



## MAYNOOTH CYCLING CAMPAIGN NOTES – July 2017



### **Bikeweek 2017**

After 6 years of organising Bikeweek events, Maynooth Cycling Campaign was not invited to participate in Bikeweek 2017 and consequently received no funding for advertising events. (For the first time too, schools in Maynooth and Celbridge received no funding either.) Nevertheless, we decided to go ahead with our two events as scheduled. For the Heritage Tour, we travelled to Leixlip for a trail developed by Leixlip Tidy Towns. The second event was a cycle along the Royal Canal exploring the biodiversity of the canal and towpath. Due to lack of advertising, attendances were significantly down on previous years.

### **14 Year Old Cyclist Seriously Injured near Monasterevin**

There was more bad news for cycling with the collision of a 14 year old boy and a jeep outside Monasterevin. Maynooth Cycling Campaign is appalled at several reports in the media including *Kildare Now* which described the incident as the cyclist being *knocked from his bike when he collided with a jeep on the road*. We have no information on who or what was at fault but the report in *Kildare Now* implied that the cyclist was at fault and follows a familiar pattern where vulnerable road users – be they cyclists or pedestrians – are scapegoated for ‘accidents’ with motorised vehicles. Other reports even included the fact that the driver of the jeep was unhurt, which – considering that the incident involved a jeep and a child - was hardly news!

### **Census 2016 and Commuting**

The results of Census 2016 on commuting patterns were published recently and revealed a 4.5% annual increase in cycling between 2011 and 2016. This was a lot more modest than the spin of 42% increase between 2011 and 2016 which appeared in some media reports and contrasts with figures released by the UK government which showed a 70% increase in six months in usage of the high quality London Superhighways.

The 4.5% increase reflects not only the failure of the political establishment to provide for cycling in terms of quality of infrastructure but also low funding. To impact on cycling levels, funding must be at a minimum level of €10 per person per year whereas the actual level of funding is closer to €1.50 per person. A succession of questions in the Dáil by TDs, in particular by Catherine Murphy, has attempted to uncover the level of funding but the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has continually refused to answer the questions and instead has fobbed off deputies with a confusing stream of irrelevant figures.

## **Velo-City Conference 2017**

Some good news at last! The Velo-City Conference 2017 recently took place in Arnhem-Nejmegen in the Netherlands and brought together 1500 delegates from over 80 countries to discuss all matters related to the everyday cycling. Topics included health, happiness, medical research, infrastructure, tourism and Bikonomics. The theme of the conference was the Freedom of Cycling and referred in particular to the freedom of mobility by children in the Netherlands. This is in stark contrast to the situation in Ireland where children are denied the option of cycling due to lack of high quality infrastructure with the result that the majority are chauffeured to school, to sports and to after school activities which impacts on their health and results in traffic congestion. In 2019, Velo-City will be in Dublin.

## **Kildare Cycle Forum**

The Kildare Cycle Forum (perhaps it should be called the Non-Cycling Forum) held it second meeting again without any representatives from cycling advocacy groups. The meetings are in secret so it is not known if the Forum discusses one big secret or a number of little secrets.

*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.*