

PRESS RELEASE – May 17th 2010

For further information, comment or interview contact Richard Lane on 07923 915724 or email york@worldcarfree.net

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

Wednesday May 19th, 15:30 outside Cycle Heaven (see below)



Support Boost for Carfree Cities Conference

Campaigners, academics and architects from four continents will gather in York next month for the UK's first "Towards Carfree Cities" conference. Local businesses, campaigners, the Council and the Co-operative have all announced their support.

The conference organisers are proud to announce that The Co-operative Membership will be the main sponsor of the conference, taking place from June 28th to July 1st this year. Other sponsors and supporters of the conference include the bike shop Cycle Heaven, York-based Get Cycling – one of the country's leading cycling promoters, and York's City Screen cinema. The conference has also been welcomed by Council leader Andrew Waller.

The conference is an annual forum for cutting-edge, radical thinking in transport policy and car-free development. Local campaign groups including York and Ryedale Friends of the Earth, and the internationally renowned Stockholm Environment Institute are also involved with the conference.

"The Towards Carfree Cities conference series is a vital opportunity for forward-thinking and collaboration, working towards new carfree developments and the transformation of transport in our cities – one of the most prominent issues in our efforts to become more sustainable," said Ed Powell of The Co-operative Membership.

The conference programme will cover topics such as freight in carfree areas, DIY street makeovers, social marketing and the psychology of car dependence. One keynote speaker, Dr Barbara Schmucki of the York-based Institute for Railway Studies and Transport History, will be examining how the pedestrian became the underdog in a talk entitled 'The Quick and the Dead'.

Tuesday 29th June will be an open day at the conference, to which all York residents are invited. Entry is by voluntary donation. The day will end with a film night and panel discussion with conference delegates at York's City Screen cinema.

The national research and campaigning group Carfree UK is hosting the conference, which will take place in York's Priory Centre between June 28th and July 1st 2010. Past conferences have taken place in Lyon, Berlin, Istanbul, the Colombian capital Bogotá, and Portland, USA.

Richard Lane, one of the conference organisers, said: *"We heard recently how the UK faces up to £300 million in fines from the EU for poor air quality, mainly due to car-choked cities, and that up to 50,000 people are dying each year as a result. This underlines the urgency of making our cities work without cars. It is a long term project, but one that we need to start on right away."*

Volunteers are still required to help with the running of the conference – anyone interested should email york@worldcarfree.net

[ENDS]

Notes to editors:

- There will be a photocall with sponsors and supporters of the conference at 3:30pm on Wednesday May 19th outside Cycle Heaven on Bishopthorpe Road – those present will include Councillor Andrew Waller, leader of the City of York Council; Dave Taylor, Marketing Director of City Screen; Guy Wallbanks and representatives of York and Ryedale Friends of the Earth; Ed Powell and members of the North Yorkshire Area Committee of The Co-operative Membership; and members of the Towards Carfree Cities planning team.
- The goal of the Towards Carfree Cities conference series is to bring together people from around the world who are promoting practical alternatives to car dependence - walking, cycling and public transport, and ultimately the transformation of cities, towns and villages into human-scaled environments rich in public space and community life. The focus is on strategy, collaboration and exchange, assisting the practical work of conference participants - whether it be organising carfree days, promoting urban cycling, or building the carfree cities of the future.
- The full programme is available on the conference website at <http://www.worldcarfree.net/conference/>

