

## Cardiff Residents Call On Council to Get Naked

*Naked Roads can kill speed and reduce accidents -Its official - Traffic Lights are bad for your health*

([PRWEB](#)) March 24, 2005 -- Cardiff residents' concerns about the suitability of introducing traffic lights at the Waunygroes Road junction of Caerphilly Road are backed up by the latest developments in traffic management thinking.

Not only should Cardiff Council halt the programme of signalling more roads, they should consider removing some of the existing controls says the A469 Save Our Streets Action Committee. Indiscriminate installation of traffic lights not only blights the homes of local residents, there is plenty of evidence to show they cause congestion and increase the level of accidents.

Removing traffic lights can help reduce accidents

In a movement dubbed 'Naked Roads', urban planners claim that removing visible road markings and traffic lights reduces speed and accidents by encouraging drivers to be more considerate to pedestrians and other road users, an approach which has been used with success in Holland, Germany and Sweden,

The concept has been tested in Seend, a Wiltshire village, where white lines and other controls were removed from the road last April. Wiltshire County Council said, 'accidents in the village dropped by a third and speed has fallen by an average of 5% after the markings were removed. It seems to be just a matter of time before other parts of the country try the idea out.'

Bexley council is another authority who has changed the way it thinks. 'From accident records across the Borough, traffic lights would not reduce the rate of accidents as well as a roundabout would. Traffic lights will also cause far more congestion than a roundabout. This could lead to traffic problems elsewhere by people trying to avoid the junction.'

Urban design specialist Ben Hamilton-Baillie who has been advising local authorities, certainly believes the experiment is effective in calming traffic. "This approach draws on behavioural psychology involving the way drivers respond to their surroundings," he says. "Instead of relying on the street system for security, drivers are forced to use their reactions."

Behavioural psychologists believe eye contact forces people to communicate non-verbally, reducing the breakdown in understanding that causes accidents.

The Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), an independent think-tank, has conducted research into various traffic calming measures, including those with a psychological basis. It has experimented with a number of measures, such as narrowing roads as chicanes and road humps. These can often prove costly and ineffective.

According to TRL, perceptual techniques such as unmarked roads have the potential for success. Schemes using unmarked roads in mainland Europe have reportedly led to a cut in road accidents.

This latest thinking is backed up by Cardiff Council's own statistics which show that traffic lights in northern Cardiff accounted for an accident rate three times greater than a roundabout carrying similar traffic



flows. Provided as part of the environmental statement in the planning application for land development at the junction, the data shows that three serious personal injury accidents occurred between November 1998 and July 2003 at Maesycod traffic lights south of the development while only one occurred at the Tyglas Road roundabout to the north in the same period.

“We have been calling on the council consider the views of all householders and road-users when making decisions about changes affecting them,” said a campaign spokesman. “This is an opportunity for the council to show imaginative leadership and embrace creative planning to improve the City, but their proposals just push more and more cars onto the roads, and then slow traffic down, increasing congestion.”

The A469 Action Committee has grown since the success of the campaign in 2004 when a petition of over three-thousand signatures opposing the council’s scheme to develop the A469 was presented to the council.

Residents are urged to visit [www.a469.co.uk](http://www.a469.co.uk) for more information

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**Contact Information**

**Andrew Williams**

WILLIAMS SRHIWBINA

<http://www.a469.co.uk>

44 0 7870875252

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