

***Good Morning Cllrs,***

***The sun was shining last week, which I hope is a good omen for our approach to you!***

***Let me explain who we are and what our aim is.***

***We are a loose group of disparate Herefordians completely fed up with the constant congestion and unfriendly state of our roads for all road users (motorists, cyclists and pedestrians alike) who would very much like to look at the possibility of undergoing a trial to switch the traffic lights off along the A49 Hereford City central corridor (in effect, Edgar Street and Victoria St).***

***This would ideally mean switching the traffic lights off initially at 4 junctions. These would be, from North to South, the signals on the Steels/Tesco Roundabout, the Victoria/Eign St slip road junction that serves Whitecross, the Barton Rd/St Nicholas St Junction by the top of the New Bridge and the Belmont/Asda Junction at the bottom of the New Bridge where the A49 and A465 split.***

***This may seem a mad and original idea but it is neither of those. In the UK the towns of Poynton and Portishead are testament to the success of the implementation of the principles of 'Shared Space' and the removal of traffic signals. On the Continent the bigger towns of Drachten in the Netherlands (44,629 pop) and Bohmte in Germany (12,706) have removed their traffic lights with an average of (from my own rough maths I must admit) a 80-90% reduction in accidents (accidents being the subject that naturally seems to be foremost in the minds of Councillors and road planners when this approach is first proposed for their consideration). Congestion has also been reduced considerably with waiting times in traffic reduced by at least 50%.***

***We had a meeting with Jesse Norman and members of the Highway's Agency in early Dec where we, with the help of traffic campaigner Martin Cassini, put our case for a trial to the Highway's Agency. We approached them first because the A49 is the responsibility of the HA and we could not***

***proceed without them at least agreeing to consider a trial. They agreed to look into the possibility of such a trial. We agreed, during a conference call with Keith Firth of SKM Transport <http://uk.linkedin.com/pub/keith-firth/1a/882/44a> that a computer simulated trial would be the first step in this process. Jesse Norman and the HA agreed that they would look at carrying or procuring funding for the cost of said simulation. If this numbers crunched on the micro-simulation (used in Poynton first before the scheme there was implemented) we could then look at a real life trial.***

***I appreciate most of you are aware of the idea of Shared Space, since it is something you are hoping to implement along Newmarket Street in time, so I won't try and teach Grandma to suck eggs. And rather than attempt to skew or convert you to our point of view I will simply leave you with the Wikipedia entry on Shared Space which you can navigate and research further yourselves if you feel inclined to. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shared\\_space](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shared_space)***

***After our meeting with The HA we then approached Hereford City Council as a precursor to our approach to you. What we would ask you now, Cabinet members of the Herefordshire Council, respectfully, is for the opportunity to come and present our idea for a trial to you (the Cabinet or Planning Committee) in person to see if this is a project we can win your support for! Without your support it is very unlikely that the HA would proceed with a trial.***

***We have no hidden agenda on this, we think this should be and remain a non party political issue. We simply want to try something new in Hereford (without precluding the other options for traffic relief considered by the Council) relatively quickly and painlessly, which might benefit our city enormously. On the other hand, we may find during the simulation process that this approach would not work in Hereford.***

***Thank you very much for your time and consideration.***

***Regards,***

***Colin James, John Llewellyn-Perkins, Amanda Martin and John Harrington***