

Edinburgh Councillor blogs – Nigel Bagshaw on being a pedestrian



Virtually all of us are pedestrians – so why not make life easier for us all?

Pedestrians sometimes get a poor deal in this city of ours. They don't have a motoring lobby to fight their cause, or a cycling pressure group to support them. They do have crossings they can use in some of the places where they need them, but even then they have to shoot across like Usain Bolt if they are not to slow life down for supposedly more important road users.

The Council, of course, has its plans and strategies and genuinely appears to be heading in the right direction. But they often seem far removed from the experience of real people on the street. And it was with that in mind that I thought I would carry out a wee experiment on social media and find out what people really think.

Now, my experiment wasn't particularly scientific and I don't have as many Twitter followers as the Dalai Lama or Snoop Dog, but what it did produce was a heartfelt and far-reaching response from the number of people the Council would claim as constituting a successful public consultation.



Hazardous routes to school, lack of lights, impatient turning traffic, no dropped kerbs, excessive speeds, near misses, long waiting times, jumped red lights, confusing light sequences – a whole range of issues were raised, but all of them telling the same story from Granton to Balerno and Portobello to Inverleith, namely that the situation for those moving about on foot is poor and much more needs to be done.

That is why I have proposed that the Council examines the challenges facing pedestrians and prioritises action to help. And I know there will be the usual knee-jerk reactions to the

idea of any further impediments to road traffic and claims of a continuing 'war on the motorist', but they essentially miss the point. Unless they are disabled, nearly everyone is a pedestrian – either all the time because they complete their whole journey on foot, or as soon as they step off the bus, climb out of the car, or get off a bike. So, let's not categorise people simply as drivers, cyclists or pedestrians, and recognise that improving life for pedestrians benefits everybody.

[[View the story "Nigel Bagshaw's social experiment" on Storify](#)]

And here is a video which The Edinburgh Reporter produced early last year. This crossing is now back in use.