

## **Consultation on closing Crawlees Rd, Oatslie Rd, Roslin Glen**

Spokes Dalkeith response, October 2020

I would like to respond to the consultation regarding Spaces for People (SfP) on behalf of Spokes Dalkeith.

The response of Spokes Dalkeith members to these proposals was mixed. With regards adding permeable filters to Crawlees Rd and Oatslie Rd, members pointed out that these would be fine, but may not have a large impact as these routes are not heavily used by motor-traffic, and may not be significantly better links than existing routes for cyclists and walkers. Regarding Roslin Glen, there was a wide range of responses with some members in favour and some opposed. Members tended to think that this could be a useful link across the Esk valley (of which there are few), but that there were concerns regarding whether traffic still accessing the car park at the bottom plus the steep gradient would deter novice cyclists from using this route.

If the proposals as they stand are rejected, may we suggest that speed-limits on these roads are reduced and traffic calming, pavement widening and/or cycle-lanes introduced?

As a general point, the group is surprised that Midlothian Council has prioritised closing rural roads to cars, rather than focussing on village and town centres where encouraging people to walk and cycle to work or school is far more viable, and where the dangerous impacts of high traffic level and air pollution is greatest. Additionally, other areas (including Edinburgh and East Lothian) have taken SfP as a chance to add protection to major commuter routes, which has not occurred in Midlothian. We are also confused that the council is suggesting fairly radical actions like closing Roslin Glen to through traffic when (based on the assessment table released by the council) much more modest suggestions were rejected out of hand due to their impact on traffic being deemed too great.

Furthermore, Spokes Dalkeith members were repeatedly told by councillors that any bid to SfP would be based upon the Midlothian Active Travel plan and any suggestions which deviated from the plan would be unlikely to be implemented. We note that these road closures are not included on the active travel plan (which is understandable given their nature), which begs the question as to why we were repeatedly told that the active travel plan would form the basis for the SfP bid. The time to introduce many of these changes would have been in spring or early summer so that people could get into the habit of using them in good weather, and they would be ready for schools going back. It is not clear to us why this has been delayed until November, and with only a one week consultation when these proposals were funded months ago.

We again reiterate that there are many residents within Midlothian with a strong interest in improving walking and cycling routes, and decades of shared experience of using the roads and paths across the region. As discussed previously with councillors (CC'd), we strongly suggest following East Lothians lead in setting up a formal active travel or cycling forum, so that the council may tap into that enthusiasm, knowledge and experience.

