

WORKING TOWARDS BEING A LOWER SPEED COMMUNITY

Tillydrone



We are Living Streets Scotland, part of the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a walking nation where people of all generations enjoy the benefits that this simple act brings, on streets fit for walking.



BACKGROUND

Living Streets has been funded through the Scottish Government's Road Safety Framework to work in five communities across Scotland where local people have identified speed as an issue. The project is working with communities and local authorities to take action to reduce speed.

Aberdeen City Council approached Living Streets about Tillydrone being one of the communities the project worked with. Living Streets had worked with other communities in Aberdeen on Street Audits to improve the streets for walking, and Aberdeen City Council is looking to support this in more communities. In Tillydrone the issue of speed and traffic had been a major issue raised during the consultation on the Locality Plan and had been an issue for the community council for some time.

THE COMMUNITY OF TILLYDRONE

Tillydrone is a housing area between Aberdeen City Centre and the River Don. Its population is predominately families, with a mixture of people who have lived there all their lives and many recent Eastern European immigrants. The area figures as one of the most deprived in Aberdeen in particular when looking at health, but also for income. It is in one of the three priority localities identified by Aberdeen Community Planning Partnership.

A new bridge – the Diamond Bridge - was built across the River Don in 2016 after years of planning and consideration of the most appropriate site. The Tillydrone community campaigned against the chosen site as they believed that it would have a detrimental effect on their community and local people's health, would increase the traffic volumes and speed of traffic going past and through their community, cause rat running, increase pollution and be detrimental to the health of local people.

In 2017 as part of the preparation for the Locality Plan, the at Aberdeen City Council Communities Team canvassed local people about their priority concerns. The issues of speed and the impact of the Diamond Bridge were among the main concerns raised. The Communities Team contacted Living Streets to request that Tillydrone was included in the project.

WHAT HAPPENED



A series of meetings was held with local people to identify their concerns and to produce a map showing where issues occurred. An online Facebook survey and a paper survey helped to reach a wider group of people. The Facebook survey reached 300 people, with many people leaving comments detailing their concerns about traffic speeds and traffic impacts on their lives. Facebook proved an invaluable tool throughout the project. It helped to reach a broader group of people who were unlikely to come to meetings and also encouraged some of these people to start attending meetings and get involved in the discussions. It was also used as a tool to keep people informed, with information about the progress of discussions was posted regularly.

Once the initial mapping meetings and survey were complete, discussion focussed on prioritising the issues and developing potential solutions.

The major issues **as identified by the community** were grouped into six themes:

IMPACT ON TILLYDRONE AS A COMMUNITY

Tillydrone had been a quiet community with only local traffic – now the amount of traffic has increased and this will get worse once the new housing is built at White Stripes.

Local people accept that the new road is there, but want to examine what action can be taken to make things better for the local community.

Tillydrone is a highly populated area with a lot of children and some of the worst health statistics in Aberdeen. There is concern about the impact the increase in traffic around and within the area is having. They would like to see these concerns resolved and there be a balance between cars and people. Safety of children and older people is a prime concern for the community, alongside a desire to encourage people to walk and be physically active.

Tillydrone has been described as feeling like the 'forgotten community' whose concerns are being ignored.

TRAFFIC SPEED AND VOLUME

The community feels that traffic speeds are an issue on Tillydrone Road (the new road carrying traffic to and from the Diamond Bridge), and within Tillydrone itself. The traffic volumes through Tillydrone have also increased.

The latest figures received from Aberdeen City Council were from 2016 and the community thinks that the amount of traffic has increased since the last count. The 2016 report quoted 10,000 vehicles in a 24-hour period but local people think the true number is between 12,000 and 14,000.

Cars and buses appear to speed coming off the Diamond Bridge after travelling downhill from Danestone and appear to ignore the 30mph limit. There were screens reminding drivers that the new road was 30mph but these have been taken away – these need to come back. It was noted that local people experienced a lot of tailgating and aggression when driving at 30mph on the new road.

The increase in traffic within the area can mostly be attributed to people trying to find shortcuts. This is particularly so at peak times (especially in the morning) and has been accompanied by increased speeds in the area. The area off Gordon Mills Road is particularly affected, alongside Hayton Road. It was noted by the police that this speed may not be over the speed limit, but local people feel that it is inappropriate in a built up residential area. There are speed cushions in some areas but these don't appear to deter lorries and 4x4 vehicles.

It was noted that local people are also taking shortcuts to avoid traffic as the amount of traffic has increased inside Tillydrone. At peak times, some find it difficult to get out onto the main road due to the volume and speed of traffic. A particular concern was the opening up of Gort Road and the impact this has had, although this had originally been requested locally.

There is a concern about HGVs, particularly training vehicles.

The placing of Bus stops on the new road (which had the intention of slowing traffic) makes drivers impatient and likely to overtake to keep moving. This adds to the danger for pedestrians and people trying to turn onto Tillydrone Avenue.

In the survey 74% of those responding said that the speed of traffic was poor or very poor. 45% said the volume of traffic was poor or very poor. When asked whether they had noticed any change in traffic since the new bridge opened, 23% said it had got better, 12% said it had remained about the same, while 60% said it had got worse.

RAT RUNNING

Rat running occurs in a number of roads as traffic tries to find quicker ways into the city, especially at peak times. The community is of the view that there are increased numbers of lorries and vans that weren't present before.

Of particular concern is Hayton Road where children cross to go to school. This generally coincides with peak times, which leads to an increase in volume and speed of traffic on this road.

However rat running also occurs in a number of other roads – Coningham Road, Wingate Road, Portal Crescent, Hayton Road, Pennan Road, Harris Drive and the bridge at Don Street – as traffic tries to find quicker ways into the city. Drivers are attempting to get round the no right turn at the Diamond Bridge by turning in the community centre or Donside Village to get along Gordon Mills Road as a shortcut.

In the survey 60% of those responding said rat running was poor or very poor.

SAFETY AT CROSSINGS

Often traffic won't stop for crossing patrollers. This is particularly so at Hayton Road where the cross patroller has concerns about safety and the stress of trying to get children safely across the road. She described the speed as 'awful'. Often traffic coming one way will stop but traffic coming in the other direction won't stop. Drivers edge forward and can be abusive – indeed once a car had to do an emergency stop at the crossing. The crossing is busy with a lot of parents and children coming from both sides of the road. She feels the traffic has definitely increased since the bridge opened. There are concerns about the timings at toucan crossings (e.g. on Hayton Road and Tillydrone Avenue), which seem to be very long for pedestrians and lead to people trying to cross through the traffic. It appears that the priority, especially on Tillydrone Avenue, is set against pedestrians.

In addition, safe crossing can be impeded by people parking at junctions and corners making it difficult to see. This has been identified as an issue around the high flats, and on Formartine Road and Gort Road.

There are concerns whether all crossings on Tillydrone Road are correctly positioned, as often people cross directly opposite bus stops due to convenience or mobility issues. Parking around Riverbank School as people drop off their children can also make it dangerous for children walking to school and can deter some parents from allowing their children to walk.

76% of those responding to the survey said safety at crossings was poor or very poor. Alongside this, 76% of those responding to the survey when asked how safe it was to walk or cycle in Tillydrone said it was poor or very poor.

CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS

There is a new pavement with pedestrian and cycle paths. Often pedestrians walk in the cycle lane and cyclists can be in the pedestrian area. It was said that cyclists can be impatient and abusive with pedestrians, which can lead to conflict. There was confusion as the pedestrian area was nearer the road while pedestrians appeared to prefer walking away from the traffic. It was noted that the signs showing where the cycle lane was at St Machar were wrong, but also that cyclists have to move from one side of the road to the other to follow the cycle lane. Additionally, the pavement widens and narrows which makes it difficult to navigate. It was noted that the new pavement was not gritted well this winter, which made it icy and forced people to walk on the road.

POLLUTION AND HEALTH

There are concerns that pollution levels and a negative health effects have increased due to the increase in traffic. There are reports of children having more coughs and more being diagnosed with asthma. This needs explored more fully. There is low life expectancy in Tillydrone – and some feel this will be made worse by the traffic.

DONSIDE VILLAGE

As part of this work, residents in Donside Village have also raised a number of concerns. Speeding and style/manner of driving in the area is an issue – drivers often do not realise Donside Village as pedestrianised area despite there being 'Home Zone' signs. There is a question mark over whether drivers understand the concept of a 'Home Zone' and how this can be improved. Many drivers are using mobile phones and there are a number of irresponsible motorbike drivers.

The volume of traffic has increased over the last year with construction traffic and delivery vans. The installed speed bumps don't deter drivers driving at speed. Linked to all of the above, the car park area in the square is confusing -- is it a car park or is it a pedestrian area? It is often used for loading for the shop and general deliveries while children use it as a playground.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT



The community identified the actions they would like to happen, actions they could take themselves and actions they wanted to see Aberdeen City Council and Police Scotland taking. However, it was clearly stated that the community wants this to be a partnership where all sides discussed, shared information and agreed on actions could be taken.

ACTION THE COMMUNITY COULD TAKE ITSELF:

- Work with Riverbank and St Joseph's Primary Schools and parents to map the children's journey to school, identify areas of concern and identify safe routes.
- Highlight safe routes to children, parents and drivers by prominently marking the routes with either paint, cut outs or other means.

- Work with parents and Riverbank School on safe parking and park and stride.
- Increase the number of children walking or cycling to school by including both schools in the Walk To School programme.
- Make a film about the issues experienced by the community to highlight these issues in the press and social media.
- Make Hayton Road a priority for action through changing drivers' perception of the road through use of planters, street colouring to highlight entering a residential area, signage to highlight children crossing and explore the idea of a 'village gateway' sign.
- Consider a Community Speed Watch campaign
- Highlight to local people the dangers of parking at junctions and corners.
- Campaign for the 20mph area to be a mandatory speed limit for the whole area.

WHAT ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL COULD DO:

- Monitor traffic speeds and volumes on Tillydrone Avenue and on priority identified routes in Tillydrone
- Install signage on Tillydrone Avenue to remind drivers that the speed limit is 30mph.
- Alter the settings on pedestrian crossings to give more priority to pedestrians and lengthen the time allowed to cross the road.
- Install traffic lights on key exits from Tillydrone to allow easier access on to Tillydrone Avenue.
- Monitor air quality along Tillydrone Avenue.
- See Hayton Road as a priority and – as a matter of urgency – look at installing traffic lights, speed bumps and a parking bay at Nisa.
- Examine where rat running is occurring and work with the community on solutions to this.
- Conduct a media campaign to deter drivers from using Tillydrone as a shortcut.
- Work with the community, local media and Police Scotland on regular enforcement of speed in key areas and highlight the speed limit.
- Work with community to consider gateway features on major roads into the area which remind drivers that they are entering a community.
- Work with the community to extend the 20mph area to be a mandatory 20mph area for all of Tillydrone.

WHAT POLICE SCOTLAND COULD DO:

- Work with the community and Aberdeen City Council to run enforcement campaigns to curb speed on agreed priority routes.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

The community was clear that they would like to see action on a range of issues, but identified the following as priority:

1. Traffic Lights on Hayton Road
2. Signage:
 - A. School and crossing signs on Hayton Road
 - B. Increased signage alerting drivers to the change in speed when coming into Tillydrone
 - C. Signs alerting people that they are entering a residential area (20 is plenty)
3. Increase in police presence and enforcement of speed limits
4. Monitoring of Tillydrone Road and Avenue
5. Community and School activity, in particular safe routes to school, designing visual road markings ,and consideration of a community speedwatch

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

At the same time as the project was exploring the community's views on traffic and speed, Aberdeen City Council was conducting a review of the Third Don Crossing (Diamond Bridge) one year after its opening. The results of the Review were available in November 2017 and this provided an appropriate opportunity for officers and elected members to sit down with Tillydrone residents in October prior to the Council meetings to discuss their findings, the community's work, the issues and solutions they had identified, and to agree a way forward. Concurrently, planning was underway for the building of a Community Hub on Hayton Road – one of the main roads the community identified as an issue. The Hub, when it is opened in 2019, will provide access to a range of Council Services as well as providing community meeting space. The building of the Hub was also identified as providing an opportunity to relook at Hayton Road.

TRAFFIC SPEED AND VOLUME

Traffic speed and volume had been measured at number of times at various locations. This had shown that the speed of traffic at most points was within or just above the speed limit. Staff explained that 85% of traffic was travelling at an acceptable speed, including on Tillydrone Road. Local people were clear that the impact of the remaining 15% was having a detrimental affect on their community, that at various locations at certain times the speed was unacceptable, that the perception of speed was as important as actual speed, and that it was unacceptable within a residential area. There was considerable discussion about this and the need for additional signage to alert drivers to the speed limit and that they were driving through a residential area. Staff from Aberdeen City Council explained the regulations governing signage in a 30mph area, but there remained a feeling within the community that additional signage was required.

The new road's traffic volume was at 10,000 on day of opening and had risen to the current level of just under 13,000. The new road has been designed for all future developments currently within the Local Plan. This caused considerable anger and consternation within the community as they believed that the expected volume was to be 10,000. They had been led to believe this by staff at Aberdeen City Council at the time, and press releases issued at the bridge opening had stated the figure of 10,000. There

was a lot of discussion about this, with local people clearly expressing that this difference in information left them feeling let down by Aberdeen City Council. It also partly explained why local people felt that the volume of traffic had an adverse affect on their community.

Actions

- It was agreed the community would identify other locations where traffic speeds and volumes were unacceptable and Aberdeen City Council would carry out additional monitoring and report those findings to the community. Potential actions to resolve any issues could then be discussed.
- Aberdeen City Council officers recommended, within the Third Don Review report, the placing of poles to carry a Variable Message Sign on a rotational basis at key locations on Tillydrone Road and within the Tillydrone community. This had also been identified as a solution by the community. It was agreed that the community would meet with Aberdeen City Council to agree the siting of these poles.
- It was stressed that these signs work best if they are moved around selected sites, as drivers can become 'blind' to them if they are left permanently in one place. The siting of the poles would allow this to happen.
- Aberdeen City Council officers also recommended installing a 'gateway' sign at the Tillydrone side of the Diamond Bridge alerting drivers that they were entering a residential area. The community had identified gateway signage as a potential solution, and it was agreed that the community would work with staff from Aberdeen City to agree siting and wording of any signage.
- Hayton Road had been identified as a priority for the community, because of the volume, speed of traffic and driver behaviour at the crossing. Aberdeen City Council had also identified that cars were rat running at the morning peak traffic period. The crossing also required improvement. Aberdeen City Council proposed that as a first step the crossing where the crossing patroller worked should be upgraded to LED lights, which would make the crossing more visible to drivers. They then proposed that they would work with the Hub team and the community to carry out further improvements. This could include the following:
 - raising both crossings on a road cushion that would force drivers to slow down
 - redesigning parking to take parked cars off the road to give better sight to pedestrians and drivers

- shortening the crossing points/distance they have to cross the road for pedestrians
 - looking to introduce some form of marking on the road before the crossing that would alert drivers that pedestrians were waiting to cross.
- It was proposed that a working group be set up to examine options for Hayton Road, including actions the community could take to soften Hayton Road, such as positioning planters and highlighting the crossing points.

The issue of both a 20mph area for the whole of Tillydrone, or a part-time 20mph area along Hayton Road, was also raised. It was explained that a Traffic Regulation Order would have to be introduced for this and a nine-month consultation period would have to take place. However, it was agreed that Aberdeen City Council and the community would discuss this as a possible solution in conjunction with current legislation and the speed results taken.

RAT RUNNING

It was acknowledged that this happened with drivers seeking quicker routes that avoided tailbacks at St Machar or the bus gate. It was also acknowledged that local drivers found it difficult to get out onto Tillydrone Road/Avenue and therefore went through Tillydrone instead, although officers had measured traffic gaps on Tillydrone Road and had found them within acceptable limits to allow drivers access the road. The Third Don Review had identified Gordon's Mill Road and Hayton Road as suffering from rat running.

It was agreed that Aberdeen City Council would examine the roads that the community identified as rat running routes and the length of time it took to get onto Tillydrone Road and discuss any options if required with the local community.

SAFETY AT CROSSINGS

The crossing at Hayton Road was identified as a key issue and the actions proposed on this have been explained above.

Concern was also raised about the siting and length of time it took for the crossings on Tillydrone Road/Avenue to operate. Aberdeen City Council explained the issues they have to consider when placing crossings (distance from side roads and distance from bus stops) and that the number of side roads and crossings on that stretch of road meant that there were limitations on where the crossings could go. The length of time it took for the crossings to operate and the time it gave to pedestrians to cross would be

checked and reported back to the community. However, these were set at the same interval as all of those within the city apart from Union Street.

CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS

This will be monitored and further discussion held after the results of the monitoring.

POLLUTION AND HEALTH

Aberdeen City staff agreed to share any detailed information they had on pollution monitoring that had been carried out as part of their Review with the community.

OTHER WORK UNDERTAKEN

WORKING WITH POLICE SCOTLAND

Local officers from Police Scotland have been positively involved with residents throughout the project. Officers have shared information about their experience of traffic issues and have followed up issues raised by the community. Support for the crossing patroller on Hayton Road has been particularly important, with officers stationed at the crossing to alert drivers to speed on a number of occasions. A number of operations to target driving and motor vehicle issues have also been carried out.

WORKING WITH RIVERBANK AND ST PETERS PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Staff from Living Streets worked with two of the main primary schools that children from Tillydrone attend.

Mapping of the route to school and discussion of the issues children face getting to school was held with children in P2, P4 and P6 at St Peter's Primary, which is located on the opposite side of Tillydrone Road from Tillydrone itself. Using a large-scale map children were asked to identify where they lived, how they got to school (walk or car) and the route they took to school. If they were driven to school, they were asked to identify a route they took to a local park. The exercise was informative as many children were driven to school from Tillydrone and appeared unaware of the walking routes they could take. The children who walked identified traffic volumes and speeds as an issue and identified many sites where speed made crossing the road difficult. The sites identified by the children agree with those identified by the adults in their mapping exercise. Interestingly, all of the children – including those driven to school – identified the streets outside the school as problematical due to parental traffic and parking near the school.

The staff at St Peter's are now exploring walking routes children could take to school. They're also focusing on road safety at various times in the school year and are interested in becoming involved in the Living Streets Walk to School (WOW) programme.

RIVERBANK PRIMARY

Riverbank Primary is situated just off Hayton Road, with many children using the crossing at Hayton Road to get to school. The school was offered – and has enthusiastically taken up – an offer to join the WOW programme. The school has a high

rate of children who walk to school, but wanted to use the WOW programme to maintain that rate, use it to encourage others to walk to school, and as a springboard to discuss road safety with children and parents.

To support this -- and also as a means of highlighting to the local community and drivers who travel through Tillydrone -- the school has worked with Living Streets and local community media company Stationhouse Media House (SHMU) to make a short film about the children's experience of walking to school. This focuses on the experiences of a small group of P6s as recording the journey to school involves pupils and parents discussing traffic and safety.

The film will be hosted on YouTube and will be shared on social media to raise awareness about children's safety. It will also provide a useful tool for the primary school to continue discussions with children and parents.

INVOLVING THE LOCAL MEDIA

Articles in the local evening paper have provided an important means to giving a positive story about the community in Tillydrone, the issues it suffers and the positive action it has taken.

NEXT STEPS

Living Streets' involvement in Tillydrone may be at an end, but there is a commitment from residents, schools, Aberdeen City Council and Police Scotland to continue to work together. Indeed, a partnership has been developed that didn't exist before.

The following commitments have been given:

- Work with residents to monitor speed and rat running
- Install Variable Message Signs and a Gateway feature; LED lights on the crossing at Hayton Road will also be introduced.
- Work with residents to design improvements to Hayton Road in conjunction with the development of the Hub.
- Consider a 20mph area as part of the overall approach to speed and safety within Tillydrone.

Aberdeen City Council acknowledges that funding will have to be sought for these improvements but are actively working to source this.

The community has the opportunity to continue to raise awareness about traffic, speed and safety through promotion of the children's route to school film.

Riverbank Primary School will continue to promote WOW and Living Streets will work with the school on route planning and marking to coincide with the improvements on Hayton Road.

Police Scotland will work with Riverbank Primary School to run speed checks and children led questionnaires about speeding motorists in Hayton Road. These will be repeated on a regular basis as the need arises. Police Scotland will undertake a police only campaign at the end of June to assess the impact of the child led operations on the behaviour of the regular Hayton Road users.



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In association with



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