

REPORT OF WALKING MEETING

In relation to road safety and moving around

DUNKELD AND BIRNAM

24 FEBRUARY 2022

BACKGROUND

1. This meeting was a continuation of a number of conversations between community organisations and individuals in Dunkeld & Birnam, and Perth and Kinross Council.

MEETING AIMS

2. The principle reason for the meeting was to allow an opportunity for officials and a councillor from Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) to hear directly from those in Dunkeld and Birnam about their concerns relating to road safety, and the ways people move around the settlements. The particular advantage of the walking meeting was that issues could be shown 'live' – with the opportunity for PKC representatives to give specific views as the meeting moved around Dunkeld and Birnam. The conversation could then be logged in this report.

IN ATTENDANCE

Perth and Kinross Council (PKC)

Grant Laing - Councillor
Daryl McKeown - Traffic and Network, Housing and Environment
Frank Mills - Traffic and Network, Housing and Environment
Chris Martin (standing in for Andy Clegg) – Community Greenspace

Dunkeld and Birnam Community Council

Andrew Cave (co-organiser, walking meeting)
Chris Claydon

Gien a Haund

Jan Silburn

Royal School of Dunkeld PPG

Sarah Marr
Amy Lorimer
Euan Robinson

Residents

Kat Brown
Sophie Cade
Graeme Cook (co-organiser, walking meeting)
Alex Kettles
Alan Wolfe

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

3. The community wishes to acknowledge the time given by PKC representatives, officials and the councillor who attended.

DISCLAIMER

4. This report, and the record contained therein, is largely from the perspective of one of the co-organisers who took notes throughout the walking meeting, but given the meeting format could only be party to certain conversations at certain times. There has not been time or capacity to test the contents of this report with others who were at the meeting – and there will have been other key points and conversations not captured. However it is hoped the report can act as a marker, and as a prompt for future action.

DISSEMINATION

5. As a first step, the final version of this report has been sent to as many of those on the walking meeting as the author has contacts for.

MEETING REPORT

6. This report follows the format of the meeting – logging issues where they were discussed. The report also includes areas where PKC said during the meeting that they could take action – and what that action should be. The report also includes suggestions made by local residents – some of which require a response from PKC as to viability.
7. PKC did say that they already have a list of priority projects – and that some of those areas and issues raised in this report were already on that list. PKC said that it would be useful if the community itself could come up with its own priority list. PKC further shared that they use a matrix to make decisions on where projects should be on that priority list.

PKC Action – PKC agreed to share their priority list as it stands; and to share the matrix and criterion on which they assess where on that list projects should go.

Community action – PKC identified that in the past it has been a challenge for the community itself to agree what it wants to happen – and without such agreement / consensus it is much harder for them to proceed. This seems to be a clear action for appropriate community groups to take forward. How to achieve agreement and communicate that effectively with PKC.

North Car Park – Strategic Issues Discussion

8. The meeting began in the North Car Park, with attendees introducing themselves. The time and space available here was used for residents to air

strategic issues – that is those which could be considered to apply to wide areas of the settlements. These included :

Levels and types of traffic

9. The amount of traffic, particularly at certain times of the day, and year, was raised as a significant issue. This linked to car parking availability for locals, or those using services, discussed later. Overall:

- There was an overall acknowledgement that the levels of traffic in Dunkeld and Birnam were very high, and appeared to be increasing.
- Some types of traffic caused particular issues, including heavy goods vehicles.
- More intensive traffic levels could be identified at particular times of the day.
- It was acknowledged that it is not just visitors who generate high volumes of traffic – or are to be found speeding – it is those more local to both Dunkeld and Birnam, and the wider community.

PKC Action – PKC agreed that strips could be installed around the village to monitor traffic levels, and speed (and potentially type of vehicle). Between the meeting and this report being completed, some of these appear to have been installed and removed (but this is subject to PKC verification). PKC agreed that historical record from previous monitoring could be released.

Active travel to reduce traffic levels

10. Directly related to levels of traffic, there was recognition that encouragement, and facilities for, more active travel around Dunkeld and Birnam would help:

- to reduce traffic
- increase health benefits (better air quality, and more exercise taken)
- benefit tourism

11. It was felt to be reassuring that PKC had brought along a Greenspace representative, who was able to part of the conversation about how people chose to move about Dunkeld, and how the walking and cycling network could best be improved to encourage people out of their cars, particularly for short distances – and where they were able to do so. It was also acknowledged that by no means did everyone in both villages either have a car or have access to one – walking and cycling infrastructure is critical.

PKC Action – PKC agreed to take note of the specific pathway issues identified through this report, and to consider them alongside roadside pavements (for which the roads engineers in attendance had most jurisdiction).

Seating

12. Related to active travel, it was raised that seating had to be in the right places – there was acknowledgement of a parallel conversation with PKC on this issue, particularly involving Gien a Haund – and that it was important that these conversations also joined up in PKC. It was also recognised that the community council had been having conversations with PKC about paths provision more generally (that is non-roadside paths).

PKC and Community Action – this appears to be an area where clarity on the status of existing and ongoing conversations between community representatives / organisations and PKC would be helpful. It may be that this information could be pulled together by DBCC. Since the meeting, there appears to have been considerable progress on seating.

Speed Limits

13. This was an area raised by many of those present.

- PKC officials talked about the 20mph limits imposed through road orders, but which were temporary, and could lapse soon. There was shared concern that not only should this not happen, but that the retained 20mph zone should be extended throughout the settlements of Dunkeld and Birnam – this was regarded as an absolute minimum.
- PKC officials appeared to support this – but mentioned that 20 mph zones on their own are not enough, and that physical measures are also required if those limits are expected to be adhered to. There appeared to be related support among the gathering for physical measures to slow traffic down¹.
- There were specific asks around where the boundaries should be for 20mph, 40 mph and the national speed limit (60mph around the settlements).

Specifically PKC were asked to:

- Ensure that Spoutwell was included in any new 20mph zone
- That the 40mph limit on the Boat Road be extended beyond the entrances to Eastwood house, and ideally to where Brae Street meets the Boat Road
- That the 20mph zone be extended past the entrance to Dunkeld House Hotel, perhaps to the junction of the Blairgowrie road

PKC Action –

- PKC agreed that road orders delivering 20mph zones should be extended (in terms of time) and that they could share what would need to happen for these to be made permanent
- PKC agreed the specific points in the three bullet points above should be rectified, that is:
 - Ensure that Spoutwell was included in any new 20mph zone
 - Ensure that the 40mph limit on the Boat Road be extended beyond the entrances to Eastwood House, and ideally to where Brae Street meets the Boat Road
 - Extend the 20mph zone past the entrance to Dunkeld House, perhaps to the junction of the Blairgowrie road

Dropped kerbs

14. The issue of installing dropped kerbs to facilitate access to certain shops and services was raised. This is covered later in this report – in relation to particular sites.

Priority, resident, worker and visitor parking

15. A number of issues were raised around the linked subjects of:

- Ensuring there is appropriate parking available for residents in Dunkeld
- Parking for staff in shops and services (many of whom live outwith Dunkeld and Birnam, and for whom the bus service timings / routes do not work)
 - Related it was observed that such parking can, in itself, lead to congestion, and lack of access to those same shops and services
- Parking to allow access to shops and services by those who have no alternative but to use a car – this included discussion around the possibility of dropped kerbs (or not) and priority short term parking at key services (such as the chemist or dentists).

16. The underlying pressures around parking relate partly to the high numbers of visitor traffic (and so congestion, with related air quality implications) at certain times of the year (and at certain days of those times of the year, and even certain hours of those days). A number of ideas were put forward as to potential ways forward. These included that:

- Shop and service delivery staff could be given free access to parking in the Boat Road car park and the North Car Park.
- Dunkeld residents could also have permit and free access to those car parks.
- Related, some (or all?) on-street car parking in Dunkeld could be time limited and paid for (perhaps during peak day times) – and perhaps residents could park freely for these time limited periods too – there are

issues around those who need to park briefly for access to services (for example, to collect prescriptions), and whether they should be charged to do so.

- Related, that those requiring priority parking – either for access to shops or services, or as residents, could get it (blue badge holders, for example).

There was a range of views on these options (and there may well have been other options). PKC were clear that many of these had been explored previously – but the barrier had been community agreement.

PKC Action – explain what parking measures have already been scoped in Dunkeld (and Birnam) and share this information. On a specific, consider whether there is an engineering option for a dropped kerb at the pharmacy.

Community Action – once this information is in hand, ascertain how to reach enough of a community consensus as to be able to communicate such to PKC.

Car parking in Birnam

17. The possibility of using car parking spaces in Birnam, and encouraging people to walk over the bridge to Dunkeld was suggested – and other options e.g. travel by shuttle bus. Options for this could include enhanced signage, and the encouragement of people to park in areas which could include:

- The GP surgery (at the weekend or public holidays)
- Parking for the Recreation Club
- Parking in the industrial estate off Station Road (but ownership a potential issue).

Community Action – it could be explored whether any of the options above are viable, whether any access or other (e.g. insurance) issues may be a concern, and what any next steps may need to be

PKC Action - PKC could advise on any related signage issues

Adherence to existing speed limits in adjacent settlements

Communication prior to the meeting outlined that existing speed limits, such as at Inchmagrannachan, were little adhered to, and that it was unclear how this could be rectified.

PKC Action - PKC could advise on measures taken elsewhere to ensure adherence to new and lower speed limits (where no physical measures in place).

Walking meeting – hotspots and conversations

18. The meeting left North Car Park and proceeded to the main cross junction between Brae Street, High Street and Bridge Street. Hotspots and issues are shown – whilst the depth of conversation at each was hard to capture, it is hoped this list can give an agreed starting point as to where the issues, or points for further conversation/action, lie.

Main road into Dunkeld passing by entrance to Dunkeld House Hotel

19. As noted above, this was identified as an area of high speed, and it was requested that this be made part of the 20mph zone.

Spoutwell

20. This is a road under the national speed limit (60mph). PKC officials said that could be easily rectified (presumably by extension of the 20 mph zone = perhaps for the entirety of that road).

Main cross junction between Brae Street, High Street and Bridge Street

21. This was an area already identified by PKC as requiring some action – and officials suggested that traffic calming and easier pedestrian use could be achieved by having a ‘continual pavement’ across the entirety of the junction. This would both slow traffic down, and make it an easier walking and wheeling environment.

The Cross and High Street

22. Some of the ‘strategic issues’ identified earlier apply here, but there were also specific issues raised including:

- Double yellow lines being parked on
- Pavement parking
- Residents having space to park.

23. The wide area of parking outside the Duchess Ann Hall was identified as an area for potential conversation. Some felt that this could be used to allow more car parking, others felt it was appropriate for this to remain a wider pavement for pedestrian and other use.

24. The Cross and High Street perhaps encapsulate many of the issues across the village in microcosm – where some residents do require access to parking somewhere – but whether that always needs to be in this area, or whether another solution, such as continual free access to the PKC car parks would be a potential solution.

Under Telford Bridge (beside allotments)

25. It was explained by residents that this was an area used for informal parking, particularly at busy periods in holidays and through the summer. There are issues of ownership, safety (for car users and pedestrians), and in particular in relation to access to this area from the Boat Road (this is a very tight junction). A useful first step would be to clarify ownership (thought to be PKC).

Pharmacy

26. Issues were raised that access could be improved for the pharmacy by installing a disabled parking bay and / or a dropped kerb. PKC officials reflected that a designated bay would reduce parking amounts elsewhere, but was possible. They suggested that a dropped kerb was also possible, however for some a traditional kerb was actually easier for accessing vehicles.

27. The community suggested that PKC could scope whether a designated bay was possible, and any design options for improving access to the pharmacy from vehicles.

Boat Road

28. Traffic is very fast in and out of village once through the 40mph zone on Boat Road. A potential solution, to extend the 40mph zone, was discussed earlier. Related, car parking on the verge on the boat Road has been an issue. It is understood this is now prohibited as part of a road order.

Junction between Boat Road and Bridge Street

29. This junction was discussed as being a huge issue, particularly when HGVs have to use it - driving into Dunkeld and turning left across the bridge they have to take a wide berth across both carriageways, and often wheels can clip or mount the pavement on the bridge side. This is an extremely dangerous spot for pedestrian crossing – there is no supported crossing, visibility is very poor and it can be intimidating.

Telford Bridge

30. Safety on Telford Bridge was discussed at some length. Whilst opinion varied as to how dangerous the road is for pedestrians and non-motorised vehicles, this is felt to be an area of prime importance for action. One point made was that the bridge is not just a worry for those who either can or choose to use it, it is also a physical barrier for many who might choose to use it – but avoid it completely. Issues which emerged during discussion include:

- Speed of traffic over the Bridge (this is a 20mph zone, routinely flaunted and with no physical on-road measures to slow traffic down) – this is an issue both ways, with fast traffic coming in from A9 and

accelerating on a straight towards Dunkeld; and traffic accelerating over the bridge towards the A9.

- Narrowness of pavement – impossible for a wheelchair and pedestrians to pass each other without stepping into the road.
- Issues exacerbated by size of traffic using the Bridge – routinely HGVs and buses meet each other on the bridge.

31. PKC suggested solutions, which they said had been explored numerous times already and include (but they reiterate the need for community cohesion on these):

- Single lane traffic with lights (could be permanently on green either end, depending on priority / time of year).
- Wider pavement (one or both)

32. Community representatives also suggested reinstating one way pavements, as through Covid.

33. The approach to the bridge is understood to be one area where PKC have monitored flow, speed and type of vehicle before – an action could be for that to be shared, allowing a common evidence base for next steps discussion.

PKC Action - share previous options explored, and the work done on these. Share any vehicle usage data

Community action – once further evidence received, initiate conversation to agree any preferred options

Junction into Bruce Gardens, and Junction into Kirkfield Place (one way emerging onto A923)

34. Both of these junctions represent a break in pavement – and so a break in a safe and continuous pathway from Birnam to Dunkeld. Use of the Zebra crossing does not remove this break. A possible solution may be a continual pavement at Bruce Gardens, and improved sightlines at the Kirkfield place junction.

PKC Action - share options for continual pavement at Bruce Gardens, and improved sightlines at the Kirkfield Place junction.

Zebra Crossing

35. The zebra crossing is useful – but anecdotal and empirical evidence shows it is routinely driven through, often at speed – and in both directions. This is an integral part of communications through the villages, and forms a vital part of a safe route to school. In conversation PKC outlined that vehicles only must

give way if a pedestrian has started on the crossing, however it is worth reproducing what the Highway Code says on zebra crossings:

Rule 195

Zebra and parallel crossings. *As you approach a zebra crossing*

- *look out for pedestrians waiting to cross and be ready to slow down or stop to let them cross*
- *you should give way to pedestrians waiting to cross*
- *you **MUST** give way when a pedestrian has moved onto a crossing*
- *allow more time for stopping on wet or icy roads*
- *do not wave, flash your lights or use your horn to invite pedestrians across; this could be dangerous if another vehicle is approaching*
- *be patient, do not sound your horn or rev your engine as this can be intimidating*
- *be aware of pedestrians approaching from the side of the crossing.*

36. PKC indicated that replacement of the zebra crossing with a traffic light crossing is already under discussion (and understood to be on a priority list – it would be useful to know where this is at).

PKC Action - PKC advise where work to install traffic lights is at in the priority list – and action it.

Access to Craigvinean Surgery and the Recreation Ground, related facilities and the core path network

37. As an adopted road, this was discussed as a key problem area, with no pavement or pedestrian priority access beyond the co-working space at Laghmor on what can be a busy thoroughfare to the surgery, and onto the recreation club (which is about to have an upgrade likely to generate more footfall and traffic). It was noted that a through-path, little used extends from the zebra crossing area on the river side of Laghmor co-working space and the attached domestic property (so between Lagbeag and Bruce Gardens). The status of this path could be clarified.

PKC Action - PKC to advise what options have been previously explored for this road, and what the possibilities might be (either a pavement or a clear pedestrian route. Also advise on status of path between Lagbeag and Bruce Gardens).

Community action – explore what conversations may already have taken place in relation to the development at the recreation club; and define the status of the through path.

Junction between A923 and Perth Road (below war memorial)

38. It was discussed that traffic routinely comes off the A9 quickly, even with an engineered corner, and continues at pace either over Telford Bridge, or accelerating down Perth Road.

PKC Action – 20mph zone, clear signage and physical measures would aid the situation

Route past school along Perth Road

39. It was discussed that this is an area of road with:

- traffic routinely accelerating along a straight stretch of road in an urban area – perhaps encouraged by hedges on either side of the road. Traffic has often come straight off the fast A9.
- one of the few 30mph zones past a school anywhere in Perth and Kinross
- very poor line of sight footpaths reaching the road from the war memorial (2 paths) and a main footway from Birnam.

PKC Action – Ensure 20mph initiated as soon as possible (though this would be community wide anyway, as discussed earlier) and include physical measures. Investigate improvements to crossings from war memorial, and footway from Birnam. Share any vehicle use data (it is understood such monitoring has been carried out recently).

Perth Road Junction at school

40. This was discussed as wholly unsuitable for a junction outside a school, and used as a main thoroughfare and turning off point for traffic to the school (staff and others) as well as to a highly populated area of the village (Willowbank and beyond). The junction has no safe crossing option, and no physical measures to slow traffic. PKC advised a plan was in place for traffic lights and pedestrian crossings – including across the main road through Birnam.

PKC Action – Ensure 20mph initiated as soon as possible (though this would be community wide anyway, as discussed earlier) and traffic lights and pedestrian crossings to be installed as an absolute priority. Consideration should be given to pedestrian access down the school side of the road into and beyond the school gate. Phased lighting on the lights could be on default green for main road.

Access to Stell Park, and road crossing

41. This is a busy vehicle and pedestrian route, with sightline issues for vehicles leaving Stell Park. There is no safe pedestrian crossing over this road.

PKC Action – as part of related measures, explore a continuous pavement at this section to allow for safer crossing. Also to explore improved sightlines at the junction.

Bus stop on east side of Perth Road (Stell Park side)

42. This is one of the main Breadalbane High School pick-up points, and a very well used bus stop at other times. It is also a crossing point for the main road and is very dangerous for four reasons:

- The speed limit here is 30mph, with traffic often going more quickly;
- There is no safe crossing from the school side of the road to this crossing – indeed there is no safe crossing (zebra or traffic lights) anywhere on this stretch of road, from one junction of the A9 in Little Dunkeld, to the next junction to the A9 at the far end of Birnam.
- At school bus pick-up points, traffic either halts behind the bus, or moves around it – children crossing are in obvious danger
- The safety measures at the bus stop are wholly inadequate, with only a short rail affording any safety – and very poor lines of sight for those waiting at the stop.

Route towards and through Birnam – along Perth Road

43. This is perhaps one of the longest village routes in PKC area with both 30mph limit, and no physical measures to slow traffic – as well as no pedestrian crossings – on an urban road running for over a mile.

PKC Action – 20mph zone, clear signage and physical measures would aid the situation. IN addition to a pedestrian crossing at the school, thought needs given to other pedestrian crossings at key points, including

- At a point between the old (now fire damaged) car garage and the post office
- At a point beyond the post office and between there and Torlee Road.

Birnam Hotel

44. It was discussed that the area outside Birnam Hotel could be much improved for pedestrian use. PKC suggested the pavement section could be made explicit and wider.

PKC Action – ownership of the area outside may need identified, however PKC suggested the pavement could be defined – it would be useful to know what the options now are.

Access to railway station

45. Whilst access to the railway station is perhaps complicated as this is a privately maintained road, nonetheless this is a key, and critical, corridor for active travel in Dunkeld and Birnam. There is no dedicated pedestrian facility, and the station itself is completely inaccessible to those in a wheelchair or pushing a pram (aside from the access issues getting onto trains).

PKC Action – share what measures may have been previously explored for this critical route, and access to the station (in particular what conversations have taken place with Scotrail and Network Rail Scotland). Explore possible continuous pavement where private road meets Perth Road.

Junction at Best One

46. As well as being an area where pedestrian crossing needs more consideration, this junction was discussed as having poor sightlines for drivers emerging from St Mary's Road. This has direct implications for the safety of other road users, and pedestrians.

PKC Action – share options for improved sightlines at this junction. In addition, share engineering options (continuous pavement?) for Station Road and Perth Road pedestrian crossings.

Post Office access and parking

47. The Post Office and Chattan Tea Room are integral and essential locations and service providers. It was recognised in discussion that the car parking areas there are essential, but that more could be done to slow traffic past the site – and to ensure the safety of road users and pedestrians were better considered. It was recognised that use of the car parking facilities does involve driving on the pavement.

PKC Action – share options for delineation of pedestrian and road vehicle areas, and ensure options are available for pedestrians to cross to the other side of the road more easily if they so choose.

Route towards Torwood park and beyond

48. Whilst this constitutes Perth Road already referred to, it was discussed that this is where another long, clear straight appears - and traffic can accelerate along it – in both directions.

PKC Action – 20mph zone, clear signage and physical measures

Junctions to southern entrance / exit of St Mary's Road Inshewan, Erigmore and Torlee Road

49. The walking route on roads ceased at the Post Office, but these junctions are also critical for consideration – along Perth Road – and were mentioned as needing to be part of the overall package.

PKC Action – 20mph zone, clear signage and physical measures (potentially including continuous pavements).

PATHWAYS

50. The walking meeting route back to Dunkeld from the Post Office was down Oak Road, and onto the paths through Jubilee Park and along the river. It was discussed that work could be done to ensure the core paths in Birnam and Dunkeld were usable not just for walkers, but for those in wheelchairs and using prams too. There would clearly need to be a lot of work done in our settlements for that to be the case – a single example is that it is impossible to access the (poorly) signposted routes to the Birnam Oak if in a wheelchair, if coming from the direction of the Best One shop and through Jubilee Park.

PKC and Community Action – the community greenspace officer in attendance was keen to talk about the key role paths away from roads play in communications and networks in Dunkeld and Birnam. There is already conversation ongoing between Dunkeld and Birnam Community Council on paths – and it is suggested this needs some support.

PKC Action – as a specific, the greenspace officer noted that the wooden based steps from Jubilee Park down to the river need work – and said he could look into that. The same was true of the steps down from Willowbank – but note steps have been installed into the Orchard since the walking meeting – to be applauded.

SUMMATION

51. The walking meeting format seemed to be of interest and particular use to both community and PKC representatives. It would be interesting to carry out an annual appraisal, perhaps based on this report, to be able to report on action and activity.

Graeme Cook
Final Version 1.0
1 July 2022