

ROAD SAFETY TRIAL PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES/NOTES

Drymen Community Development Trust (DCDT) Monday 21 August 2023, Drymen Village Hall

Meeting purpose was to give and gather information on the Road Safety Trial currently in place at the Village Square. On the stage, DCDT Directors - Richard Boddington (Chair), Ewan Mackay (Vice-Chair) and Simon Reid (Secretary). Other Directors of the Trust were in the Hall (Hilary Soanes, Rae Gibb, Struan Robb).

Richard Boddington, Chair of Drymen Community Development Trust (DCDT) welcomed all to this Public Meeting. The Chair apologised on behalf of the DCDT to those who have been upset by elements of the Road Safety Trial. The goal of the Trial is to slow traffic and deliver a crossing for the community of Drymen – something that has been a high priority for the community for over ten years, as highlighted in both the 2012 Community Action Plan and the 2023 Place Plan.

The DCDT aims to represent the whole of the community. The Chair expressed the willingness of the DCDT to change or remove the Trial if that is what the community want.

Agenda items

- Introduction to the DCDT
- History of Road Safety Trial
- Where are we now?
- Feedback to date
- Proposal for next steps
- Questions and Discussion

The Chair delivered a presentation which is available at: <https://www.drymen.org/road-safety-trial-faq>. The summary below contains the main points from that presentation.

Introduction to the DCDT

The presentation started by highlighting the difference between Drymen Community Development Trust (DCDT) and Drymen Community Council (DCC).

- DCDT is a limited company and a registered charity with Directors. As such it can raise funds by acting as a commercial company or successfully apply for grant funding.
- DCC is a statutory body set up by Stirling Council that acts as a link between the community and statutory bodies and vice versa. It folded in 2022 and has recently been re-formed.

The DCDT was set up in 2005 to own and maintain the Square. The DCDT insures and inspects the Square, organises the Piping on the Square, the Christmas tree and the Advent Windows. It owns two e-bikes for use by the community and organises the Cycle Meanders. It produced the Village Place Plan (www.drymen.org/plan) and organises the village spring clean and the maintenance of the defibrillator.

In addition, it has attracted significant grant funding (>£100k) to implement improvements such as mono-blocking parking spaces and refurbishing the bus shelter on the square.

History of the Road Safety Trial

The Chair explained the history of the Road Safety Trial. Its history goes back to at least the 2012 Community Action Plan which has now been superseded by the 2023 Place Plan. Both demonstrated a desire in the community to slow traffic and have safer road crossings. Stirling Council offered a pedestrian crossing in 2021, but this was not supported by the previous Community Council and so could not be installed.

The DCDT successfully obtained a grant to undertake a road safety trial in July 2022, which was supported by DCC and Stirling Council. DCDT shared information about the trial online and using notices, flyers, Drymen Reporter articles and a public meeting.

The Chair explained how alternatives were considered, advice from Stirling Council sought, support by the DCC obtained and plans drawn up by a Transport Consultancy. Plans were altered slightly after comments were received from statutory bodies and the trial layout was independently audited. The Chair explained how the unexpected (but welcome) introduction of the 20 mph speed limit had delayed the Trial's introduction and required additional traffic monitoring surveys.

The white lines and the planters have been installed but it was noted that some parts of the Trial were incomplete and/or incorrectly implemented.

These were:

- Lines between the planters denoting dropped kerbs and a potential crossing point are missing.
- Centre markings on Main Street (Gartmore Road) are slightly misaligned making one side of the road marginally narrower than necessary.
- The marked crossing area is not yet installed.

These outstanding items will be installed/corrected as soon as possible.

Feedback

The Chair acknowledged that feedback on Facebook had been largely negative. However, feedback received via email was far more balanced, with several supporters noting that they felt unable to speak up on Facebook due to the nature of some of the comments posted.

The Chair highlighted some specific issues raised in the feedback. In particular, the issues of blue badge parking and delivery vehicles needed to be considered during the Trial.

It was recognised by the Chair that the Road Safety Trial had been divisive within the community, and it was important for the community to be able to come together behind a way forward that had majority backing.

Proposal for Next Steps

Drymen Community Development Trust (DCDT) has asked Drymen Community Council (DCC) to undertake an independent survey of the views of the community. DCC are the statutory consultees for road issues and are therefore well placed to undertake an arms-length survey.

DCC will design & distribute the questionnaire, the results will be published and the DCDT will proceed based on the outcome.

Questions & Discussion *[though many of the questions have been captured here, it is the intention to reproduce a range of questions and not every individual question or statement].*

At this point the audience was asked for its comments and questions after listening to the presentation by the DCDT.

- The DCDT was asked what Stirling Council's plan was for Drymen.
 - *Audience: Paul Henke, one of our local councillors in attendance kindly explained that Stirling Council has no specific plan and very limited funds.*
- Comment was made that £10 was too much to join DCDT and that it was not democratic.
 - *DCDT: None of the consultations carried out in the village have been limited to members of the DCDT. Last thing that was wanted is a divided community. We need consensus from all. Without consensus, it will be difficult to obtain funding for village projects in the future.*
- Comment was made that crossings are of no use without flashing lights: Belisha beacons, or stop/go lights [e.g., Pelican, Puffin or Toucan crossings].
 - *DCDT: In 2021 DCC did not support installation of a full pedestrian crossing when grant funding of £30k was available to Stirling Council. It is hoped that this trial is a step towards a formal crossing in the village.*
- DCDT asked, once the survey is completed will the findings be included in the Place Plan?
 - *DCDT: The Place Plan is already ratified by the National Park. However, it is accepted that changes are inevitable and the survey findings will be used to guide this trial and future DCDT activities.*

- DCDT was asked why/when was the square acquired by DCDT?
 - *DCDT: It was sold in 2005 for £1 by Duke of Montrose to the newly formed DCDT.*
 - *Audience: A study was undertaken by Atkins in 2005 looking at redeveloping the square but did not progress. A later study and consultation was undertaken by The Paul Hogarth Company in in around 2012. A grant of around £1m was applied for, but was awarded to a neighbouring village.*
- “In 60 years, I have never heard of an accident or near accident occurring in the centre of Drymen.”
 - *DCDT: There have been 3 reportable incidents in the last 17 years according to official records.*
- “Roads in Drymen are no busier now than in the past.”
 - *DCDT: This view was noted. DCDT do not have figures on traffic volume.*
- “Two children had to be pulled back from between the planters. We need a vote tonight.”
 - *DCDT: If the outcome of the survey is to remove the Road Safety Trial, then it will be removed.*
- “More people are walking outside the planters i.e., in the road. The rhododendrons are growing too big.”
 - *DCDT: The rhododendrons will be pruned to keep them at a safe height.*
- “I was driving into Drymen and there were lots of tourists walking amongst the planters and looking as if they may try and cross the road – it was very confusing and I had to slow down.”
 - *DCDT: The intention of the Road Safety Trial is to slow down traffic coming through the centre of the village.*
- “Crossing the road around the junction at the Hawthorns is difficult. Cars lined up cause congestion. Traffic coming from potentially 4 different directions. 20mph not being followed. The only way to stop speeding is road bumps or cameras. This scheme does not achieve reductions in speed. Speeding past the Old Bank/Skoosh is much more dangerous & dodging in and out of the traffic much more an issue.”
 - *DCDT: Agree that there are several areas of the village where road safety and crossing points could be improved, and the DCDT will work with DCC on those areas.*
- A discussion about communication took place as several people stated that they did not see anything about the Road Safety Trial before it was in place. A flyer door drop had not been effective.
 - *Ideas were sought from the audience as to the best ways of communicating - door drop, a Village Square noticeboard and the Drymen Reporter were all suggested.*
- “The DCDT should communicate in The Reporter earlier and not leave it until the last minute.”
 - *DCDT acknowledged that in once case The Drymen Reporter was delivered after the event. DCDT added that although it meets the deadlines for submission of articles it does not have control over when it is delivered.*

- A Blue Badge resident explained how they were unable to park on double yellow lines anymore as with the new layout as they would be blocking the road and are no longer able to use the Spar.
 - *DCDT: Agree that something needs to be done to resolve the question of disabled parking in the centre of the village.*
- “School Bus double parks 9 out of 10 mornings.”
 - *DCDT: This is typically because of the Winnock Hotel coaches and private cars being parked at the bus stop. We will discuss with the new management at the Winnock Hotel to see if they can avoid clashing with the school buses.*
- “The Post Office and Bank Vans cannot park on the square anymore.”
 - *DCDT: Stirling Road car park is available.*
- “Other villages use ‘smiley faces – your speed is’ at the entrances to their village. This is effective.”
 - *DCDT: Vehicle Activated Signs have been discussed with Stirling Council before, but will be raised again now that the speed limit has been reduced to 20 mph.*
- “The village square is unique. It has history. A meeting place etc. This Committee is changing it too fast.”
 - *DCDT: Agree that the village square is unique and accept that some people are unhappy with some of the changes.*
- “We are still waiting for the chicane to be removed at the bottom of the village. Stirling Council said that was temporary.”
 - *DCDT: This is a matter for DCC. Our understanding is that the Stirling Council assessment is that it has successfully reduced speed into the village.*
- “The timing was all wrong. The planters arrived in the middle of the tourist season.”
 - *DCDT: The Road Safety Trial was scheduled for installation in the spring, but there was a delay due to the introduction of the 20mph speed limit, which required an additional traffic survey. DCDT agreed that Stirling Council should introduce a 20mph limit in the 2022/23 financial year, rather than re-apply and risk it not happening.*
- “How much has been spent on this trial?”
 - *DCDT: Approximately £15,000 to date. The money spent on the Road Safety Trial by DCDT is from a grant provided by a charity, The Road Safety Trust, who raise money by running driving awareness courses for drivers who have committed driving offences. It is not tax payers’ money, as some have suggested.*
- “The trial is on a bend, at a junction and there is just too much happening.”
 - *DCDT: Advice from the engineering consultants and safety advisors is that the crossing location is the one with the best lines of sight in the centre of the village.*
- “There is no new signage advising of the change of road layout, especially outside the Pottery.”
 - *DCDT: Comment noted.*

- “116 survey responses for the Place Plan are not representative of the entire community. If that’s okay, then we have at least that number here tonight so let’s have a vote.”
 - *DCDT: The Place Plan survey was widely publicised and available for all to complete. There are many people in the community with views on the trial who are unable to attend this meeting and so it would not be appropriate to have a vote. We have asked DCC to survey the entire community and the outcome will determine the way forward.*
- A teacher asked on behalf of the children in the village if they had had a say?
 - *DCDT: Yes, children were independently canvassed for opinions and surveys received back. The overwhelming feedback was a need for more public transport.*
- “Why can’t we have lots of crossings to slow down traffic and create a safer walking route? Stirling Road, Balmaha Road etc?”
 - *This kind of feedback will hopefully be brought out during the DCC survey. It is important for the DCDT to understand what people want as well as what they don’t want.*
- “Regarding the proposed survey, this should be for other villages that use Drymen, not just Drymen residents.”
 - *DCDT appreciate that Drymen is a hub for other communities and DCC will take this into account when conducting the survey.*
- “Questions should be ‘open-ended’ not ‘closed’ in the survey.”
 - *DCDT: The survey is likely to include some closed and some open questions, to ensure that all views are captured while still ensuring that there is a clear outcome.*
- “Picnic tables are blocking the pavements for wheelchair and pushchair users.”
 - *DCDT: DCDT will review their position and ensure that there is adequate space.*
- “We need more parking or we will lose tourism.”
 - *Noted.*
- “Are there plans for Parking Meters?”
 - *DCDT: There are currently no plans for charging around the Square with parking meters, Ringo or 10-minute parking limits. However, it is worth noting that this would need to be revisited if Stirling Council decided to introduce parking fees at Stirling Road carpark as this would likely put too much pressure on the parking at the Square.*

Key Actionable items

- DCDT to ask DCC to organise a survey of the community.
- DCDT & DCC to publicise results and DCDT to act on results.
- DCDT to review its communication strategy and tools.
- The Community to complete the DCC Questionnaire when available.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution and closed the meeting.

Approval of these minutes:

Proposed by Rae Gibb & seconded by Hilary Soanes.