

# The Edinburgh Reporter Long Read – Improve Corstorphine Group – Part 3

**This article is the third part in our mini series about Low Traffic Neighbourhood measures introduced in Corstorphine.**

The Improve Corstorphine Group focuses on matters that they believe the whole community can get behind, gathering evidence and feeding that evidence back to the council.

The group is made up of ordinary residents in Corstorphine who are not involved in any existing campaigning groups or committees. Having such a group allows membership of the Community Reference Group for the [Corstorphine Connections](#) project. They have provided evidence and challenged assertions over the past year in relation to this Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN). The emphasis is on the residents of Corstorphine working together and where they disagree, doing so respectfully. They are if you will the middle ground – and not often heard.

Here they explain what they do and what they would like to happen when the [sub-committee meets on Tuesday](#) to decide if the LTN measures should become permanent.

## Corstorphine Connections

The [Corstorphine Connections](#) objectives are to:

- improve the safety of routes to schools in the area
- understand and address issues with speed and volume of traffic in residential streets
- improve walking and cycling routes and access in the area
- improve local air quality
- create a more attractive environment with new public realm spaces.

The City of Edinburgh Council received Scottish Government funding to be specifically spent on the project. No money was diverted from pothole fixing or the many other things that need done. LTNs were supported over the years by all political parties as a way of improving neighbourhoods, although recently that stance has changed.

In Corstorphine there is a long history of traffic issues and measures such as the closure of South Gyle Road to through traffic has had wide community support.

## **More unites the residents of Corstorphine than divides them.**

All groups broadly agree with the widening of pavements and installation of crossing points making life easier for families, the disabled and the elderly.

Everyone wants safe routes to school for children and encouragement of active travel. But that approach has to be inclusive – for instance, Improve Corstorphine has been arguing for better parking for parents who live near the airport and have a stressful morning school run by car. They have also asked for small bus route diversions once a day to allow children to travel to the Primary School, as happens in other council areas.

# Consultation and communication was originally ineffective

The council changes coupled with ineffective consultation have set resident against resident with frustration and anger about disruption to daily lives and the apparent poor value for money when so much needs fixed. The council's project manager is committed to communication and has attended nearly every Community Council meeting over the last four years. He also runs a Community Reference Group.

Communication with residents has improved over the project with leaflet drops to every household. Despite that many people leading busy lives say they have never heard of the community council, have not seen the leaflets and did not know about the Community Reference Groups – so their input has been missed.

# Lack of school improvements in the project area

Pupils in the project area attend five different schools, but only routes to two have been considered and even then Corstorphine Connections misses the majority of pupils at one. No improvements at all have been made for [Gylemuir Primary](#), [Forrester High School](#), or St Augustine's nor has the full catchment area for [Corstorphine Primary](#) been considered for improvements with hundreds of pupils travelling long distances without safety improvements.

Using census data Improve Corstorphine have asked council officials why there have been no improvements at all for hundreds of young people. They have also asked officials to look at resident journeys – how do they get to the chemist or post office when roads are closed and no cycleways are present?

# **Featherhall, Station Road and the bus gate**

Featherhall and Station Road feedback is pretty negative as the residents in these areas suffer daily frustrations. Correspondents from these areas say that consultation was poor and the implementation does not meet residents' needs .

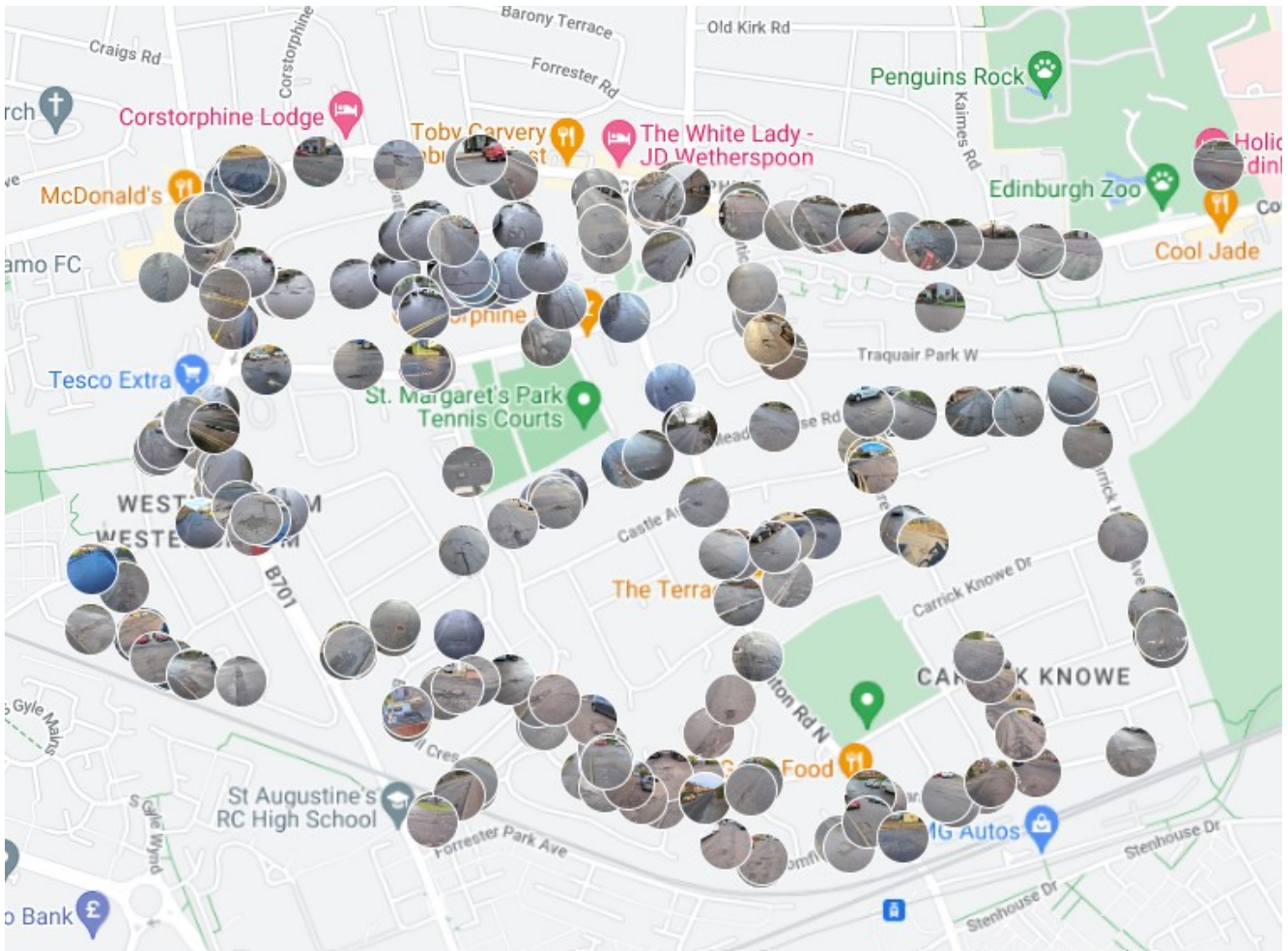
The signage for the bus gate continues to be ineffective at alerting people from outside the area of what a bus gate is, and that they will be fined. The council's own figures show that 92% of drivers fined are from outside the project area which indicates the signage is still an issue.

Local people regularly stop cars and the School Crossing lady says she stops six cars an afternoon being fined.

## **More than 400 potholes have been reported and made safe**

Improve Corstorphine try to live up to their name and more than [400 potholes](#) have been made safe across the area after members reported them to the council uniting car drivers , cyclists and pedestrians in positive action.

Map showing over 400 potholes reported:



Other initiatives include installation of litter bins, the repair of pavements after liaising with a local disability group, graffiti removal and collecting evidence on other council consultations such as St Margaret's Park Bowling Green and the realignment of community council boundaries.



Streets identified by Improve Corstorphine for cleaning and the result:



New litter bin installed after Improve Corstorphine provide evidence to the council

## **The Council need to learn lessons and apply them going forward**

One of the sad aspects to this project is that it has polarised opinion and led to the harassment of individuals on both sides of the debate. People from each side are giving up their spare time to help build a better Corstorphine but with passions running high no local organisation has taken a stance for or against the changes. Meetings are all online preventing a building of relationships and continuing a feeling of exclusion.

[A decision will be taken on Tuesday 24 September at the meeting of the new sub-committee.](#) Whatever happens we need to

ensure the wider community has a chance to input to measures going forward and allow debate between all residents in Corstorphine. There are many people who are now engaged and we can harness that community energy to Improve Corstorphine.

