

The Edinburgh Reporter Long Read – Corstorphine Low Traffic Neighbourhood – Part 2

This article is the second part in our mini series about Low Traffic Neighbourhood measures introduced in Corstorphine. The council is to determine whether these are made permanent on 24 September when a quasi-judicial sub-committee meets.

The papers for that meeting run to 400+ pages and [can be read in full here](#).

At a meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee on 12 September there was no decision to be made in relation to the Low Traffic Neighbourhood. It was brought up solely as a matter outlined on the Committee's Business Bulletin which is a kind of aide-memoire or a to do list.

But a decision will be made in relation to whether the [Corstorphine Connections](#) scheme should become permanent at the meeting of the Transport and Environment Sub-Committee on 24 September.

The 400 plus page [report and other papers](#) being considered then by a sub-committee of [ten councillors](#) in relation to Corstorphine Connections suggests making: "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).”

Much of what was said at the September meeting of TEC came from deputations who are opposed to the measures, and want some or all of them scrapped. Most had also submitted a written deputation, and all those papers can be read below.

What has happened in Corstorphine?

There are essentially four parts to [Corstorphine Connections](#) which includes:

- No exit from Featherhall Avenue to St John’s Road
- A pocket park on Featherhall Crescent acting as a modal filter
- Bus gate on Manse Road
- School measures at Corstorphine Primary School

The Local Democracy Reporting Scheme reported after the September meeting: “A “bus gate”, only allowing buses and taxis to enter St John’s Road from Manse Road at peak times, has proved so controversial that a camera set up at the spot to fine drivers who break the rules has been repeatedly cut down by vandals.”

Our first article set out the arguments made against keeping the LTN in the area – either wholly or in part.

The argument for...

Now the argument for retaining the measures is set out here – assisted by [Low Traffic Corstorphine](#), “a group of local residents and business people passionate about bringing safer

streets, better air quality and improved accessibility to residents of all ages, genders and abilities whether they are walkers, wheelers, cyclers, drivers or passengers”.

These matters are not new. They can be traced back at least to discussions at a Corstorphine Community Council meeting in 2017 [when traffic problems were raised](#) if not even earlier.

A spokesperson for Low Traffic Corstorphine said: “At a time when plans are being drawn to build a new town almost the size of Falkirk immediately west of the Corstorphine area we urgently need measures that will protect residential streets from rat running and the inevitable increase in traffic such developments will bring. We’re concerned about the deliberate misinformation and misleading messaging around the Corstorphine Connections Scheme.

“It is worth noting that:

- “Not one of the current local Lib Dem councillors were in post prior to May 2022 local elections, and therefore had no direct engagement with the initial design process or local political discussion in the designs of the LTN.
- “Neither did Accessible Corstorphine for Everyone (ACE), which didn’t form until after the physical implementation of the modal filter elements of the LTN.
- “As such, very few of its members had engaged in the design process over the two years of its development, nor had many of them expressed any interest in community engagement concerning this at any point before the visible signs of the LTN being installed.
- “This is despite a considerable effort being made [by CEC to engage](#) residents local to the LTN for the two years previous to implementation.”

LOW TRAFFIC CORSTORPHINE – BUSTING THE MYTHS

Myth A – The streets around the school are more dangerous now.

This is a myth.

1. The High Street now has widened footpaths, improved crossings and bollards to prevent pavement parking and vehicular egress toward pedestrians.
2. Chicanes have slowed the overall speed of traffic along the high street making it safer for pedestrians, particularly so when the traffic is heavier as it is self restricting due to chicanes and eastbound priority traffic flow.
3. The bus gate itself has reduced the flow of over 3,000 vehicles a day on a narrow Manse Road by 46% over a 24 hours period and by 62% during bus gate operation hours, making this a much safer route for school children to walk to school, and also for other members of the community to travel between areas like St Margaret's Park, the Library and St John's Road at any time.
4. There is no evidence the LTN has itself increased traffic on St John's Road.
5. There have been increases in traffic flow across the city, over the trial period, similar to those seen on the boundary roads to the LTN area, so connections being drawn linking the one to the other are by no means clear.
6. Parking has not been restricted in the area by the LTN elements, and access by car is still possible to all areas of the LTN. The idea that people are trapped by the Bus Gate is scaremongering, and factually incorrect.

7. Corstorphine, like all other parts of the city, experiences high traffic points in the day, but these are the exception, not the rule.
8. In fact, walking around the residential areas of Corstorphine village for most parts of the day is, now, a very pleasant experience and is to be recommended.
9. Regular and misleadingly negative headlines which do not mention the overall increases in traffic buildback after Covid restrictions across the city (directly blaming the LTN for citywide levels of increase) is probably doing more to turn people away from using local businesses than the LTN itself.

Myth B. the Corstorphine community was never included in the design process and valuable local knowledge was not tapped into from the outset.

This is a Myth.

1. A local Community Reference Group was started at the very early stages of the design process – local residents and community members were involved in the process from, and before (via community council discussion), that stage, in March 2021
2. Community feedback has been invited on several occasions via public consultation since, not least an ongoing consultation which ran alongside the LTN changes from early June 2023.
3. Conversations were had around all aspects of the design from the start and local knowledge was fed into, and used to guide the designs.

4. The suggestion of a Corstorphine south LTN goes back to summer 2020, when it was mentioned in Corstorphine Community Council discussions about traffic in the area post Covid.

Myth C. Featherhall Avenue is the most dangerous road in Edinburgh.

This is a myth.

Despite local belief, and according to [crashmap.co.uk](https://www.crashmap.co.uk), there have been no vehicle incidents on Featherhall Avenue, whilst there have been several on the High Street, all of which were prior to the LTN installation <https://www.crashmap.co.uk/Search>

1. Cllr Lang's [amendment](#) (On page 29 at the link) attempted to alter LTN design recommendations so as to **not** allow Featherhall avenue to be a one way at the very start of the LTN design process.
2. Indeed, this is one place regular historic complaints have been made about dangerous traffic for many years before the LTN was installed – note the 2017 CCC meeting below.
3. This is important to mention because an experimental intervention making Featherhall Avenue (south end) one way in 2018 is mentioned in a Corstorphine CC meeting as having “...been overwhelmingly endorsed by local residents in a community consultation which followed the trial” – why then did LibDem councillors deliberately go against local consent? See page 2 para 2 in the document below:



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Footnote: Cllr Lang's amendment was not voted in.

Myth D. Residents of the LTN area were not consulted at any stage of design and haven't been listened to through the process of the ongoing consultations.

This is a myth.

1. The consultation process has been ongoing since at least 2020 when LTNs in East Craigs and Corstorphine were being discussed at TEC.
2. Views have been sought from residents on Corstorphine Connections since February 2021 when a Community Reference Group set up to present options to local interest groups, business and community leaders.
3. There have been local street banners, across the Corstorphine community, information available in the local library, social media posts, widespread leafleting of the LTN area and regular feedback opportunities throughout this period.
4. Council officers involved in the project have attended Corstorphine Community Council meetings to discuss progress and steer the designs, implementation and progress at most monthly meetings since early 2020.

Myth E – There is no need, nor local support, for this LTN

This is a myth.

1. There's long been a need to reduce traffic coming through Corstorphine, with a 2016 [placemaking](#) exercise which attempted to gather the views of residents towards various aspects of living and working in the area.
2. At the [Corstorphine Community Council meeting in October 2017](#) the whole meeting was dedicated to finding solutions to high vehicle speeds, dangerous rat running through traffic, unacceptable and dangerous parking, particularly around Corstorphine Primary School.
3. The meeting was well attended by local residents, our local MSP and local councillors, the details and the conclusions drawn clearly show the need for the LTN which followed.
4. Those engaged in our community have, in fact, therefore been very much involved in informing this process from the very beginning.
5. Whilst the tone of discussion around the LTN in social media has been deeply aggressive towards any person showing support for it, understandably, we believe a quiet majority of local residents have felt intimidated by the rhetoric and have therefore remained quiet over their support.
6. We know Libdem councillors have received supportive emails but they never mention them, despite being required to represent all parts and members of their constituency. They have never approached Low Traffic Corstorphine for comment.



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Manse Road before and after:







After Corstorphine Connections measures put in place



Measures on Manse Road



Station Road