

PE1595/FF

William Waddell Letter of 11 January 2016

Dear Petition Scrutineers,

I am writing this in support of Mr Taylor's petition as it concerns a safety matter crucial to all pedestrians and drivers in Scotland.

Mr Taylor's petition is about the town of Kirkintilloch, my father's home town, and as a Glaswegian I knew this though now I live in Gloucestershire. My sister and friends still live in East Dunbartonshire where I regularly visit so I have an interest in Kirkintilloch.

Mr Taylor and I are both blind members of The National Federation of the Blind, which is how I know about the proposed road changes for Kirkintilloch. I live near the city of Gloucester in which a similar road system change took place in 2011. This change which comes under the general name of the Shared Space philosophy has caused distress to pedestrians and drivers and in particular the blind in Commercial Road where it is situated.

The Shared Space philosophy is one where to speed traffic flow the traffic signals and crossing systems are removed from the roadway and the pavement kerbs are removed and vehicles are made to slow down to 20mph.

All pedestrians and drivers are in those new schemes and are told to cross the road by making eye contact with drivers to negotiate who uses the road space first, which for many people is difficult and impossible for blind people.

In Gloucester after years of petitioning the County Highways to reinstate the controlled crossing which was removed when the Shared Space was introduced, they have installed a Courtesy Crossing and tactile metal guide strips to the crossing for blind people. This has meant that at busy times pedestrians stream across the Courtesy Crossing holding up vehicles for long periods causing much anger in drivers. The Highways planners refuse to put in a Puffin controlled sound crossing which would give equal priority to pedestrians and drivers because they say that it would destroy the ethos of the Shared Space. This is an instance of planners sticking to a false idea out of pride and ignoring practical reality.

It appears that the Council in Kirkintilloch have the same mentality as those in Gloucester, that is putting ideology before reality. And it is happening all over Scotland. This is why I support Mr Taylor's petition of a moratorium on Shared Spaces in Scotland. I would like to think that Scottish Parliamentarians have more

wisdom in this matter than those in Whitehall. I therefore urge you to adopt Mr Taylor's petition, for the safety of all road users in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Wm. Waddell