



# MAYNOOTH CYCLING CAMPAIGN NOTES August 2019



## Velo-City 2019

Well Velo-City 2019 has come and gone. There is so much which could be said about the conference itself but that is for another time.

One of the things of note around the conference was the comments on Twitter of visitors - cycling activists, politicians, planners, engineers - about the quality of cycling infrastructure provided by Dublin City.

Klaus Bondam, CEO of The Danish Cyclists' Federation, former deputy mayor of Copenhagen and former MEP with the Liberal group in the European Parliament criticised Dublin City Council's lack of commitment to new safe segregated bicycle [infrastructure] and added that *"the physical absence of Dublin and Irish high-level politicians except at photo opp's [sic] has been noticed"*. This was a reference to Minister Shane Ross's brief appearance at Velo-City at which he said how important the conference was but disappeared after the opening, never to be seen again. Klaus Bondam said that *"Several .... European mayors have attended for several days"*.

One of the most influential international commentators on cycling, Mark Wagenbuur of the Bicycle Dutch blog, wrote

*I couldn't remember when I last felt afraid on my bicycle. Not just anxious, but genuinely fearing for my life. I do now, after I cycled in Dublin last week. ....  
Cycling in Dublin made me feel 12 again, in a bad way. It reminded me of what traffic was like in the Netherlands in the late 1970s, when cycling and cycling safety were at an all time low.*

Brian Salmon from the UK tweeted *"Cycled in 30+ cities, mostly in Europe. Dublin definitely the worst for safe cycle provision"*.

There were loads of other comments - some by people who had attended Velo-City when it was previously held in Dublin in 2005 and who were disappointed at the lack of progress since then. Such comments were no surprise to Irish cycling campaigners who have been making the same points for more than 10 years and who have been repeatedly ignored by central and local government.

## **Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Change**

Three of the leading speakers were invited to address the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Change - Dr. Rachel Aldred of the University of Westminster, Brian Deegan of Urban Movement (Consulting Engineer) and of the European Cycling Federation. All of them gave an impressive presentation and answered questions from the committee members. The most memorable contribution was from Brian Deegan who informed the committee that

*“Ireland is spending €3 billion a year to subsidise cars. This is not what car owners are paying in taxes; this is the external cost for everybody. Every man, woman and child in Ireland is paying €650 per year to subsidise cars.”*

## **Celbridge Road**

*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*