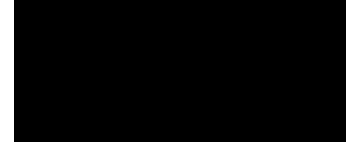




Gorebridge & District
Community Council



t: [REDACTED]

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Thursday, 29 October 2020

Spaces for People
Midlothian Council
40-46 Buccleuch Street
Dalkeith
Midlothian
EH22 1DN

Dear Sir/Madam,

**SPACES FOR PEOPLE PROJECT: VEHICULAR TRAFFIC BAN ON CRAWLEES ROAD, OATSLIE ROAD
AND ROSLIN GLEN ROAD**

I write to lodge our objection to the project above. Our position is based on analysis of over one hundred comments we have seen on social media (both connected with our Community Council page, and other local pages) as well as our own website, and from an email discussion within the Community Council itself. The online comments that we have analysed were posted both before and after this public consultation was launched.

Before I provide a summary of the reasons for our objection, I wish to convey our Community Council's disappointment and the handling of this consultation and of the communication around the Spaces for People project in general.

The first we had heard of this specific proposal was when a member of our community posted about it on a local forum. We immediately got in touch with elected members who attend our Community Council meetings regularly to find out more. It became clear that neither the Community Council nor the elected members for the Ward were consulted in any capacity on these proposals. Suddenly, a public consultation has been launched with only a week's notice. The date on the drawings suggest these were done in June 2020 – over five months ago – so why the big rush with the public consultation now? It seems to us as if the 'People' aspect of the Spaces for People project has been somewhat forgotten about.

This is not the first proposal from the Spaces for People project that had progressed without due diligence and taking full advantage of the local democratic structures that already exist. One of the purposes of the Community Council is to help better inform local decision-making. At the end of July this year a set of TTROs appeared in the Community Council inbox one Friday which would come into effect the following Monday. These would have major implications on available parking in our Main Street, affecting businesses, residents and visitors to many of our shops and services in the area. It appears that particular example was a communication error within the Council. That project had never actually been given the green light, however the TTROs looked fully constructed alongside a full set of marked-up maps. This suggested that a reasonable amount of time, money and resources had been given to this. I expect that something similar has occurred here.

Our plea is for the Community Council to be actively consulted on infrastructure matters for Gorebridge. We are an engaged Community Council who can help better inform such decisions before sums of taxpayer money are spent by the Council, especially when we are always told budgets are tight. Please use us!

With specific reference to the proposed closure of Crawlees Road (that being the road with the most local impact), the following themes are common in the comments we have received:

- This route provides the main vehicular access between much of Gorebridge and Newbattle High School, and that closing it would force that traffic onto nearby already heavily congested roads during the early morning rush in particular
- This route provides the main vehicular access between much of Gorebridge and Newbattle Medical Practice, where patients are often referred to from our own Newbyres Medical Group for additional services
- There is concern over the impact to response time for emergency vehicles from the ambulance depot reaching Gorebridge, Stobhill or south to the A7
- The roads proposed for closure are already in a poor state of repair, and this makes them unsafe for cyclists and walkers today even if there were no traffic
- In general, this route is a well-used and slick thoroughfare for traffic between Gorebridge, Mayfield and Dalkeith and closing it would only force this traffic onto other local roads, increasing the likelihood of accidents elsewhere while adding significantly to journey times, fuel usage, congestion, emissions and pollution in other parts of the County

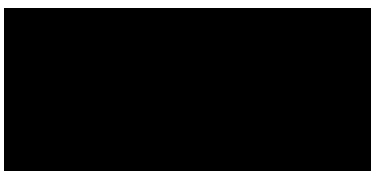
However, we do support the principle of improving this road for access by all users – including walkers and cyclists. We feel this is best achieved by investing in upgrading the road surface itself, widening the carriageway and adding a footpath and lighting. Or, better still, provide an extension to the existing walking/cycling network by creating a dedicated route adjacent to Crawlees Road that can be used by these more vulnerable road users. Dedicated infrastructure which reduces the requirement for walkers and cyclists to share road space with cars, lorries and other motorised vehicles in the first place is a far more effective way of increasing Active Travel options.

We would be keen to examine the benefits identified by Midlothian Council on the proposal to close Crawlees Road. How many people would be expected to walk/cycle instead of using the car on this route? Are there additional plans to improve the Active Travel network at either end of this road to provide a holistic approach? What can be shared with us on the impact to traffic elsewhere?

I hope I have provided a flavour of the comments we have seen, and that provides background as to the opinion the Community Council has reached. If there is any further information you require, please let me know.

Once again, I repeat my plea for the Community Council to be involved earlier in discussions like these.

Best regards,



Neil Whyte
Secretary
Gorebridge & District Community Council