

# Road Safety debate highlights active travel in Edinburgh

**As former Transport Convener on Edinburgh Council, a debate on Tuesday in the House of Commons was right up the MP for Edinburgh South West's street.**

It gave him the opportunity to talk about Nether Currie Primary School where they parents are keen to make it safer for children to walk to school. It is one of the schools which runs a walking bus. In November 2023 the council included it in a list of schools which do this – collecting pupils on the way to school so that as many as possible use active travel. The council report said that “Nether Currie Primary run an occasional walking bus from Tansy Street, Kinleith Mill.”

There was also a plan in 2021 to introduce measures near the school with “New waiting and loading restrictions on the bend on Thomson Crescent”.

Dr Scott Arthur said: “This debate is on an extremely important subject for my hon. Friend’s constituents. On active travel, good habits start early in life, and that is particularly true of walking and cycling. In [Edinburgh South West](#), parents and residents are keen to work with the council to make it easier and safer for children to walk to Nether Currie primary school, and they are really open to collaboration.

“Does my hon. Friend agree that if we are serious about tackling road safety issues in rural areas and our towns and

cities, we have to work with our school communities to make sure it is absolutely embedded in them?" Of course the answer was yes.

The adjournment debate was proposed by Andy MacNae, MP for Rossendale and Darwen, who said in reply: "Absolutely. This is a hugely important issue and, as in many other areas, we know the solutions. Fantastic work is done by organisations such as Active Travel England that detail the solutions, yet our current or past funding structures make it incredibly difficult. I am campaigning in our constituency for a safe path to a school, yet I find there are essentially no dedicated funding opportunities to meet that very obvious and stark need. This is an absolutely crucial area."

Mr MacNae had introduced the debate by saying: "I requested the debate because our current approach to road safety is in desperate need of overhaul. Although a few local authorities have robust and innovative approaches to road safety, too many lack the resources or political will to implement proactive safety measures, which is increasingly making road safety a postcode lottery. Too often, safety interventions come as a response to collisions, rather than as proactive measures to prevent them. We do not listen to our communities and have failed to invest and to learn from international best practice. As a result, progress in reducing road deaths has largely plateaued in recent years. The UK has passed a grim and shaming milestone: 500,000 people have died on the roads in Great Britain since records began in 1926. That is more than the number of UK citizens killed as a result of warfare in the same period, including in the second world war.

"I am well aware that this is a complex and multi-dimensional issue to which we cannot do justice in such a short debate, so rather than trying to address every aspect of road safety, I will instead focus on a couple of linked aspects that are of particular concern to my Rossendale and Darwen constituents—specifically, speeding and issues related to

large commercial vehicles. Rossendale and Darwen is a constituency of A roads running down valleys, with relatively few alternative routes, and most residential and commercial development extends along those lines. I live off Burnley Road in Bacup, and the lived experience of residents along that road serves to highlight most of the issues I want to raise today. Ask anyone who lives on Burnley Road and they will tell you that speeding is endemic. There have been serious injuries and fatalities, but more fundamentally, residents will cite numerous close calls and the fear they generate.”

Nether Currie Primary School is a non-denominational primary school in the south west of Edinburgh with a current roll of 186 children, from Primary 1 to Primary 7. In August 2022, Nether Currie Primary Early Learning and Childcare opened for children aged 3 and 4 years old.

On their website the school sets out its goals regarding active travel: “At Nether Currie, we are keen to promote active travel to school. This means that we want to encourage as many children as possible to walk, scoot or cycle to school. Thomson Crescent is really very narrow and parking is limited. We are keen to make Thomson Crescent as free from school traffic as possible; and so if you do live further away and need to travel by car, please park away from Thomson Crescent and walk the last bit of the journey to the school gates. If it is necessary for you to drive into Thomson Crescent, please park respectfully by not blocking any driveways.”

