

The Edinburgh Reporter Long Read – Corstorphine Low Traffic Neighbourhood – Part 1

Following September's Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) and the depositions which were heard there, opposition to the Low Traffic Neighbourhood in Corstorphine is playing out exactly "according to the playbook", say supporters of the scheme.

We make no apologies for setting this story out in what is not one, but two, long read articles. These are important issues and we feel it is important to set out the arguments for and against.

The Transport and Environment Convener, Cllr Stephen Jenkinson, stated at the meeting on 12 September that this matter was only noted on the Business Bulletin – a kind of To Do list for the committee – and that no decision would be made on the day. Decisions on Traffic Regulation Orders are now delegated to a quasi-judicial sub-committee, and the decision on whether the Corstorphine LTN becomes permanent [will be made on 24 September.](#)

The 400 plus page report and papers to be considered then in

relation to Corstorphine Connections recommends: “A reduction in the operational periods of the Manse Road bus gate to operate from 8am – 9.30am and 2pm – 4pm Monday to Friday, including during school holidays. This aligns with the Corstorphine Primary School Streets restriction times (Monday to Thursday and Friday mornings).”

[The papers can be read in full here.](#)

At an earlier media briefing Cllr Jenkinson said: “The main purpose of this type of project, this type of initiative, is to ensure that kids can travel safely to and from school. So one of the statistics that is good to see is that there’s been a decrease in traffic on the streets, specifically around the primary school. That decrease has been over 9% at certain times of the day, which I think shows that some of the changes that have been made around that area have made a significant difference.

“There has been an increased level in active travel to and from primary schools in the area which has increased by 3% which has resulted in over 70% of children using active travel methods to get to and from school, which is pleasing.

“What it tells us is that 50% of the residents support the project, with 24% opposed.”

The group Low Traffic Corstorphine back the LTN scheme. The clue is in the name, and they lodged a one page written deputation. The opposing view, in the form of Accessible Corstorphine for Everyone (ACE), is a bit less obvious. The group ACE is very much opposed to the LTN, and they always have been since representatives for the group spoke at the public meeting in [June 2023 in St Margaret’s Park.](#)

In Part 1 of our mini series busting the myths about LTNs we set out at length the reasoning and arguments of the parties who are campaigning against making the LTN permanent.



Peter Roberts of Accessible Corstorphine for Everyone at a meeting in St Margaret's Park © 2023 Martin McAdam

Accessible Corstorphine for Everyone

Accessible Corstorphine for Everyone (ACE) represented their point of view both in writing and also by three members in person, Peter Roberts, David Low and Karen Smith, only two of whom addressed the meeting.

Peter Roberts, the Vice-Chair explained that the Corstorphine Low Traffic Neighbourhood is “not working, not wanted and not democratic”. He claimed that traffic in the area has increased by 6.5% since the LTN started, making it more dangerous for children overall. He said that traffic on Corstorphine High Street has increased, but cycling is only up by a “tiny 3.6% and walking by 2.2%.

His other points in summary are:

- Sustrans is unduly influential as it is involved in funding, project management and also conducting the Integrated Impact Assessment.
- The LTN changes discriminate against the elderly
- The market research excluded those who are adversely affected
- The LTN favours cyclists and their ideology, and discriminates against the elderly and disabled
- There is clutter on pavements making it dangerous for pedestrians – there have been multiple incidents of pedestrians tripping and falling resulting in “some serious injuries”
- The 68% reduction in Manse Road traffic is “more than offset by increases on nearby streets. Traffic has been displaced rather than evaporating”.
- There are 70% of people opposed to the introduction of the bus gate and a Liberal Democrat survey carried out at Corstorphine Fair achieved 153 responses “only 19 of whom thought the LTN was good”
- The LTN is “not democratic”
- He is aware of people moving out of the area due to LTN measures which is “said and Corstorphine is losing its community spirit”.

Cllr Iain Whyte, Conservative, asked the ACE deputation if they thought it would be fairer if the councillors who sit on the quasi judicial committee are separate from those who make the policy decisions – and they agreed it would be. We understand the new sub-committee will be run under the same guidance as any other council meeting, with councillors obliged to admit any conflicting interest.

Cllr Kevin Lang confirmed he had read the 30 page deputation, and asked ACE to explain more about their concerns about the council’s market research. Mr Roberts replied there was a “strong sampling bias”. He criticised the methods saying that the researchers had stood outside “a very good” bike shop. He

said anybody who was at work, or who drives, or relies on a carer was excluded from the market research.

Cllr Booth said that ACE's criticism of the LTN is that it has increased traffic. He presumed that ACE share the intention to reduce traffic and asked how they would do it. Mr Roberts replied that there are a "large number of people who have ideas and there is a wealth of people with local knowledge who could have been drawn on". Mr Roberts said that with or without a bus gate there are few children who walk down Manse Road to get to school, and he explained that the pavements in Manse Road are virtually non-existent.

He concluded: "We stand ready to be constructive and to engage but you must step back and listen to us."

ACE say they have more than 2,000 members on their Facebook group, but it is a closed group.

[Watch the webcast of the TEC meeting by clicking here.](#)

Kirsten Olverman, a sales negotiator from Neilsons Solicitors, a long established firm who have their main office on St John's Road, also spoke to the meeting. She read out the written deputation which you can read in full below. The business complained they have not been consulted about the measures rolled out in Corstorphine and that those selling property just outside the LTN have regularly expressed their frustration. One of the arguments is that the solicitors working in the practice regularly have to attend death bed situations to draw up wills – and the LTN was causing them delay in reaching their clients. Ms Olverman said that clients are also regularly late to appointments as a result of the LTN.

(Cllr Kevin Lang made a transparency statement during the

meeting as he is employed to lead the team responsible for [The Law Society of Scotland's](#) communications, policy work, research and international work.)

Cllr Munro asked how Neilsons would feel if the bus gate was removed and the remainder of the LTN kept in place. Kirsten replied that there would be “dancing in the street on St John’s Road” as the bus gate is the most unpopular aspect of the LTN. She also said: “We are not against the idea of an LTN but we, are against it in its current form and we, as solicitors, are very concerned about the way it has been brought in.”

Cllr Cameron asked if they had consulted other businesses in the area. Neilsons confirmed they had consulted with others, but not all. Ms Olverman said: “There is one that has a different ideology from us, so they don’t agree with us. We have 88 partners and staff which is a lot of people – and most of our clients seem to agree.”

Oswald Terrace Community Group

Warwick Campbell from Oswald Terrace told the meeting that there is a hero in Corstorphine who each day advises drivers to turn around so that they do not get fined by driving through the bus gate. He described these drivers as “innocent people who had the audacity to drive through Corstorphine and not know the area”.

He said that three or four roads are blocked by the LTN measures, Featherhall Crescent, Featherhall Avenue northbound and Manse Road. He said: “This traps us and only leaves us with one option to leave the area along Featherhall Avenue going south, where there are two pre-schools. This is one of the most dangerous roads I have ever driven on and is an accident waiting to happen. The road suddenly goes from two lanes to one on a blind corner.”

He claimed that the LTN has increased traffic where there is a park, a school and Corstorphine Pub where “there was never a problem before”.

Mr Campbell suggested that ambulances cannot get in to the area because there is only one road in if Featherhall Avenue is blocked by an accident so “we are essentially trapped”. Think of being trapped in a neighbourhood and forced to drive down a dangerous blind corner with your family in the car. The LTN has already cost £800,000 and people don’t even want it. It has caused nothing but division, pain and anger within the community.

“Free us from the LTN!”

COMMENTARY on the 12 September meeting

While the second part of our mini series will deal with the argument for retaining the LTN, there has been commentary on Twitter both during the meeting and since.

These were quick to denounce some of the arguments laid out above as nonsensical.

@GylerNorth said: “Council officers research-biased. Some weird logic about council officers having done detailed research and now presenting it as reliable. Versus – a board with coloured stickers outside the Lib Dem tent at a fair, which is totally reliable, apparently.

@PidginPosting explained that in one sentence just after saying that people should walk an extra half mile or more so people in cars aren’t inconvenienced, he (Mr Roberts) says the best way to reduce traffic is to “make it as easy as possible to get around on foot”.

Since the papers for the meeting on 24 September have been

published @PidginPosting has had a good rake through some of the comments and objections contained in the papers. To save you the bother of reading the 400 pages you can read the thread below.

Council officers recommend that the Manse Road bus gate is retained, although operating hours will be reduced.

Decision to the made at the TR0 sub committee on 23rd.
<https://t.co/xkzECYMotG> pic.twitter.com/jAUINtkTh2

– PidginPosting (@PidginPosting) [September 17, 2024](#)



12/09/2023

A replacement bus gate camera has been vandalised for a second time on Manse Road Corstorphine. The first time the pole was cut down in July 2023. This time the cables had been cut. There was one further attack on the camera. Picture Alan Simpson



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