

UPLANDS LIVING STREETS

UPLANDS LIVING STREETS MEETING, SATURDAY 9 JANUARY 2021

Present: Dawn Lyle (Chair), John Sayce, Brigid Haines, Rosemary Havard-Jones, Gerrit Niezen, Deryl Dix, Mark Robinson, Allyson Evans, Jenny Wyatt, Rob Humphreys, Catrin Humphreys, Anne Wood, Cllr Peter May, Pauline Rolt, Viv Makin, Hedley Austin, Leonie Ramondt, Cllr Mary Sherwood, Cllr Nick Davies, Jane Tonks

Guest speakers: Neil Barry, Matt Bowyer

Item 1 Highways and Traffic Issues

Matt Bowyer, Principal Engineer in Highways and Transport, Swansea Council, introduced himself. He has been involved in numerous infrastructure projects for road and rail and is currently involved in active travel schemes across the city. His work includes dealing with crossings and the recent work on Townhill Road and Walter Road.

Question and answer session with ULS members

Q Anne: Is traffic calming possible for The Grove and Glanmor Crescent? These are dangerous rat runs, very busy roads near a park where traffic seems to take precedence over people.

A: It's the same across the County. I will feed back traffic calming questions to the person responsible in the Council. There are no calming schemes planned for this area at present.

Q Anne: How easy is it to get 'Access only' for roads?

A: Not easy at all. Only permitted where it is possible for police to enforce it. 20 mph could become default in residential areas in the next 12-18 months but there is no more funding at present to do this. I will take this question back to the Traffic Management Department.

Q Anne: Is it worth residents providing evidence?

A: Yes.

Comment: Rose: Pedestrians must have priority. This is the case in New Zealand and Australia where drivers are more aware of residents.

Q Dawn: What are the latest developments in traffic calming measures?

A: Speed bumps are no longer popular. It is better to narrow carriageways, and introduce other measures.

Q: How about introducing planters?

A: Yes, possibly. All ideas need to go through the planning process. There is an interesting example in Garden Village where an application has been made to change the landscape and make 'Green Streets'.

Q Dawn: Gwydr Square pedestrianisation was raised last year but it became an issue that divided the community. We understand the Council modelled this proposal to assess the impact on through traffic. Can you tell us more?

A: People are often concerned about the effects of changing traffic routes. Our highways assessment model compared Gwydr Square (GS) with and without traffic. The model shows that in fact the pedestrianisation of GS wouldn't increase traffic in the surrounding residential areas. The only increase would be on Brynmill Lane and Brynymor Road. The model shows that GS isn't actually very busy. If

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pedestrianised, arrangements for access to some individual houses would need to be put in place, but there is certainly a case for something to be done here that would be a big improvement.

Comment Dawn: Behaviour does change and adapt.

Matt: Uplands has an enormous catchment for traffic, it's not a nice place to be if you are a pedestrian.

Q John: The stretch of pavement from Subway down to Costa is so narrow it's not good for people who use wheelchairs, buggies etc, and it's impossible to socially distance there at present. Cars have pushed pedestrians to the very margins. Can we find some more room here?

A: The space for traffic here is huge. A quick experimental closure of the junction at Gwydr Sq could be useful to see what would happen. The traffic lights (near Noah's) don't really do anything here. Piecemeal changes over the years haven't helped to improve things. There are lots of options that could help. For example, instead of completely closing GS, we could just narrow it.

Comment Dawn: Congestion, inaccessibility, high levels of pollution, poor footfall to local businesses; all these issues are interconnected.

Q John: Could Highways put together some plans for us to look at what options there might be to improve things?

Comment Mary: Highways are incredibly busy and overstretched; they don't have the resources to give us options. This is why we originally asked Urban Foundry to look at all this, which they did for free. Then Nick and I spent a little of our community budget for them to discuss this with the Council. If this group were to source a range of ideas and plans, then we could take them to Highways.

A: Yes, we are very busy. So your suggestion might be a good way to proceed. It would be worth Highways, Regeneration and Members all getting together to look at this. There are lots of individual pots of funding that we might be able to access.

Comment Anne: Access for disabled people and people using buggies is a priority here. There is a legislative duty to ensure disability access is addressed.

Comment Dawn: Research shows that pedestrian-friendly spaces encourage more footfall to shops. We have already seen several closures of shops along by Subway, which is a particularly pedestrian-unfriendly section of Uplands.

Comment Rose: Buses need to be encouraged too. Bus stops are configured differently – it is easier to board buses heading to Sketty; the bus stop on the other side is badly designed.

A: Buses need to be able to stop on the carriageway as they can outside Brewstones. They need priority.

Comment Peter: I don't have a personal view on this. My role is to listen. The bus stop outside Beck Hall is an engineering disaster because of the drains getting blocked and causing flooding. This needs to be sorted. Some areas are no-go because of water pooling. Widening the stop at Subway could work but any changes made have to be done sensitively.

Q Dawn: How can we move forward with consensus on these ideas?

A Peter: I conducted a crude survey on Gwydr Square. I actively sought knee-jerk reactions and I got some brilliant ideas from the Ward. We need a good conversation from all sides. When making any proposals, you have to take people with you. Gwydr Square as it is isn't good. So I am happy to get people together to discuss options. The Uplands Party website has the survey results and ideas on it.

Comment Pauline: The problem with the survey was that it was very raw. If you take the time to look at the idea, it was fantastic, very forward thinking. So people need a lot more factual information. This is more productive.

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Comment Leonie: It would be useful if people had visuals for how streets with less traffic would work. Amsterdam is a good example of how things can be improved. Providing examples enables people to visualise possibilities. **Commonplace Software** could be helpful. Can we co-opt it for ULS?

Action

- Dawn will investigate **Commonplace Software** to see if it would be useful and if we could use it.

Matt: Mumbles has already made some changes with interesting ideas for outdoor café seating.

Comment Dawn: Like outside Brewstones and Crumbs. Lots more tables and chairs would be great post-lockdown.

We also know from our survey that older people would love to come and sit on a bench in Uplands. It seems such a small thing; how can we fix that?

Comment Mary: When the sewer drains were being repaired on Gwydr Crescent, the impact on traffic in Ewald Place was astonishing. People quickly find other routes and traffic is calmed.

Matt: Traffic expands to fill the space. If you take that space away, you get less traffic.

Matt: A traffic flows report for Gwydr Square was sent to Mary. I could put some visuals into it and send it to all Uplands councillors.

Comment Nick: The Gwydr Square scheme was a good idea. It would help Uplands become a people place rather than traffic space. It's not helpful to present it as a binary choice, a simple yes or no. It would be good to get more ideas.

Matt: There is space to play with in Uplands. There are lots of ideas that could work.

Actions

- All councillors to put the traffic flows report on their websites, once Matt has sent it.
- John will lead a small group of interested ULS members to work together on getting an Uplands conversation going, where a broader range of people can share and develop ideas re traffic reducing and rearranging.
- *If anyone is interested in joining in with the Uplands conversation, where we will look at ideas for making our streets more pedestrian-friendly, please let John Sayce or Jane Tonks know*

Q Viv: Terrace Road is very narrow. Lots of cars, and the bus comes up and down. Are there any plans to address the problems here?

A Mary: Nick and I met Helen Jeffs. On the free side of Terrace Road there are lots of dropped kerbs so cars drive on the pavement to pass each other. Pedestrians are in the middle of all this. We have written up the problems and we are asking for advice from Highways.

Comment John: I'll ask a colleague from Sustrans to cycle along to see what it's like for cyclists.

Matt: With regard to cycling in Uplands, a core funding bid has gone to Welsh Government about the Walter Road cycle lane. There will be consultation, an outline plan, and a further bid next year before a firmer plan and formal consultation which will happen in the next financial year, 2021-22.

Item 2: Greening Uplands. Neil Barry, from Swansea Community Green Spaces Project

Anne explained that her survey re The Grove has resulted in lots of ideas from residents of The Grove and Glanmor Crescent, e.g. tree planting, edible hedges, installing planters, creating a path through the Green.

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She met with Neil and the idea is to hold a public meeting and form a working group of 4-6 people to take things forward. The ambition is to hold a carol service on the green this year!

The public meeting will be on the Green on 27 March at 1.30, assuming lockdown has been lifted by then. This coincides with Uplands Market, thus potentially increasing attendance.

Points raised:

- Important that it's a community project
- A meandering path would boost biodiversity
- Public meeting would help to thrash out ideas
- Costings need to be looked at
- SCVS – very useful resource. ULS to join. Will enable us to attend training courses e.g how to make our group more diverse and inclusive, plus we could access funding information.
- This type of project enables neighbours to interact, e.g. as has happened in Ganges Field in Townhill
- Lots of funding for us to tap into.
- Neil is happy to work with us because we fit into the remit of his project. He has worked on the Primrose Hill food growing initiative, Sea View Terrace and the Washing Lake in Mayhill.
- All these projects have in common everyone wanting to work together-an important feature.

Dawn: The Room to Grow project is very powerful, gets neighbours out together talking.

Viv: Just received Keep Wales Tidy funding, package and materials starter pack for Rosehill Quarry. Over 100 trees have been planted. It's a very good source of funding.

Anne: Swansea Council have agreed to undertake tree management on The Grove. They will install bat and bird boxes at the same time.

Neil: Also, making bat and bird boxes is a great activity for kids etc.

Cwmdonkin Park update:

Hedley: 50 ornamental **cherry trees** have been planted. Trees were a gift from Japan we received as part of a friendship project. They are planted behind the Dylan Thomas shelter.

The **slope** where the Park connects with The Grove could become a lovely biodiverse area.

The planned **orchard** will be on the slope above the kiosk.

A couple who live on Windsor Street are taking over the **café in the pavilion** and will serve coffee on a takeaway basis at first. Opening late February, all being well.

Neil: Supports No Mow May and no-mow projects in general. Could we look at this in Cwmdonkin Park?

Anne: We could have a chatting / friendly bench in The Grove and the Park. This is a nationally-understood idea. People recognise this is where you can sit if you want a chat. It could be formalised by setting a time each day when there will be someone there to chat, though this is not necessary.

Hedley: There are 39 benches in Cwmdonkin Park so one could easily be designated a friendly bench.

Rose: We could have a pollinators' trail. There is an example in St David's including lots of local people having their gardens open. Could be a great way to connect Uplands, Townhill, Constitution Hill etc.

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Allyson: The steps leading from Penlan Crescent up to Pant y Celin Road need some work. There is great potential to develop this area as a green space and as a way of connecting Townhill and Uplands. Lots of litter at the moment.

John: Developers of the Townhill campus, Pobl Housing Group, will give £140,000 for active travel measures when the development starts. This could be used as match funding and could be active travel with a greenery / biodiversity aspect. We as residents need to influence how this money is spent.

Nick: We could have Chloe Lewis, Active Travel Officer, come to a future meeting. This would help to link everything up.

Community growing discussion

Leonie: Vertical garden boxes on south-facing houses on Constitution Hill could be great for salad greens and herbs. The Hub on the Hill has storage space for tools. The carpark could be used as workshop space. Could be a competition for salad growing and greenery in a vertical garden scheme. We need more visible edible food in front gardens. We also need to involve and support people with learning disabilities. It's a way of bringing people together, fostering understanding and inclusion and potentially reducing hate crime.

Dawn: We could hold community workshops.

Hedley: The bowling green in the Park could also be used for these.

Dawn: Let's organise a public meeting for anyone interested in community food growing schemes in Uplands.

Mary: Swansea Community Growing Network could help with this. Neil is on the Board.

Action

Dawn to invite Angie from Room to Grow to the next ULS meeting to help with our interest in community growing schemes.

Back Lanes discussion

Neil: Initiatives like the Back Lanes project, where unloved lanes are tidied up and adopted for various positive uses, can help to reduce antisocial behaviour. They can be made into little oases away from traffic. Developing a walking trail is a good idea. There are funding opportunities with SCVS.

Peter: Also the historical aspect of our back lanes is really interesting and could be highlighted. I firmly believe that more eyes and community presence is good for safety. I have organised Neet team cleansing of the lanes for years. I am thoroughly behind you, but there are others who might not be.

Action

Jane, Brigid, Peter and Neil to meet to discuss the back lanes, once lockdown ends.

Any Other Business

Nick: Artwork on boxes getting underway in Uplands, should soon see improvements.

Dawn: We need a motto like 'Keep the Mount Pleasant.' Suggestions so far include: 'On the Up' and 'Onwards and Uplands', or even 'We Love Uplands'. It's about placemaking and will help to bring people together around a positive identity for our community.

Summary of Actions

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1. Dawn will investigate *Commonplace* software to see if it might be helpful in producing visuals to illustrate our ideas for traffic re-routing and placemaking enhancements.
2. All councillors to put the traffic flows report on their websites, once Matt has sent it.
 - John will lead a small group of interested ULS members to work together on getting an Uplands conversation going, where a broader range of people can share and develop ideas re traffic reduction and rearranging. *If anyone is interested in joining in with the Uplands conversation, where we will look at ideas for making our streets more pedestrian-friendly, please let John Sayce or Jane Tonks know*
3. Dawn to invite Angie from Room to Grow to the next ULS meeting to help with our interest in community growing schemes. Potentially hold a public meeting to explore possibilities.
4. Jane, Brigid, Peter and Neil to meet, once lockdown ends, to discuss how to progress back lanes ideas.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Saturday 6th March, 2021, 10.30am. Details to follow. Contact us for the Zoom link.

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