

The newsletter of the Islington Cyclists' Action Group

740 Members

www.icag.org.uk

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ISLINGTON CYCLISTS VOTE WITH THEIR WHEELS!

Saturday 10th May saw some fifty ICAG supporters from all wards in Islington, take to the streets to cycle a 10km ride from the Sobell Centre, taking in six of the major "asks" from ICAG, that focus on making streets that are safe and inviting for everyone to cycle, and ending at the Town Hall. The "Little Ride" visited Nags Head, Drayton Park, Highbury Corner, Bunhill Row, and Clerkenwell Boulevard.



In the run-up to the local elections, the "Little Ride" was the climax in our 3-month #space4cycling campaign which focuses on dangerous or difficult to cycle routes. The campaign has attracted considerable support and media focus as well as sufficiently inspiring several ICAG supporters and residents, to write to Islington Labour to urge them to support measures in their wards and improve their cycling record. You can find a few here:

<http://www.icag.org.uk/2014/letterstoislingtonlabour/>

The Little Ride was followed a week later by the LCC "Big Ride" from Park Lane to Embankment with thousands of cyclists from all over London and from as far as Cambridge, Coventry, and even Wales. ICAG led a feeder ride of cyclists from Highbury Fields to join the main group.

LABOUR ENJOYS LANDSLIDE WIN, BUT WILL THEY FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THEIR PROMISES ON "ASKS"?

In this month's local elections, Labour party candidates won 47 out of 48 seats in Islington, giving them an outright majority at the council. ICAG congratulates Labour but has to ask:

"Will they follow through with their support for the borough "asks"?" In contrast, the Green Party voiced their total support for the #space4cycling campaign and both they and the Lib-Dem candidates all said "yes" to our "asks" – a bigger support than even our colleagues in Hackney could generate! Unfortunately, only half of Labour candidates supported cycling and it would appear that Labour in Islington is bucking the party line, expressed by Valerie Shawcross, Deputy Chair of the Transport Committee for the GLA when she said that Labour gave 100% support to #Space4Cycling.



If you have followed the campaign in Islington, you will know that Labour's position was ambiguous. A letter from Executive Member, Cllr Andy Hull, was criticized by ICAG supporters for being too pro-cars and motorists, and showing too much concern for cycling schemes that displace traffic and not enough concern for poor air quality, increasing obesity, access to low cost transport, and physical dangers to pedestrians and cyclists.

It is clear from the many responses from ICAG supporters' to Cllr Hull's letter, that it influenced their vote on 22nd May.

You can follow the election debate on the ICAG Campaign blog <http://www.icag.org.uk/2014/space4cycling-pledges/>

The #space4cycling campaign is not over in Islington nor in the capital as a whole. We fight on!

AIR POLLUTION: THE INVISIBLE KILLER

The problem:

London is one of the most polluted cities in Europe. The problem with London's air pollution is that it's very dangerous, but we can't see it and we can hardly smell it, so it is easy to not be aware of its presence, or effects, on our health.

Islington is particularly affected as its main road traffic transits the heart of our densely populated borough via the A1, and its south east quarter is part of the London Congestion Charge Zone. Air pollution is present in all parts of our borough, and trapped at building height. Our lack of green spaces also makes it difficult to allow harmful particles to disperse or to avoid them. Concentrations in the air are made up of primary particles (PM10) and smaller particles (PM2.5). The biggest sources of PM10 are stationary vehicles and road transport, and particles from tyre and brake wear. Fine particles in the air are the most harmful to our health and have a disproportionate effect on vulnerable people, such as children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing heart and lung conditions. Short and long term health effects include respiratory and cardiovascular illness and even death.

In 2008, the Institute of Medicine calculated that 100 deaths were attributable to exposure to PM2.5 in Islington.



"Air pollution is a hugely neglected issue that has health implications for all cyclists, as we are so directly exposed to traffic pollution." Mustafa Arif, LCC Board member

The exposure of cyclists to particulate matter and its danger are obvious. Until recently, it was thought that if you wore a mask while cycling this would prevent particles from entering the lungs. However, a PhD student now working with Islington, has recently shown that PM2.5 can still pass through a mask, and find its way deep into the lungs.

How big is the problem?

The borough's strategy tracks that of the Mayor's 2010 strategy, implemented as a statutory document. Shaping development includes making the transport systems safer and more efficient, encouraging modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport. Worryingly, target levels have been overshot year by year by most boroughs including Islington, and now London faces EU fines of £300million. Sustrans recently gave evidence to the GLA, showing that London's air pollution levels are frequently running at 75% more than European safe levels.

What should we be doing to reduce air pollution?

Write to Judith@getmore.so

Islington's response:

Islington has been monitoring pollution to manage air quality, for 20 years. There are two sites: one at Nag's Head and one at Gillespie Park. Kings College London collect, analyse and report on results via the London Air Quality Network (LAQN) website www.londonair.org.uk Islington lead on the London wide AirTEXT service, which provides pollution forecasts via mobile phone. In collaboration with the GLA, Sustrans and other boroughs, Islington has been enrolling Air Quality Champions. These are individuals and groups from across Islington who are working with the Council to implement measures to improve local areas, and reduce emissions.

Activities include:

- Free cargo bike trials
- Air Quality Awareness Packs distributed (by bike and on foot!) to pharmacies
- Global Footsteps Challenge
- Air Aware events

The strategy can be viewed at www.islington.gov.uk/airqualitystrategy

But is it enough to use "Citizen Science" and volunteers to address an issue, which threatens the well-being of all residents, as well as our economy?

Perhaps we should be much more proactive. How about this manifesto to attack air pollution and get more people cycling, proposed by Green party candidate for Tower Hamlets, Chris Smith:

- Priority for cyclists & pedestrians at all road junctions
- Pollution masks for children
- Smog Alerts in Schools
- Massive Tree planting & allotments programme
- Introduction of secure bicycle parking
- Enforcement of 'no idling' laws to stop road users polluting whilst parked
- Move lorry deliveries to night-time for multinational retailers.
- Ban HGVs from all narrow roads
- 'Gas Guzzler' charge for the most polluting vehicles
- A Pay as you Drive Scheme
- Expansion of Cycle Training
- Replace 'blue highway' cycle lanes with segregated road space
- Develop a London wide greenway walking and cycling
- Introduction of Smart Road technology to adapt to conditions minute by minute

Or how about this for a solution?

MAKE ISLINGTON A DIESEL-FREE BOROUGH PLEA TO NEW COUNCIL



Greg Foxsmith, right, receives his award from Simon Birkett.

A NEWLY-elected Islington Council must appoint an air quality officer to monitor pollution as a matter of urgency and make plans to declare a diesel-free borough. This was the view voiced by former Independent councillor Greg Foxsmith during the presentation of a special award by pressure group Clean Air London for his work on pollution. Mr Foxsmith, who stood down as a councillor this week, believes that air pollution is the biggest threat to the health of borough residents, particularly children. He was being presented with the award by Simon Birkett, founder and director of the group, for his work in chairing the borough's air quality scrutiny committee. Cllr Foxsmith said: "With all the knowledge we now have about the insidious effects of

diesel particles on the lungs I suspect we will need to treat air pollution in the same way as we treated smoking 15 years ago. "It's going to mean some radical actions by a new council, including schemes to stop people driving children to school. As well as a designated officer to deal with the problem we might need to say to the Mayor of London: 'We don't want your polluting diesel buses and taxis coming into our borough.'"

Islington Tribune, 23 May 2014

Cycle Workshop Dates

Place: Sunnyside Ecology Gardens corner of Sunnyside Rd and Hazelville Rd, N19 (off Hornsey Rise)

Date: 4th Wednesday of each month (except August & December)

Time: 7 – 9.30 p.m.

Cost: £1 (50p unwaged) per session

C Adrian Williams

T 07810 211 902

ICAG monthly meeting

If you've something to say about cycling in Islington, or just want to listen, come along to the ICAG monthly meeting.

Place: Islington Town Hall

Date: 2nd Wednesday every month

Time: 7.30-9.30 pm

C Alison Dines

T 020 7226 7012

E alisondines@clara.co.uk

Agenda items for meetings should reach Alison Dines by the Saturday before the meeting.

Reporting Potholes

In Islington, phone 020 7527 2000 or go to islington.gov.uk and click on report a street problem. Or try fixmystreet.com Rest of London, phone 0845 305 1234 or go to www.tfl.gov.uk, click on road users, then on report a street fault.

Follow us...

We have a Facebook page; go to your page and type in Islington Cyclists Action Group. And you can follow us on Twitter @IslingtonCycle

If you wish to discuss any of the topics covered in Islington Cyclist in more detail then why not subscribe to the ICAG email list? If you would like to participate, send an email to icag-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

We have another yahoo group concerned mainly with the engineering projects that we are being consulted about. If you want to join this one send an email to: icag-eng-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Contribute to Islington Cyclist

Please send articles/images to judith@getmore.so

Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of ICAG.

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