

Audio – a walk along Lanark Road with the local MSP

The segregated cycle lanes on Lanark Road have been the subject of discussion all summer long.

Installed as part of Spaces for People, the council was on the point of ripping out the £200,000 infrastructure when a couple of hundred cyclists protested by cycling up and down the road on the evening before a Transport and Environment Committee meeting in June. The council then decided, following a bit of U-turn, to [retain the measures](#) but a pedestrian crossing at Kingsknowe opposite the park.

Many people have had their say and Gordon Macdonald, MSP for Edinburgh Pentlands, has also offered his views. In his November newsletter he said that he had been working for years with local residents to find a way to address concerns about crossing Lanark Road both at Hailes Park and at Kingsknowe Park. He also said he was pleased that the council had found a way to enable safe crossing at both points, and recognised that part of that was due to the Spaces for People measures and the reduction of the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.

The council has now rebranded the measures Travelling Safely for future developments, and at the October meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee councillors considered a report from council officers which included feedback received from a survey of local residents. It was agreed that any new additions would include a signalised crossing at Kingsknowe Park. Between June and October council officers had monitored traffic of all types on Lanark Road and developed some options which were then discussed with local community councils

following a survey of local residents.

I had arranged to take a walk up Lanark Road with the local MSP starting off from his constituency office in Kingsknowe Park. As we set off there was fairly heavy traffic in both directions as you will hear on the podcast below.

When I asked about whether he supported the new road layout as it stands, Mr Macdonald said he was generally supportive but cautioned: "We have really got to find a way for all road users to share the space. It is about compromise and an agreed position that everyone can live with.

"I think the majority of motorists abide by the speed limits. But one of the issues that has been a benefit has been the reduced parking. I have not had many representations made to me about it, and that suggests to me that a lot of people were commuting from out of town, parking here and then jumping on a bus to go to the city centre.

"By reducing the parking on Lanark Road we are in a position where lines of sight coming out of junctions should be far better, and there should be fewer incidents. I know that coming out of Kingsknowe Park, where my office is, it is a lot easier than it has been in the last five or six years.

"I do have some issues with the floating parking spaces, one relating to people with a disability. Previously they could park next to the pavement and get their wheelchair alongside to manoeuvre themselves into. They can't do that with a floating parking space. That restricts their freedom. The cyclists coming down the cycle lane has to be restricted next to these parking spaces. Also the road is narrower and disabled drivers or passengers cannot get out on the side facing the road."

One point where Mr Macdonald has considerable concern is at the area outside Kingsknowe Golf Club where the road has been narrowed by floating parking.



This in itself is not a problem, but the angle the road takes there means that city bound traffic has to drift right a little. Gordon is concerned that in snowy, wintry weather it will be the site of possible collisions. It is in his view difficult to know where the white line along the middle of the road is – and he wonders if perhaps cats eyes can be laid down to improve the situation. He also points out that parking spaces have been reduced and that there are a number of small businesses along the road with a need for some parking for drop-offs.

The height of the bollards is said to make it difficult for some cyclists turning right and some constituents have reported difficulties with those to Mr Macdonald's office.

Gordon recognises that the council did not consult with the public to any "normal" degree. During the pandemic, the Spaces for People measures were introduced as a public health measure and there was no requirement for full consultation on any measures to be introduced. But he said that the urgency with which the cycle lanes and other measures were set up has led to its own difficulties. He said: "If you're going to make such a major change then you've got to take people with you. They have been fighting this ever since.

"But the council has been keen to do this for a number of years and that additional funding has allowed them to try out some of these ideas."

Just last weekend there was a collision involving a single car at the pedestrian refuge in the centre of the road opposite Kingsknowe Park, at the point where a new pedestrian crossing is planned and which, in Mr Macdonald's view, would benefit

people of all ages in the area. Dave McCraw snapped the photo below.

Two things:

- I hope nobody is hurt*
- WTAF*

Island has been there for many years. Recall the claim that the old road layout was "very safe" and all problems would go away if only the cycle lanes were ripped up!

pic.twitter.com/dT7XmKYxIk

- Dave McCraw (@david_mccraw) [November 27, 2021](#)*