valid means of transport related climate action.

Healthy Ireland surveys confirm that the average Irish adult is not meeting the target of a minimum of 150 minutes of physical activity per week and concerns about the results of inactivity on the health of Irish children are growing.

Colm Ryder, Chair of Cyclist.ie, said “When exercise is seen as an ‘extra’ that has to be fitted into busy lives on top of work, commuting, caring and other family responsibilities, it is easy to neglect. On the other hand, walking or cycling to work, school, college, shopping or to social activities offers people the opportunity to integrate physical activity into their day-to-day lives”.

The publication of the All-of-Government Climate Plan which is due shortly after Easter will reveal how serious the government is.

Cyclist.ie Council Meeting

Maynooth Cycling Campaign recently hosted the bi-annual Council meeting of Cyclist.ie in Maynooth University. Sixteen representatives from cyclist campaign groups from around the country met to discuss progress on existing campaigns and to plan for the future especially in the light of pending local and European elections. We would like to thank Dr. Joe Larragy of Maynooth University who treated the gathering to a talk on Maynooth Green Campus.

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.