



**Bradford on Avon
Town Council**



Minutes of the Sustainable Travel Council meeting of
BRADFORD ON AVON TOWN COUNCIL held
on Tuesday 29th March 2022
at 7p.m in St. Margaret's Hall

Attendance – Town Council

Cllr S Blackwell

Cllr S Gibson (Acting Chairman)

Cllr K Vigar

Cllr J Vittles

Sandra Bartlett (Town Clerk)

Ian Brown (Director of Operations)

Sarah Hawkins (Accountant)

Matthew McLaughlin (Communications Officer)

Apologies: Cllr Garwood, Cllr Parker and Cllr Trimble (Chairman),

Members of the public: Jeremy Wire, Andrew Nicolson, Glenys Lunt, Simon Meade-King, Mike Roberts, Robin Clark, Jonathan Slack, Ivan Wiggam and Mark Osborne and 35 others.

24. Declarations of interest - none

25. Minutes

It was proposed by the Chairman seconded by Cllr Blackwell and with 3 in favour and 1 abstentions it was **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th January 2022 were accepted as a true record.

26. Chairman's Report

(i) Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) Chairman said that Cllr Trimble was looking into this with Community Speed Watch.

(ii) Preliminary discussions with The Big Lemon electric bus operator. Chairman said that Cllr Trimble will be talking to the operators again on the 21st May 2022.

(iii) The Snickett (Belcombe Road to Rickfield) new handrail. Town Council expenditure already approved). Awaiting start date from the contractor. This was noted.

27. Traffic Consultation

Chairman said that Cllr Garwood has sent her two questions:- (1) In the report it says we are finding a solution to satisfy everyone. He feels this will not be possible and it should be changed and (2) What happens now? These results going to Wiltshire Council. What will they come up with three worked up options? Cllr Vittles said that on page 10 of the report it says we are finding a solution to satisfy everyone. Chairman said that this was not a new conversation. In 2019 The Kerb report led by Cllr McNeill-Ritchie had similar priorities. "To rebalance the use of roads to promote the health and well-being of residents and visitors, and economic viability of the town. To systematically consult the town and work with Wiltshire Council on outcomes, no magic bullet." She said this problem had been in existence for 40 years. She said that an option would be produced by Wiltshire Council with lots of variances on it. The report was discussed in detail. Cllr Vigar said not 100% unanimity but build a consensus and balance the interests of different people and make it better for most people and that the situation not worsened for anyone. There was no fixed timescale. Wiltshire Council and

Town/Unitary Councillors to continue our discussions with the Highways Department and Cabinet member. Chairman said that the Cabinet Member Cllr Mark McClelland had visited Bradford on Avon and walked around so he was familiar with the town. Chairman said she had no date yet when a response from Wiltshire Council about the traffic consultation would be available. Chairman agreed to do some final checks with Cllr Trimble on the graphs in the report and to make the deletion which Cllr Garwood requested on page 10 about providing "solutions that works for everyone in town".

After discussion it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Vigar and with all in favour it was **RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note the report prepared by Copper Consultancy following the 'Future of Transport' consultation.
- (ii) Recommends that the report be presented to Wiltshire Council Highways and the Cabinet Member for Transport for their consideration.
- (iii) Requests that Wiltshire Council work in consultation with the Town Council to design measures to improve travel in Bradford on Avon consistent with the views of residents as expressed in the report.
- (iv) Notes the top three priorities identified by residents are Reduction of Traffic Volumes, Improving Air Quality and Improving Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety and Comfort.
- (v) Regards the Improvement in Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety and Comfort as the aspect most in need of immediate attention.

28. Wiltshire Council Community Area Transport Group (WC/CATG)

This group had a new name Local Highways & Footpaths Improvement Group (LH&FPIG)

Chairman explained that various traffic surveys will be conducted at Bath Road, Ashley Road, Holt Road and Trowbridge Road. Station Approach pedestrian improvements the work will be starting on the 25th April 2022. Notice from Network Rail of a replacement railway bridge at St. Margaret's Street. At Whitehill the consultation ended on the 6th March 2022 on the 'no entry' sign. Wiltshire Council were now evaluating responses.

(i) Advisory 20mph speed indicators outside Christchurch School Sladesbrook. After discussion it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Blackwell and with all in favour it was **RESOLVED:** That 50% funding amounting to £3,750.00 be agreed.

(ii) Winsley Road road markings - After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Vigar, seconded by the Chairman and with all in favour it was **RESOLVED:** That 50% funding amounting to £150 be agreed.

29. Highways Improvement Request Form

(i) Resident's request regarding bus stop near Mill Lane. Wiltshire Council's proposal of how to move this bus stop to be agreed by the Sustainable Travel Committee.

(ii) 20mph speed limit and formal crossing required at the Highfield/New Road. It was agreed to send both these requests to WC/CATG.

30. AutoSpeedwatch

After discussion, it was decided that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

31. Date of next meeting

The next meeting has been arranged for 24th May 2022.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm.

Members of the public who spoke at the Sustainable Travel Committee meeting on the 29th March 2022.

1. Jeremy Wire First of all, as a representative of Climate Friendly with special interest in transport, it's heartening to see (question 7) that 88% of respondents are concerned or somewhat concerned about climate change. However the report recognises it's at odds with their analysis of question 8, which states that "the majority of respondents (55%) deny that their travel behaviour contributes to the climate crisis" But this is wrong. Irrespective of the lack of actual figures, one can see from the bar chart on p19 that this is only true if the 'not very' and 'not at all' are combined. But 'Not very' still implies recognition that one's travel behaviour of a trip to the shops adds to the climate crisis but '**not very**' much, which I think is correct for the majority of individual motorists in the global scheme of things, but obviously every little reduction helps. The true figure of outright denial is about 20% which might be almost right for anyone cycling or walking or using public transport. So I think the report's analysis on this point does a disservice to the wisdom and judgement of residents. I have to say that the nature of that last problem is particularly distinguished in questions 4 & 5.

On which I would like to say something as Chair of Streets Ahead. I'm speaking in a personal capacity because we haven't had the opportunity to discuss the report since it's release but I'm confident that the group would welcome the publication and outcome of the report.

In Q4, people are decisive about their opinions on the **two way** system, with very few being neutral, and want something done. In only one factor – public transport usage - is the result a double figure percentage of not being a problem, with 46% being neutral – presumably because they never use it. However, in Q5, related to the social distancing **one-way** scheme, the result is much more nuanced, with greater percentages of neutral recorded (perhaps because they were stuck at home) but the whole set reported as being definitive. So page 17 of the report has a set of bullet points that I'd like to read out, with the true figures added

- Traffic volume and traffic flow were not identified as a primary concern for respondents, with the **majority** agreeing that both traffic volume and traffic flow were not a problem as a result of the social distancing (one-way) system. (Respectively 54%, actually only 31%, and 71%, actually 54% - the only one with a majority)
- Equally, 72% of respondents stated air quality was not a 'major problem' or 'a problem' (actually 20%) and likewise, 77% of respondents stated noise pollution was not a 'major problem' or 'a problem' (actually 24%).
- Pedestrian and cyclist safety and comfort and walking and cycling facilities were not identified as concerns for 78% of respondents (actually only 35%).
- Public transport remained a minimal concern relating to the social distancing (one-way) system, with only 12% identifying it as 'a problem'(with almost half 49% being neutral, again presumably because they never used it!)

In all those cases where majority figures were stated in the report, the data for 'somewhat of a problem' ie there is a problem but who knows how big, and being neutral, is used as 'not a problem'. On that basis I could transform the whole report! Will the committee send this report back to the consultants to remove the bias in their conclusions and give a fairer picture?

I'm concerned that the perceived improvement in the flow of traffic in the social distancing scheme is based on a false premise of traffic volumes that were noticeably lower than before the COVID measures were introduced, and especially now, and that if such a similar scheme is introduced, it will lead to increased speeds, and conclusions will be drawn committing to the inordinate costs of chicanes and humps to restrain that speed. Anyway further costs will need to be expended around congestion and safety on the bridge itself - the problems of which will remain unresolved unless it's planned to cut pedestrian and cyclist access across the bridge entirely which is just not acceptable. Which brings me to my final point. 72.14% of respondents prioritised reducing traffic volume - almost 10% more than those who prioritised pedestrian and cyclists safety which would itself benefit from a reduction in traffic volume - but you have decided to relegate it to second place, because 'we recognise it will take a series of measures to effect a significant reduction' and 'Improvements are likely to come indirectly' - but not if you address the issues head on. Be bold. You now have the statistics to back you up.

Now that it's been established that the three criteria of reducing the volume of traffic, safeguarding pedestrian & cyclist safety and reducing pollution – first proposed by Streets Ahead to solve our traffic problem several years ago - were correct, will this committee please amend the motion to include a

formal arrangement to involve such transport amenity groups and their concerns, in any planning about steps forward in the future?

2. Andrew Nicolson – My Environmental Information Regulations request is still underway. A report was published discouraging traffic in the Neighbourhood Plan. We are in a carrot versus the stick you can't just encourage people away from the car, traffic jams. Also do you want community and national organisations to keep our distance or help you. Wiltshire Council would like us to keep our distance.

3. Glenys Lunt – The questionnaire for this was not delivered to every house. Only 20% of residents replied. Use of the roads by motorists and pedestrians has been reduced since lockdown and covid pandemic with people not travelling to schools, shops and the museum. The questionnaire has summarised on feelings and beliefs no data. This has been an expensive and simplistic exercise. Measures need to be taken to cut down on through traffic and then the problem will go away. Chairman advised that Wiltshire Council were already collecting data. Cllr Vigar advised that the consultants were overwhelmed by the response. Cllr Vittles asked Glenys how she would have done it.

4. Simon Meade-King – he asked can we have an idea of the geographical area covered with the questionnaire. He felt that the north side of town was controlling the results. Cllr Vittles advised that on page 12 of the report there was a map with small blue circles. He thought it pretty representative of the town.

5. Mike Roberts - Why was the public not given the true data concerning Traffic Volumes, Air Quality, and speeding, this data has been supplied to Town Council on an ongoing basis from Wiltshire Council? This would have given the public factual data and not gut feeling as recently claimed in Town Council publications stating Air Quality in Market Street getting worse which is far from the truth.

6. Robin Clark – 1) Whilst I fully support reduced traffic volume as being a high priority, reduced traffic volume has to be achieved as a town wide solution, not a localised work-around. Please would the Committee confirm that it recognises that the One-Way system introduced as a 'Social Distancing' measure cannot be assumed to be a viable solution as the levels of traffic recorded at the time were not representative of normal traffic volumes (that we are starting to return to now).

2) Would the Committee confirm that it will consider Road Management System(s) which divert traffic AROUND and AWAY from the town and not simply resort to diverting traffic THROUGH the town?

3) Bradford on Avon needs to assert itself on the map. Surrounding towns and cities are ready to bully Bradford into diverting even greater volumes of traffic across its borders over the coming years. Bradford needs to stand fast and I would like the Committee's acknowledgement that it will stand its ground as these threats arise. Chairman agreed with all his statements. Cllr Vittles said that the town is standing up for their selves and will not be pushed over.

7. Jonathan Slack asked what is the time course?. He wants a one-way system.

8. Ivan Wiggam - Your proposed motion recognises traffic volume, air quality and safety as residents three top priorities identified in the consultation report. It's clear from the report that significantly fewer people considered these as a problem when a one-way system was in place. Your motion makes no reference to that fact. In your discussions will you now be representing that majority view to WCC. PREVIOUSLY you have told me that you have a neutral opinion on a one-way system as part of a potential solution. Will you now be representing the majority view or your personal opinion?

His question was intended to be asked of Councillor Tim Trimble. He thinks it is important to record it as such because Councillor Trimble is the author of the motion, and it was he specifically who told him that he had a neutral opinion on the subject. Cllr Sarah Gibson replied that she has never said she had a neutral opinion on the one-way system. He also asked if his statements of disagreement with previous questioners interpretation of the results of the traffic consultation. For whatever reason they seemed confused by the data presented and the text of the consultation report. He also stated his concern at the suggestion that the consultation results were not valid because of the low numbers of responses compared to the number of residents in the town. He felt these comments undermined a basic premise of our democratic systems which also applied to the consultation. Everyone had an opportunity to participate in the consultation. Some chose not to, but that should not invalidate the opinions of those who did.

9. Mark Osborn said he had been a resident for one year. He said that there is such a volume of traffic through here. He did an article in the Wiltshire Times about it. He asked how seriously we can take this consultation as there have been many attempts at dealing with this previously which have seemingly led to no change, as I have sensed the weariness of old hand Bradfordians in regard to these consultations.

Chairman said that she had been a councillor since 2017. She said that along with Cllr McNeill-Ritchie they had built up a good relationship with Wiltshire Council. She said that we did not have a good track record with them when schemes proved to be unsuccessful in the past. She said that the Cabinet member for Highways had requested evidence and data from the residents not the councillors.

Chairman said she had received correspondence from the following:-

- (i) Emma La Fleming regarding reducing through traffic.
- (ii) Barney Weston saying that outcome are needed for the whole town and not just the town centre. He said there was a consensus in the town to achieve a reduction in traffic volumes, improving air quality and improving pedestrian and cyclist safety across the town. Any solution which does not achieve these aims without adversely affecting another part, should be disregarded.
- (iii) Gareth Slater who had asked for a pedestrian footbridge on the south side of the town.