

Streets ahead by going Dutch

by **Frances Ridge**

Helensburgh may soon be streets ahead when it comes to traffic management — by bringing a touch of Dutch to the town.

The Helensburgh Partnership, the group charged with boosting the town, commissioned a traffic management study to seek ways of improving access throughout the Burgh.

And the team of dedicated consultants have reported back with an innovative scheme that is unique to Holland but proving to be a hit with drivers and pedestrians.

Derek Anderson, chair of the Partnership, believes it will be a huge success if given the green light and added that Helensburgh would be the first in Britain to roll out the system.

He said: "What we asked the traffic consultants to do was to look at the pedestrianisation of certain streets in Helensburgh.

"But they advised against full pedestrianisation. What they say is that when towns are pedestrianised often lose trade. It may work in Buchanan Street in Glasgow but it doesn't necessarily work in smaller towns."

He continued: "The consultants want to change the balance between traffic and pedestrians — more in the favour of pedestrians. That is when they suggested the system in Holland that is going really well. The street effectively becomes a shared space with the drivers respecting the pedestrians and allowing them as much freedom of the road as they have. It is the best of both worlds."

The Helensburgh Partnership plan to hold a meeting in the new year to allow members of the public to have their say on the future of the town's traffic.

"It is important to hear what people think about the plans," said Derek. "I think they will be very excited about what has come out of the traffic management study but it is important to get feedback. Not everyone will agree on what is best for the town but we are giving them the chance to comment on what happens."

Helensburgh's Community Council have also praised the project and suggested the project would make the town more "pedestrian friendly".

Compton MacGill, community council member, said: "Cars would still be on the road but this would mean pedestrians would come before the traffic.

"It is something that would be a unique development in the UK. Towns that have been pedestrianised have become ghost-towns. This would make it much more pedestrian friendly."