



**Bradford on Avon  
Town Council**



Minutes of the Virtual Extraordinary Town Council meeting of  
BRADFORD ON AVON TOWN COUNCIL  
Held on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 7p.m.

Attendance – Town Council

Cllr E Franklin  
Cllr D Garwood  
Cllr S Gibson  
Cllr A Kay  
Cllr T Lomax  
Cllr J Lynch\*  
Cllr S McNeill-Ritchie (Chairman)  
Cllr D Newton (Leader of the Council)  
Cllr L Brown  
Cllr M Roberts  
Cllr D Taylor  
Mr I Brown (Director of Operations)  
Ms L Booth (Communications Manager)  
\*8.13pm left the meeting

Apologies: Cllr J Parker

Members of the Public: 20 and Judith, Rod Johnson, Louise Walford, Duncan Cameron, Judith Dale, Sue Denmark, Steve Boocock, Jeremy Wire and Keith Firth.

16. Declarations of Interest - none

17. Social Distancing Highways Proposal

Cllr Newton and Cllr Gibson gave an update on the proposal.

Bradford on Avon Town Council had submitted a request to Wiltshire Council for the introduction of Social Distancing measures in response to COVID-19. This resulted in discussions with Philip Whitehead (Leader of Wiltshire Council) and the prospect of government funding, however this has been a long process. The Department for Transport (DFT) have amended the rules for the funding, the scheme has been practically on hold, being de-prioritised due to the changes in the DFT guidelines.

The Town Council's thanks go to Dave Thomas and Allan Creedy and their team for pulling together this scheme and following a meeting this week, we were able to bring the scheme forward. Unfortunately, due to the delays, the timing for implementation clashes with a road closure, [Silver Street 20.07.20 – 13.08.20]. This can be seen as an advantage, giving us time to iron out details, looking at the air quality and traffic monitoring at the same time, we can then be ready for September 2020.

The solution has been designed around COVID-19 for pedestrian safety, it doesn't remedy all of the towns traffic issues, this is a temporary solution. The traffic order to implement the changes will be an experimental order, which can then be amended to meet the needs, as they arise, rather than a normal traffic order. Therefore, changes can be made to the scheme which provides flexibility, making it possible to build a better scheme.

The resolution will need to be amended to take into account the time delay and the Council's consideration of any suggestions to alter the scheme.

Cllr Roberts asked if we have engaged with the air quality team at Wiltshire Council. Cllr Gibson explained that she had emailed to request a meeting, Allan Creedy had been very confident that they could help us. Cllr Roberts mentioned the possibility of diffusion tubes on the town bridge. Cllr McNeill-Ritchie pointed out that we can add things to the scheme if we need too going along.

Cllr Newton suggested that a number of amendments would be sensible, we are not in a position at this stage, given we are at least five weeks from understanding the current position with social distancing and COVID-19, to authorise this expenditure. We could convene a Highways and Transport or Full Council meeting for final agreement. We can still move ahead with preparations of this piece of work, in respect of additional monitoring, making the scheme as good as it possibly could be, meeting our long-term strategic objectives, around air quality and pedestrian safety. Looking at the possibility of further modelling and allow Wiltshire Council to complete any design work, to make the scheme as good as possible. In the meantime, we can press ahead with the deployment of signage, which we design and produce.

Cllr Gibson pointed out that we need to have agreement, in principle to fund the scheme to allow Wiltshire Council to complete the design work, if we don't give that security, we may lose our priority status.

Cllr McNeill-Ritchie asked if we were being asked for a specific amount of expenditure tonight that is not recoverable if we decided to not proceed to final time. The indicative costs if we wish to go ahead is in the region of £30k. Cllr McNeill-Ritchie summarised that we are being asked for a decision in principle today, must in good faith look to press ahead in the first week in August with a view to implement at the earliest opportunity.

Cllr Gibson pointed out that Wiltshire Council have only requested the Town Council to cover the construction costs, not officer time. That any commitment given by the council was not binding if the scheme, for whatever reason, did not go ahead. Wiltshire wanted a two-week lead time from us saying yes.

Cllr Kay asked how long the trial was likely to last and wanted to know that it would be sufficient time for the money, to get useful information out of it. She wanted to make the pavement safer, irrespective of COVID-19. Strongly support that we in principle go ahead, it would have to be something pretty different not to go ahead.

Cllr Gibson highlighted the cost of the traffic lights is for 26 weeks hire, therefore that is the expected timescale of the trial.

Cllr Newton identified that the barriers and bollards will be purchase and have been requested to be suited to a conservation area rather than the basic plastic ones used elsewhere. It will need to be confirmed that the barriers and bollards will be the Town Council's if we are paying for the scheme.

Cllr Garwood pointed out his previous concerns of the unintentional consequences for the scheme, it is good to hear the words modelling and experimentation idea with the ability to modify and is happy to support.

Cllr Lynch expressed the Council's enthusiastic support and thanks to Cllr Gibson and Cllr Newton along with officers and suggested we leave Wiltshire Council in no doubt of our support and we should vote for our willingness of a maximum of £30k, this would be money well spent and hope this is phase one in going much further. This is a one-off opportunity for the town.

Cllr Roberts proposed the possibility of a pedestrian one-way system supported by Cllr Brown. Cllr Newton pointed out that this had previously been discussed at Highways and Transport committee and had been rejected on the advice we had at the time this was ruled out at that meeting and reported back to Wiltshire Council.

Cllr McNeill-Ritchie said he was pleased that we can model, trial, and adapt, and learn a lot from this scheme and that we should get the most out of it as possible. We will learn a lot more about it and will be in a good position to come up with a permanent scheme incorporating the things that might have been missed.

Cllr Newton reminded members that we are embedding pedestrian safety long term, we cannot afford to lose sight of the air quality which is a critical piece we need to ensure sufficient monitoring and modelling taking place through this. We need to ensure we have safe walking routes and we need to consider carbon capture which goes towards a long-term solution, this is a very strong opportunity to actually make a real in-road here.

Cllr Gibson reminded members of the flexibility of the scheme and the ability to adapt things.

With all in favour it was **RESOLVED**:

That the Council agrees, in principle to fund, at the most £30,000, the introduction of a social distancing highways scheme, subject to further design and modelling from the middle of August or when practicable.

The Council will confirm at a future Full Council meeting once the final trial scheme has been proposed.

#### 18. Westbury Incinerator

Cllr Kay introduced the issue, that a proposal to seek amendment of Planning Application 18/03816/WCM, ATT gasification incinerator at North acre, Westbury (Wiltshire) from gasification to higher throughput incineration. Due to a reduction in emission standards by central government and potential supply chain problems following Brexit. This would reduce environmental standards that would apply to the planned gasification waste-to-energy plant in Westbury, this had been rejected and was then approved at Appeal, over the objections of Wiltshire Council, the Town Council, and many others. Since the appeal, the Council has signed a climate emergency, which this is contrary to the proposed application. The other issue is they wish to make it more economical viable, which would bring more traffic and more waste to burn.

Cllr Gibson explained that as a Planning Committee they couldn't turn it down on emissions only on bulk and size, which is why it got turned down on appeal. It is only a gasification plant when Defra say it is, whatever we were doing it was only going to be an incinerator. There is no obligation to turn the energy into anything other than for themselves, never a district energy source.

Cllr Newton expressed his disappointment and stated it reflects a national government framework which has removed of climate protections for no apparent good reason, seemingly economic reasons, and flies in the face of various authorities declaring climate emergencies. We should use our powers to oppose it.

Cllr Lomax condemned this as a retrograde step in climate terms, with the link to between bad air quality and impacts on health and that it was an irrational proposal, which should be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

With all in favour it was **RESOLVED**:

To delegate to Cllr Kay, the drafting of a letter reflecting the views of the Council's against the proposed application.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

## Public Questions at the Virtual Extraordinary Full Council meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020

### 1. Andrew Nicolson – submitted in writing

- (i) What is the proposed timescale and what opportunities for public consultation are there going to be?
- (ii) In the meantime, will the Town Council consider putting up safety signs like the ones around Bath? [see attached images]
- (iii) To what extent are the proposers and the Town Council "locked in" to this particular set of proposals, and how open to further review is it able to be, for instance to save money or to reduce traffic congestion or emissions or improve conditions for cyclists? (For example, the DataFromSky company provides equivalent services to Vivacity, some of them free, and can work with any camera and with video footage provided by the client.
- (iv) Was the project designed for 2-metre minimum social distancing? Has it been reviewed for 1-metre social distancing, and if so, what changes were considered or made?
- (v) Was the option of keeping two-way working on Market Street considered, and if so, what were the reasons for excluding it?
- (vi) Given its responsibilities for road safety, network management and air quality monitoring, how much is Wiltshire Council contributing to the cost of the works and the monitoring? Has a programme of monitoring the avoiding the routes such as via Staverton, Farleigh Hungerford and Limpley Stoke been agreed and funded?
- (vii) Given that the project does almost nothing South of the river where substandard pavement widths cause social distancing problems on a number of busy routes in and approaching the Town Centre, the Railway Station and routes to St Laurence School, what plans, including funding, have started to be developed for that area?
- (viii) What safety auditing has been or will be done for the whole project?
- (ix) Have a pre-scheme baseline and traffic forecast and emissions assessment been done, or will they be?
- (x) What routes does the plan envisage for cyclists, for example to travel from Church Street, Newtown, and Bath Road to the Town Bridge, where the one-way systems seem to require diversions of up to a mile, with steep hills?
- (xi) Were contra-flow cycle lanes considered for the one-way sections, and if so, what were the reasons for excluding them?
- (xii) If the plan is for cyclists to "get off and push", then re-mount, what are the locations where this is expected to happen, and has this proposal been evaluated for safety?

The assumption regarding cyclist was they would get off and walk, the scheme is about social distancing and aimed at the pedestrian. The scheme is not starting beyond Newtown and not going beyond Mill Lane to reduce the effect on the cyclist. Due to the narrow roads and pavements cycle routes were discounted. There has been a suggestion to reduce the on-street parking at Station Approach/St Margaret's St to allow for wider pavements. This will need to be discussed further, in relation to the planned works to Station Approach and a more satisfactory way to get commuters across the road. Due to the changes in DFT criteria and Wiltshire Council not being able to fund the scheme, it is assumed that Wiltshire Council will push us forward in tranche two for social distancing. We have been looking at safety signage and will be pressing on with, with these delays we can consider the revised guidance.

### 2. Judith

Will air and traffic monitoring only be in the central areas of town, or will it be around the surrounding areas too, where the traffic will be busier than usual?

The plan is to monitor the traffic in Newtown, New Rd and south of the river to see the effect of any changes we still need to go back and specify where this will go. We will need to monitor as much as possible. We should be able to define that, as the Town Council is funding, we have the leverage to ensure that we are satisfied that the monitoring is appropriate.

3. Trevor Bedeman

Social distancing means that the town centre will have to be radically rebalanced, so well done to Sarah, Dom, and Simon for taking this on. It's good to hear that Wiltshire to potentially getting some government funding retrospectively. The creation of a much wider upstream footway across the town bridge and the consequent reduction of traffic potential by at least half is a huge positive change and might be a catalyst to transform the long-term future of the town, not just temporary. A huge amount of effort has gone into designing such a comprehensive one-way system for Market St and Silver St and you have considered alternatives. I still have concerns that at the bottom of Silver St, there might not be sufficient space for social distancing, but time will tell. It's good to hear about the moving experiment and I hope there will be flexibility to allow the data that you collect and the temporary system you are using for modifications if needed, and finally I hope that you all will vote for this system.

4. Rod Johnson

This resolution will enormously enhance pedestrian safety on the Town Bridge. Will the Town Council accept both the enthusiastic support from the team [Heritage Open Days] and our hope that this resolution will be taken further to a permanent scheme that will enhance pedestrian safety on the Town Bridge?

5. Louise Walford

Is there any further information with regard the schools, and transport implementations? I 100% agree with the town centre, but I do worry that people will come in via Sladesbrook as a rat run and cause more pollution, there is an increase in HGV's.

Schools are currently dealing with their internal issues at the moment and there has been little response from the education department. Once they have broken for the summer, then we can talk to them about their travel plans and concerns for September. This scheme will give a bit of fluidity. The area around Berryfield could be part of further schemes.

6. Duncan Cameron

On New Road, the carriageway is in a terrible condition, with potholes that reverberate every time the D1 or trailers go over with an extra 5,000 traffic movements per day, I am concerned of increased noise, spiking with the increased traffic due to the scheme. Is this in the scope or you're not concerned, just wondering who I should go to.

This is a Wiltshire Council scheme, there is a strong argument for re-looking at the whole of New Road and the surface is adequate for the traffic. The monitoring will be of both speed and volume. With the alternate one way over the bridge, should reduce the interest in travelling through Bradford on Avon will reduce, so needs to be monitored really carefully. Maybe as part of this we should ask for Wiltshire to look at a lot of the roads. Cllr Gibson to take back to the highways team to look at, particularly noise monitoring.

7. Sue Denmark

Accessibility of the scheme, with the one metre plus rule now, for people with wheelchairs, pushchairs, guide dogs, their person width is much wider than an upright mobile person, so will need to maintain that space, so trying to cut back is a bad idea

Is there anywhere for blue badges to park, in the areas other than in the car parks, to give access to the shops.

I couldn't get out of my house due to parking on pavements, how will this be monitored and who's is going to be doing it and has the Equality Act been considered?

They are planning to put in place is a series of discreet but tall bollards, that will allow a wheelchair or pushchair can go through, but too small for a car. We need to check that additional dropped kerbs are all in place and the routes are sensible.

8. Written Question

Have the emergency services been consulted?  
This will be part of the TRO process.

9. Judith Dale

Explain the rationale between Whitehill and Mill Lane, what are the implications for the bus services, the scheme shows the loss of 4 bus stops.

Once the proposal is approved the highways engineers will contact the bus company to see about the impact and the need for any temporary bus stops. It extends as far as Mill Lane for access to the on-street parking, we can see if the scheme can be brought further down so the bottom of Whitehill is not included.

10. Steve Boocock

I am interested in the rationale of why there isn't two-way traffic for cyclists, the highway code does recommend the distance that cars should leave in passing cyclist, so why has a two-way route been ignored?

The bottom of Silver St and Market St is so narrow, once you introduce a wider pavement for social distancing, with the 2 metres there wasn't space for a cycleway, but with the changes with less social distancing it may be possible to take back and see if there is space. In a longer term scheme, cyclists would need to be addressed.

11. Jeremy Wire

Great to see the proposal on the table and I encourage all Councillors to grab the bull by the horns and vote for change.

12. Keith Firth

Putting signals either side of the bridge there is an opportunity to put pedestrian crossings either side of the bridge, stopping pedestrians having to guess if traffic is coming. It will reduce the flow of traffic both ways, it might be worth doing. Some of the measures in London have used widening the pavement, more on one side than the other to encourage pedestrians to walk on one side.