



Mr Barnacle beside the A977 in the Crook of Devon. Picture: Dougie Nicolson.

# Call for 'forgotten road' to get cash

**SAFETY:** Councillor says traffic diverted from the Forth Road Bridge puts A977 back on agenda

JAMIE BUCHAN

Roads bosses are under fresh pressure to commit money to the upgrade of a "forgotten" Kinross-shire commuter route which is being forced to deal with an influx of Forth Road Bridge traffic.

Independent councillor Mike Barnacle has long campaigned for safety measures on the notorious A977, which runs from Kincardine to the M90.

He said he had "reached a brick wall" with Perth and Kinross Council and Transport Scotland, which he says have repeatedly refused to pay out for much-needed improvements, including the creation of three roundabouts.

Mr Barnacle yesterday called for measures to be brought forward as a matter of priority after queues of traffic were diverted along the road from the closed Forth Road Bridge.

"This is Scotland's forgotten road," he said.

"It only seems to get mentioned when it is being used as a diversion.

"It was suggested when the Blackmannanshire Bridge was completed in 2008 that mitigation measures should be made to the A977.

"But, Perth and Kinross Council have significantly failed to put forward any funding for this."

**“ This is Scotland’s forgotten road. It only seems to get mentioned when it is used as a diversion.**

**MIKE BARNACLE**

He said that, given the sudden closure of the Forth Road Bridge, a review was needed urgently.

"It's very important that the Scottish Government works together with the council on developing a new strategy. The way things are going, this road is only going to get busier. At its height, it can be nose-to-tail traffic. There was a recent study which showed it gets more HGVs than any other A-road, but that doesn't seem to make any difference to the leaders of the administration."

In 2009, the Scottish Government agreed to spend about £250,000 to improve safety along the route.

Mr Barnacle said this was a "paltry" gesture and in 2013 called for £500,000 to be set aside from the council's capital budget. The move was rejected, meaning there is now no provision for A977 measures before 2020.

A Transport Scotland spokesman said last night: "Our current focus is to work with our transport partners to mitigate the impact of the Forth Road Bridge closure which will be closed to traffic until early in the new year.

"This is a matter of national significance and we appreciate the assistance that our local authority partners can give us during this difficult period."

A spokeswoman for Perth and Kinross Council added: "Our current priority is to make sure that the A977, and other roads in our area which will support diversions from the Forth Road Bridge over the next few weeks, remain clear of all non-emergency road works.

"Any proposals for improvement will require to be agreed as part of the council's budget process."

Parking restrictions have been put in place on the A977, A91 and A823.

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Mr Barnacle beside the A977 in Crook of Devon. Picture: Dougie Nicolson.

## A977: Consultation leads to 'real groundswell of support for road safety measures', says councillor

MARK MACKAY

Council chiefs have been told that only the imposition of widespread 20mph speed limits will protect Kinross-shire communities from harm.

The call has come from villages and hamlets along the route of the busy A977, which has been the scene of numerous accidents in recent years.

There has also been considerable community support for the introduction of vehicle-activated signs at village gateways.

The demands are the result of a widespread consultation undertaken by local councillors Mike Barnacle and Dave Cuthbert into road safety on the east-to-west route.

It is used by a high volume of traffic on a daily basis and is a popular cross-country route with heavy goods vehicles but ploughs through the heart of many small communities.

The area was one of the first in Scotland to adopt the community speedwatch scheme on a pilot basis and its residents are hopeful the local authority will make Kinross-shire

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**COUNCILLOR MIKE BARNACLE**

the next focus of road safety action.

Mr Barnacle, who has been leading a consultation on how money within the council's budget should be spent in Kinross-shire, said he believes road safety would be an appropriate use.

“There has been a real groundswell of support for road safety measures,” Mr Barnacle said.

“Councillor Cuthbert and I put a wide range of ideas to the community, some of which have been raised over many years.

“We received significant feedback from residents. It is clear there is very strong community support for 20mph zones in particular.

“It would not be appropriate for there to be long stretches of reduced speed limit. That would not work.

“Instead, the 20mph zones suggested would be in the very centre of the villages.”

Mr Barnacle said the findings are being collated and would be passed to Perth and Kinross Council roads officers.

Once officials have looked at the consultation's findings, they are expected to consult Kinross and Fossoway and District Community Councils and with communities after the local government elections.

Mr Barnacle added he was surprised more residents had not expressed an interest in introducing roundabouts to the road.

“This has long been a proposal,” he said. “As long as there is a straight road without bends or impediments such as roundabouts - as there is at Blairingone and between Crook of Devon and Drum - then people will exceed the speed limit.”

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A terrified mum was forced to turn her son in to police, as she fears he planned to rob a friend at knifepoint in a desperate attempt to score money for drugs.

Perth Sheriff Court was told repeat offender Liam Pringle had been making efforts to get back on the straight and narrow.

After his methadone was stopped, however, he self-destructed by mixing prescribed medication with heroin, cannabis and large amounts of alcohol.

On February 21, this pattern of behaviour saw the 29-year-old demand that his mother drive him to a friend's house after grabbing two large knives from her kitchen.

She was so worried by his demeanour that she fled her home, intending to drive away only for Pringle to follow and jump into a rear passenger seat.

His mother drove a short distance as he sat in the back

## CYCLING

### Local winner after four day

Abernyte's Alfie George was Scotland, after four stages of

The Youth Tour of Scotland riders aged between 13 and 17 which is in its sixth consecutive year from all over the UK, Ireland and

Alfie, 16, was riding for Scotland normally rides for Discover Scotland riding at the Youth Tour of Scotland.

Based at Strathallan School, youth riders took to the local event, which saw 20% more

## SPORT

### Return of Fair

Perth's all-female roller derby team, The Fair City Rollers, will play their first official match in more than five years this weekend.

Bell's Sports Centre will host the match between the Fair City team and Helgin, who come from Elgin, on Sunday.

Kirstin Guthrie, team spokesperson for the Fair City Rollers said: “Over the last few years we've recruited and trained a whole new team of dedicated players, who've worked really hard to pass the industry standard skills and get about ready for the season.”

“We're proud to be hosting the game in our home city and we want to welcome Helgin to Perth for what is sure to be a fantastic game.

“Not only will there be a whole lot of skating to watch