



## Cyclist.ie in 2017 – Progressing the Cycling Agenda

### Introduction

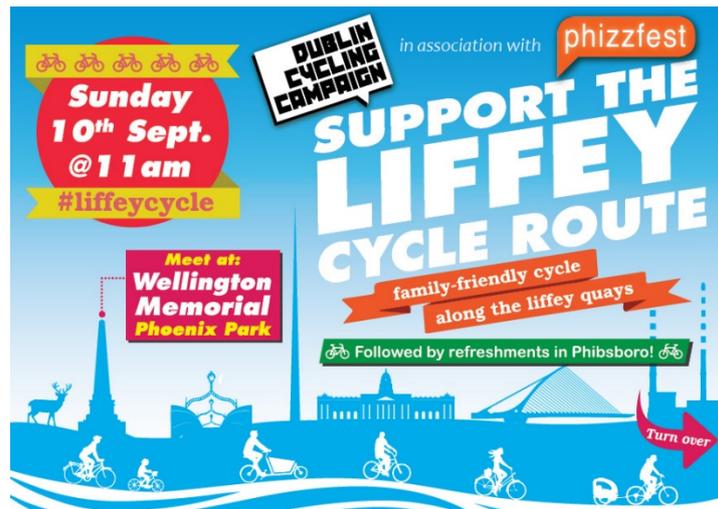
Cyclist.ie – the Irish Cycling Advocacy Network has had another busy year in 2017. Thanks to the support of our members, our network and Cycling Ireland, our campaigning work has continued at pace at local, national and international levels – and the impact of our work on the bicycle’s role in transportation and recreation is beginning to bear fruit.

Cyclist.ie is the all-island network of cycling advocacy organisations ([www.cyclist.ie](http://www.cyclist.ie)) and is the member for Ireland of the European Cyclists’ Federation ([www.ecf.com](http://www.ecf.com)). The network has grown steadily in 2017 to include new groups such as Cycling Without Age (<http://cyclist.ie/2017/03/cycling-without-age/>) and Cork Cycling Festival (<http://corkcyclingfestival.com/>). Equally, existing groups such as Limerick Cycling Campaign (<https://limerickcycling.wordpress.com/>) are growing rapidly and are making a visible impact. Meanwhile, Dublin Cycling Campaign, DCC (<http://www.dublincycling.ie/>), one of the lead members of Cyclist.ie, has had one of its busiest years ever as many crucial cycling related campaigns are reaching decision-making points in Dublin.

### Projects

One of our biggest campaigns in 2017 was on the Liffey Cycle Route. Creating a safe and attractive river-side cycle route is a top priority for Dublin as it will link pivotally important destinations such as Heuston Station and Phoenix Park to the city centre and to the evolving Grand Canal, Royal Canal and Dodder Cycle Routes. Such a route will also connect to the S2S (Sutton to Sandycove) coastal facility and in 2017 we saw the opening of the long awaited section at Bull Island (see <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/missing-link-in-dublin-bay-cycle-path-opens-in-clontarf-1.3072654>) after many years of campaigning work. The construction of a two-way riverside cycling route will be an iconic statement for Ireland’s capital city and for Ireland overall, and will lead the way for other towns and cities to follow suit.

The latest position with the Liffey Cycle Route is that the designs are being fully reviewed by the NTA (National Transport Authority) as Dublin City Council had reached a ‘log jam’ on consultations and ideas. Cyclist.ie will be keeping the pressure on the NTA to ensure that this review happens quickly and that a high quality scheme is put in place ASAP. In the meantime, Cyclist.ie will continue to mobilise the cycling community in highlighting the issues, as we did throughout 2017. Below is a sample flyer for the last mass cycle in support of the Liffey Cycle Route which attracted thousands of cyclists and generated lots of positive media coverage for cycling.



Further work in the capital has focused on making sure that the planned College Green pedestrianised space is cycling friendly and that a safe and high quality cycle route from Clontarf to the City Centre is implemented. While the above campaigning work is firmly focused on the capital, successes in Dublin City will have positive ripple effects throughout the country; if it is possible to introduce high quality cycling schemes in a busy congested city, then it is possible to do so in built-up areas all around Ireland.

Cyclist.ie has also submitted approximately 60 written submissions to local authorities and government agencies on planned cycling related schemes in 2017. These span from Cork to Donegal and from Galway to Kildare, as well as the many Dublin County schemes. These carefully researched submissions are vital in ensuring that the designs of schemes are of a high quality and safe, and so that standards are adhered to – basic pre-requisites to ensure that the Irish cycling community can grow and prosper. One recent noteworthy success is the decision by An Bord Pleanála to agree to the construction of a new cycling bridge across the Shannon at Athlone - <http://www.dublincycling.com/cycling/great-news-approval-given-cycle-pedestrian-bridge-over-shannon-athlone>. This iconic project will be a vital link in the Dublin to Galway cycle route (part of the EuroVelo 'Capitals' Route #2) and is welcomed by all cyclists.

### **Funding for Cycling and National Level Advocacy**

At a national level, Cyclist.ie has met the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Shane Ross TD, and has had regular engagements with senior officials in the main government departments and agencies with roles in transportation, road safety and public health. These included scheduled meetings with the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and An Garda Síochána. In particular, the issue of increased tragic cycling road deaths was raised on the national agenda, and it has prompted greater emphasis by the RSA and other agencies on the issue of cycle safety. National measures are being introduced on driver alcohol levels, and national publicity campaigns are now being run by the RSA highlighting the need for drivers to be aware of cyclists on the road. The particular campaign on Minimum Passing Distance Legislation (MPDL), which has been fronted by Phil Skelton – a member of Cyclist.ie and a Cycling Ireland, has gained official recognition by government ministers and is being actively promoted by the RSA to drivers.

Great strides have also been made in the realm of slower and safer urban speed limits. These have been supported by Minister Shane Ross' department and have been monitored closely by our sister organisation Love30 (<http://www.love30.ie/>). These new lower speed limits will undoubtedly lead

to greater freedom and safety of movement for cyclists. A number of on-street campaigns have also been run on this issue. The photograph below, taken during the UN Road Safety Week in May last, illustrates the engagement of politicians with this initiative.



Cyclist.ie also made a major costed submission to the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport proposing how the allocation of greater funding for cycling might be made in the coming years. This was shared with our colleagues in Cycling Ireland and, judging from initial budget responses, we expect that this will bear fruit in the coming years. We are also active in the 'Stop Climate Chaos' coalition (<https://www.stopclimatechaos.ie/>), in pushing for greater recognition of the need for the government to make *major changes* in its allocation of funding within the transport sector. This will hopefully result in increased funding for further cycling initiatives.

Other initiatives, via Cycling Ireland and supported by funding from Healthy Ireland, are advancing such as the DEIS areas Cycling Pilot Project, and the upcoming Get Ireland Cycling proposal will be critical in leading to the growth in cycling in the coming years. These initiatives are being matched by the new courses run by Sport Ireland and piloted with the help of Cyclist.ie, to train local authority, national agency, and community activists, in planning for cycling – see [http://www.irishtrails.ie/Education\\_Training/Recreational\\_Cycle\\_Route\\_Planning\\_Development/](http://www.irishtrails.ie/Education_Training/Recreational_Cycle_Route_Planning_Development/). This will ensure that more decision makers are better equipped to make the right decisions on cycling projects in the future.

These national level engagements were matched throughout 2017 with constructive input into local authorities' Transportation *Strategic Policy Committees* and *Cycling Forums*. Much of this 'behind the scenes' work often goes unnoticed by everyday cyclists, but is essential in reshaping the attitudes and (spending) priorities of senior officials and politicians. Additionally, Cyclist.ie and Dublin Cycling Campaign ran several street level mass protests to draw attention to the need for far greater investment in cycling by central government. These received widespread media coverage and are helping to keep the concerns of everyday cyclists (and potential cyclists!) to the fore.

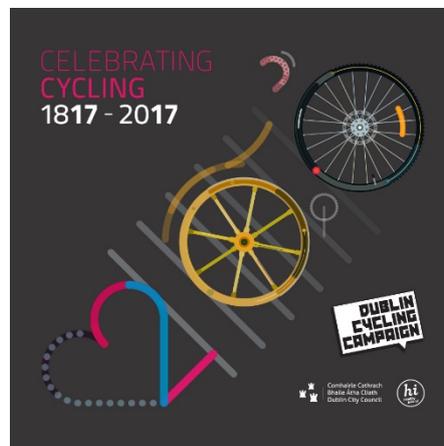
### International Links

At an international level, Cyclist.ie adds its weight to the work of the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) with Dr. Damien Ó Tuama, National Cycling Coordinator with Cyclist.ie, a member of the board of ECF. Amongst other work, ECF is advocating for the EU to adopt an EU cycling strategy (currently the EU has none) so that cycling is recognised in the many strands of the EU's work and hence can

receive a greater share of transport funding. See [https://ecf.com/eu\\_cycling\\_strategy](https://ecf.com/eu_cycling_strategy). ECF also runs the hugely successful and largest cycling conference in the world, *Velo-city* - <https://www.velo-city2017.com/>. Cyclist.ie was instrumental in partnering with Dublin City Council to win the bid to host this conference in Dublin in 2019. Planning meetings are ongoing on this huge venture. Once again, this will highlight the need to grow cycling and will lead to greater funding here in Ireland.

## 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Bicycle

This year is particularly special for cycling, as we formally recognise and celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of the bicycle (<http://www.dublincycling.ie/cycling/2017-%E2%80%93-lets-make-it-year-bicycle>). This celebration has been recognised throughout the cycling world and we in Cyclist.ie and Dublin Cycling Campaign marked it by commissioning a bespoke logo – see below - which is free to air and usable by any organisation wishing to recognise this momentous birthday. We also celebrated this birthday with a striking cycling presence at this year's St Patrick's Day Parade.



## Conclusion

As can be seen from this short synopsis of Cyclist.ie activities in 2017, much is moving forward with cycling in Ireland. The joint work of Cyclist.ie with Cycling Ireland on a variety of issues is important and the great work of local volunteers within both organisations is testimony to the strength of the cycling community. We need to continue and consolidate this cooperation to ensure that the momentum is not lost, and we look forward to future years of good news for cycling.

Cyclist.ie itself looks forward to 2018 when we will celebrate our own 10<sup>th</sup> birthday – and when Dublin Cycling Campaign will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. We look forward to another year of successful campaigning and to close collaborations with Cycling Ireland as well as An Taisce, Love 30 and the 'Stayin Alive at 1.5' Campaign.

Dr. Damien Ó Tuama  
National Cycling Coordinator  
Cyclist.ie and An Taisce  
[Damien.otuama@antaisce.org](mailto:Damien.otuama@antaisce.org)

Friday 10 November 2017