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to: letters <letters@theherald.co.uk>
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subject: Letter for possible publication

Dear Editor

As something of a 'cycling lobbyist' myself, I agree strongly with much of the letter from your octogenarian 'pedestrian lobbyist' Andrew McCrae (Herald 13 October).

He is 100% right to call for separate cyclist routes on main roads, even if this entails some reduction in parking spaces. How tragic that SNP and Conservative councillors in South Ayrshire are removing such a cyclist route even before its effect has been analysed statistically, as recently reported in the Herald.

His recommendation of 20mph throughout urban areas is being adopted by Edinburgh City Council (except for a limited network of arterial roads). Many other councils are interested, but the legal Orders required are very complex and the Scottish Government is unwilling to simplify things for councils by changing the rules to a 20mph urban default.

Whilst advance stop boxes at traffic lights have some problems, they give a much 'clearer view' for the adjacent pedestrian crossing, as Mr McCrae requests. I was told informally by a council officer that they had helped reduce casualties to all types of road user, thanks to the better visibility of all and by all. Of course, Mr McCrae is right that more crossings are needed.

The government also needs to introduce presumed liability (not the same as presumed guilt). This would presume liability on the cyclist in a cycle/pedestrian crash (as well as on the motorist in a car/walker or car/cycle crash) and so would hopefully discourage anti-social cycling (and anti-social motoring). Again the Scottish Government is unwilling to take this simple step to improve courtesy and safety on our roads and on those paths which are designated for shared use.

The one point where I'd disagree with Mr McCrae is health - the statistics are very clear that, even with present traffic conditions, someone who regularly gets around by bike adds years to their life, as well as life to their years. I am sure the same is true for walking, as demonstrated by your octogenarian correspondent!!

Yours Sincerely

Dave du Feu
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