

Public statements

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WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE

28 JANUARY 2022

Agenda item 6 – Statements received (full details set out in following pages):

1. David Redgewell – Budget and transport issues
2. Jean Churchill - Thornbury High Street
3. Anthony Domaille - Thornbury High Street
4. John Davies - Thornbury High Street
5. Rob Galpin for Thornbury Town and District Residents Association - Thornbury High Street
6. Clive Washbourne - Thornbury High Street
7. David Whitfield – Thornbury High Street
8. Julie Day – Thornbury High Street
9. Angela Brace – Thornbury High Street
10. Carole Sowter – Thornbury High Street
11. Graham Shipp – Thornbury High Street
12. Ann Jones – Thornbury High Street
13. Lindsey Hall – Thornbury High Street
14. Peter Travis – Transport issues
15. Chris Holland – Thornbury High Street
16. Ashley Smith – Thornbury High Street
17. Jane Mitchell – Thornbury High Street
18. Gil Gilroy – Thornbury High Street
19. Maureen Gilroy – Thornbury High Street
20. Megan Walden – Thornbury High Street
21. Pam Shipp – Thornbury High Street
22. Angela Crabtree – Thornbury High Street
23. Ian Gauld – Thornbury High Street

24. Melanie Fraser – Thornbury High Street
25. Steven Freke – Thornbury High Street
26. Steve and Sharon Edmundson – Thornbury High Street
27. John Reynolds – Thornbury High Street
28. Vivien Reynolds – Thornbury High Street
29. Gareth Blackwell – Thornbury High Street
30. Graham Bartlett – Thornbury High Street
31. Mo Newton – Thornbury High Street
32. John Rigby – Thornbury High Street
33. Matt Scarborough – Thornbury High Street
34. Anthony Mitchell – Thornbury High Street
35. Julie Mitchell – Thornbury High Street
36. Ron Hayhurst – Thornbury High Street
37. Fenella Tait – Thornbury High Street
38. Margaret Bishop – Thornbury High Street
39. Mike Whitfield – Thornbury High Street
40. Paul Morrish – Thornbury High Street
41. Zoe Gilbraith – Thornbury High Street
42. Meg Wise – Thornbury High Street
43. Jenny Goddard – Thornbury High Street
44. Michael Barsley – Thornbury High Street
45. David Walker-Cornes – Thornbury High Street
46. Patricia Howarth – Thornbury High Street
47. Malcolm Best – Thornbury High Street
48. Stan McCarthy - Thornbury High Street
49. Susan Blick – Thornbury High Street

50. Julian Cooper – Thornbury High Street
51. Frank Walters – Thornbury High Street
52. Jill Cyphus – Thornbury High Street
53. F Ebbs – Thornbury High Street
54. Paul Williams – Thornbury High Street
55. Julia Galpin – Thornbury High Street
56. Kim Hicks, South Bristol wrong road group – Spatial Development Strategy
57. Christine Stone – Thornbury High Street
58. Stephen Kinsella – Banwell bypass
59. Alexandra Brittain – Thornbury High Street
60. Keith Parr – Thornbury High Street
61. Rachel Taylor – Thornbury High Street
62. Andrew Chubb – Thornbury High Street – may attend
63. Sheila Watson – Thornbury High Street
64. Jacqueline Howard – Thornbury High Street
65. Rob Galpin – Thornbury High Street
66. Ross Howard – Thornbury High Street
67. Brian Cason – Thornbury High Street
68. Jill Dimond – Thornbury High Street / Armstrong Hall
69. Cresten Boase – Banwell bypass

STATEMENT 1 – David Redgewell

Public statement on the budget and transport

Public transport users and voters are concerned about the Bristol city council and the city mayor, Banes and South Gloucestershire council passporting the support bus subsidies to the west of England mayoral combined Transport Authority for the supported service bus Network which provides bus services to some of the poorest communities in Greater Bristol in South, East and west Bristol.

At present the metro mayor Dan Norris has no precepting powers to main bus services and public transport infrastructure like the mayor of the west Midlands Andy Street and Andy Burnham mayor of Greater Manchester. The support bus and coach Network is important alongside covid 19 bus operators recovery grant from the Department for transport grant to maintain the important Great Bristol and Bath city region and North Somerset council bus Network.

Which is under threat from the Department for transport buses minister Baroness Vere of Norborton.

We need to retain covid 19 bus operators recovery grant.
past April 2022.

As bus services in the west of England mayoral combined Transport Authority and North Somerset council. area no buses are conical and carrying 60% on pre covid 19 levels.

we have bus service cut from 30th January 2022 .

on services 4 Bristol city centre sea mills Shirehampton, Lawrence Weston and Henbury no longer services Cribbs Causeway bus station and food shops services 23 24.

Ashton vale to Bristol city centre has no Evening and Sunday service. services 3 3 a Bristol bus and coach Ashton Gate, Bower Ashton, Pill and Portishead

services 17 Keynsham, Kingswood, Southmead hospital, bus station. the services is withdrawn in the Longwell Green and Speedwell and Soundwell.

services 71 is no longer serving Gloucester road North Filton Ave. now operating Along Gloucester road from UWE Bus station to Parson Street. but not UWE at Bower Ashton.

Bristol city centre Gloucester road Bristol Parkway station and Cribbs Causeway bus station. is diverted in Bradley Stoke area.

Whilst there is a link between Bristol city centre Lawrence Hill St George Hanham Longwell Green Bitton Cherry Garden service 45 change for Bath service 19 via Bitton, Kelston, Weston, Bath Spa bus station

Whilst we welcome the connections

the Public transport interchange at Cherry Gardens has no lighting CCTV cameras or proper passengers facilities.

this is the same at Henbury Crow Lane Portishead town centre.

with need for the Town services to meet the x4 x5 ,to Bristol via pill or Avonmouth.
x5 to clevedon and Weston super mare

In Weston super mare Somerset whilst welcoming the new bus and coach interchanges at £6.8 million pounds.
we are very Concerned about the Design of the bus and coach station shelters.
which we fill should be more wind and water proof similar to Bridgwater bus and coach station design or wells bus and coach station.

Thornbury must have a well designed bus interchange in the high street and Rock street.
we must restore bus service 18 from uwe Bus station to Downend, staple hill, kingswood, warmly, North common, oldland, willsbridge and keynsham Railway station and town centre.

we also need proper budgets for bus stops, bus shelters and interchanges coach stops which are part of the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority Network.
in all other mayoral combined transport Authorities all the infrastructure and staff work for the combined transport Authority.
we also clear budgets for graffiti removals from Public transport interchanges and bus stop and more enforcement by the police and Crime commissioner and the Avon and Somerset police and the British transport police.
Alex Reake Public transport safety partnership is work well with the public transport operators, Taxis, Ferries, British transport police, Avon and Somerset police and police and crime commissioner office, the west of England mayoral combined Transport Authority, North Somerset council, Banes council and South Gloucestershire council.
but Public transport interchanges and bus stops are very important and well must remove Graffiti repair shelters, lighting, real time information systems.
so we must have clear maintenance budgets and prosecution by the city council west of England mayoral combined Authority and the Avon and Somerset police.

The community even with budget savings to keep the city clean as per the mayor campaign for cleaner street and for Bristol waste limited to remove Graffiti from across the city again another successful mayor policy which must be funded.
we must remove graffiti from buildings and bus infrastructure in south Gloucestershire.
we need to repair broken bus shelters and stops in odd Down, Southdown Twerton
During covid 19 we successfully fund Public toilets in city centre and the harbour.
we must have a public toilets policy and community toilets funding within the budget including in South Gloucestershire council area, kingswood, staple hill Thornbury, yate, charfield, seven Beach, cribbs causeway, chipping sodbury, Hanham.

Banes must Develop more Public toilets in Bath city centre and in keynsham Radstock, peasedown st john, midsomer Norton And Paulton.

Bus drivers staff and passengers need access to good quality public toilets.

Of course maintaining public service is very difficult at present with covid 19. Especially around housing and social care parks and Gardens, sports and leisure centres.

we need to invest in Tourism Bristol and Bath Tourist west as it worth 4 Billion pounds in the Bus economy and we need a tourist information centre in Bristol and Bath one option is to use empty shops in Bristol and Bath spa bus station.

Tourist information centres in chipping sodbury and Thornbury but at other key locations

But without access to public transport many people in Bristol cannot access Employment Education and shopping facilities Heath care and leisure and Tourism.

on capital budget it important we fund the works to Bristol harbour flood defences.

Bristol city region cannot function without investment in high quality public transport.

The west of England mayoral Transport Authority and North Somerset council bus service improvements plan and city Region plan .

The A37 Bus corridor From street Glastonbury, wells bus and coach station chewton mendip, Farrington Gurney Clutton Pensford,Whitchurch, Hengrove knowle ,Bristol Temple meads and Bristol bus and coach station.

A4018

Bristol city centre park street Clifton Down station ,Westbury, Henleaze Southmead, Bentry ,Henbury and cribbs causeway bus station.

we need bus priority to cribbs causeway bus station.

we want to see progress on The Bristol to Thornbury metro bus corridor

Bristol city centre to yate and chipping sodbury metro bus corridor.

A367 Bath spa bus and coach station Peasedown st john, Radstock ,Westfield, midsomer Norton Paulton, shepton mallet, wells bus station.

A369 Bristol city centre to pill and Portishead.

A370 Bristol city centre to Weston super mare.

A38 Bristol bus and coach station and Bond street to Bristol Airport, churchill Brent knoll, Bridgwater Taunton Wellington, cullompton ,Exeter ,Newton Abbott and Plymouth.

as far as the Somerset border.

metro west railway Network.

Portway parkway.

Bristol Temple meads to Portishead via pill.

New station at Ashton Gate.

Bristol Temple meads Lawrence hill Stapleton road, Ashley Down ,Filton Abbey wood ,Filton North ,Henbury for cribs causeway.

Bristol Temple meads to Gloucester central with station at Lawrence hill, Stapleton road ,Ashley Down, Filton Abbey wood ,Bristol parkway yate charfield cam and Dursley , stonehouse Bristol road and Gloucester central.

Bristol Temple meads to Avonmouth Dock and Severn Beach via Lawrence hill, Stapleton road ,Montpellier ,Redland Clifton Down station ,sea mills shirehampton, Avonmouth Dock st Andrew road and Severn Beach .

Bristol Temple meads to keynsham oldfield park, Bath spa Freshford ,Avoncliff, Bradford on Avon Trowbridge Westbury and warminster.

Bristol Temple meads station to Bedminster parson street Nailsea and Backwell yatton for clevedon ,worle parkway Weston million , Weston super mare. Highbridge and Burnham on sea Bridgwater and Taunton.

metro west is a very important public transport project for the Bristol and Bath city region.

with accessible station at Bedminster parson street Nailsea and Backwell Weston super mare ,Freshford, Lawrence hill ,Stapleton road, Avonmouth, pilning.

on Mass transit system the key corridor is Bristol city centre bus station

Bristol Temple meads Arnos vale, Brislington keynsham, Salford, Newbridge, Weston and Bath spa bus station.

and one option is to use the North Somerset railway line as a cycling route walking and mass transit bus route to callington Road then the ring road to Bath Road to Hick Gate along the keynsham bypass with interchanges for Keynsham town centre, saltford Newbridge, Weston Bath spa bus and coach station.

we need mass transit line in Bristol.

to the South, East kingswood and North of the city region.

Brislington and Odd Down park and ride site need to be Developed into bus and coach interchanges and we must remove the ODD Down to Bath spa bus station and city centre park and ride service with bus services 171 172 173 174 calling instead.

On Brislington to Bristol Temple meads and Bristol city centre park and ride services with service 178 349 x39 39 services calling instead

it very important to support the city region Public and sustainable transport fund through the west of England mayoral combined Authority.

we also need the 106 planning agreements from YTL arena and housing Development to be released by the mayor for the west of England mayoral combined Authority jointly with Bristol city council to make progress on bus service provision to Bristol city centre. and to make progress on Bristol Temple meads to Ashley Down Filton Abbey wood Filton North Arena station and Henbury for cribs causeway bus station.

we still wish to see the mayor of the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council set up a bus Advisory Board with passengers and Passengers forum.
like Somerset county council and Wiltshire council.
we note the new time line for the bus services improvements plan and enhanced quality partnership from the Department for transport.

David Redgewell South west transport Network and Railfuture Severnside.

.Bus back better National bus strategy.

in line with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council bus service improvements plan.

we like to promotion of intergrated ticket

with Bus fare changes on the 23 rd of January 2022.

The following tickets Avon Rider Bristol Rider Bath, Rider Weston super mare rider ,Wiltshire Rover Rambler freedom passes bus and rail tickets first west of England and first group South west buses of Somerset plus area ticket across Somerset and parts of Gloucestershire Dorset Wiltshire and Devon .

and These promoted in Bus stations at Bristol Bath,wells yate cribbs causeway Southmead

And Tourist information offices in Bristol Bath wells and Weston super mare bus coach interchange like Cornwall council.

David Redgewell South west transport Network and Railfuture Severnside.

supplements to my statement.

with Baroness vere of Norberton the buses minister at the confederation of passengers transport conference.

said that whilst some bus improvements plan are very good other will be sent back to Transport Authority for further work.

But she has made it clear that their was Only £1 .4 billion pounds available for 79. Transport Authorities in England from April 2022 for bus services improvements plans and enhanced quality partnership

Boris Johnson the prime minister was asked at parliamentary questions about buses and 4000 new buses and covid 19 bus operators recovery grant.

The mp was information the the prime minister like buses and was Enthusiastic for buses and was spending £5 Billion on buses and cycling in uk during this parliament.

But with bus services in the west of England mayoral combined Authority with North Somerset council area just carrying 60 % 63% of pre covid 19 passengers number some country bus at 46 % and the only money is covid 19 recovery grant and an Omicrom uplift money in April 2022 with 3 months of covid 19 bus operators recovery grant extension to the summer.

Their is also a drop in concessionary fare money although transport Authority can still fund operators at a full rate .

If the Government doe continues to pay bus service covid 19 bus operators recovery grant then we will see cuts to bus service services in the spring.

Railway services are operating at %53 of passengers numbers pre covid 19

with reductions in services in South west of England on First group MTR South western railway and First group Great western railway and Germany state railway cross country trains due to lack of Department for transport funding and reduced timetables
National Express coaches megabus and flix bus is operating on reductions in services in South west England .

The concerns we have that the city region transport plan bus lane interchanges facilities and priorities will be built with the subsidies and revenue support to fund the buses metro buses and Gilder services unless treasury money is available.

we must push the Region mps members of the House of lords Western Gateway Transport Board and South west transport Board. Transport select committee Transport focus a government agency of the Department for transport to push for revenue support for bus services.
and improve funding for railway services.

we need to carry out consultation on Mass transit system route across the Bristol and Bath city region and into North Somerset council area .

But follow the Edinburgh model where scheme may start off as bus service improvements and then upgrade to a light rail system as more investment become available from the Department for transport.

Great Bristol and Bath city region requires a good light rail system metro west railway Network bus and coach Network over the next 20 years .

The priority must be to get metro west railway Bristol Temple meads to Portishead line reopen with upgrading Bedminster parson street pill and Portishead Railway station.

Bristol Temple meads, Lawrence hill Stapleton road, Ashley Down ,Filton Abbey wood, Filton North and Henbury ,for cribs causeway and allowing for a loop services

with a station to deal with the flood plain issue and car park bus interchanges and park and ride site. on cribs causeway with bus lanes to cribs causeway bus station.

The A37 to 4018 bus and Transport corridor needs to extend to cribs causeway bus and coach station.
with bus priority measures.

passengers forum engagement it is very important that the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.
set up passengers stakeholder forums to talk to passengers.

That the Bristol Transport Board has more discussion about the city region Transport plans and issue around interchanges facilities and priorities for Region Transport funding.

The west Midlands region transport board are very effective at bring partnership together for Public transport improvements and Region transport investment in Mass transit system light rail system and Glider buses. local railway services and bus and coach services.

we need strong Region transport forum at the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council and a good Bristol Transport Board to work in partnership with The Region Transport Authority.

of course North Somerset council need very very urgently to join the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority.

we also not with the Bristol mayoral referendum in may not that Transport groups would send £700 000 on a referendum in middle of covid 19 Public transport funding crisis.

But would have used the money to invest in local bus services recovery. we welcome the mayor Dan Norris put extra money in the budget for supported bus services.

West of England mayoral combined Authority chief executive and the Bristol city council chief executive.

need to make it clear the Role of the city and county of Bristol mayor and the metro mayor Dan Norris the difference in function on Region planning skill business Education and Transport functions.

so the role of the 2 mayor are understood in the vote .

we would like to much more passengers input at the Bristol Transport Board and passengers forum at the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority on interchanges and facilities

similarly to Gloucestershire county council convention

with the Local authorities west of England mayoral combined Transport Authority and North Somerset council Bus coach rail operators Network rail and passengers groups.

Their needs more passengers discussion including equalities groups.

we note the last Region forum for passengers was 2 years ago .

we must make the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council work together for passengers.

and of course North Somerset council must become a full member of the Authority.

we welcome the west of England mayoral combined Transport Authority and North Somerset council branding of the public transport Network. similarly to the west Midlands liverpool city region and Greater Manchester transport Authority and the metro mayor s .

but the Brand needs to include the North Somerset council area .

we need to market all the intergrated bus and rail tickets in the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

Avon rider

Bristol rider .

Bath rider

Weston super mare Rider.

west of England plus bus ticket

bus rail freedom pass on bus rail and train services .

and Wiltshire rider.

similarly to Cornwall council.

not just first group or stagecoach west bus products .

David Redgewell South west transport Network.

public statement update .

we would also ask the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council to take part in competition and markets Authority investigations into the stagecoach group merger with National Express coach group.

As both companies deliver bus and coach services in North Somerset council and the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority area . including Megabus coaches from stagecoach west Bristol Depot. stagecoach west bus services.

National Express coaches with a Depot in Avonmouth.

stagecoach South west Falcon coach services from Bristol Bond street to Plymouth coach station providing coach services along the A38 a local bus service with covid 19 bus operators grant.

megabus coaches and the Falcon are planned to sale to comfort delgro the Singapore transport company.

who run Scottish city link coaches with stagecoach and city link Ireland.

on South Gloucestershire council part of west of England mayoral combined Authority we welcome the new yate park and ride service from February 2022

with first group west of England and stagecoach west buses we hope the 84 85 86 from wotton under edge and kingswood will connections with bus services to Bristol city centre and Southmead hospital.

That the passengers information displays will be repaired at yate bus station with bus and train information. update and at yate railway station.

and passengers facilities will be developed in Thornbury high street and Rock street bus interchanges.

with the west of England mayoral combined Authority and first group and stagecoach west.

plan will progress on metro bus service South Bristol loop . and link to seven Beach

Metro bus service to Yate and chipping sodbury from Bristol city centre From Bristol city centre to Thornbury.

and bus and rail services marketing for leisure and Tourism services on public transport in west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council this spring .

with the west country tourist boards .

including Tourist information offices in Bristol and Bath bus station.

on Bus coach and train clean we need to make sure the bus cleaning and bus washing is being carried out in the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council area .

and train and station cleaning to prevent covid 19 spread .

we welcome the operators still ask passengers with the mayor to wear face coving.

David Redgewell South west transport Network.

STATEMENT 2 – Jean Churchill

Reference:- Restricted use to Thornbury High Street, South Gloucs. without proper consultation with residents of Thornbury and surrounding areas.

Dear WECA Mayor and Councillors,

I would like to lodge my objection to South Gloucestershire Council obtaining any more funding for the destruction of our local Thornbury High Street.

They have done this without proper consultation with the residents of Thornbury and the surrounding areas, and the businesses who have been so badly affected by it's ill considered and totally unfit for purpose 'planning'.

On observing the High St., on more than one occasion when I was visiting St. Marys Centre and Arcade, the street seems to be more or less deserted, when in other years, and other small towns and shops nearby, these places have been absolutely buzzing with shoppers.

In my opinion SGC have thrown away a great deal of money on their totally useless attempt to improve the High Street; it has not been thought about carefully enough, especially the lack of consultation with the people/mainly their voters, who would have a vested interest in it's success. Any further money from WECA would likely be used in a similar fashion unless there was strong stipulation on how the money should be used in a proper democratic way.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Churchill

STATEMENT 3 – Anthony Domaille

Please accept this letter as my objection to the South Gloucestershire £4.6 Million bid to WECA for funds to make permanent changes to Thornbury High Street. The reasons for my objection are as follows –

- SGC have conducted no meaningful consultation with the residents or businesses of Thornbury. Where consultation has been conducted, the overwhelming majority view has been ignored. 71% of residents were against the changes.
- SGC conducted no environmental impact assessment and no economic impact assessment prior to making changes to the High Street.
- Traffic conditions in Rock Street have deteriorated and become less safe, as a result of the existing changes. This is largely because entering and leaving Thornbury is now forced via the Rock Street/Midland Way mini roundabout, which is incapable of handling heavy traffic.
- The High Street is incapable of being traffic free as all the all the businesses have to have deliveries made to the front of their premises.
- Because traffic is still allowed and cyclists are permitted to travel in both directions, pedestrians are forced back to the pavements used prior to the changes. Consequently, there are no pedestrian benefits in the changes.
- Business has suffered through a dramatic drop in footfall.
- None of the SGC councillors who voted for the largely unsupported changes live or work in Thornbury.
- Thornbury already has a pedestrianised precinct in the St Marys Centre.
- The changes have had a detrimental effect on the character of the centre of the town through loss of business and unattractive conditions.

The majority of businesses and residents do not want the changes that have been imposed and do not support further redevelopment of the High Street. SGC have failed to consult in any meaningful way, ignored public opinion, and detrimentally changed the character of the town. To grant funds to further an unsupported and unwanted project would fly in the face of natural justice.

Thank you for your attention in this matter

Kind regards

Anthony Domaille

STATEMENT 4 - John Davies

After all manner of objections, petitions, meetings etc I was amazed to find out that South Glos Council have now decided what is to happen to our High Street without any further consideration or consultation with we locals. Once again the concerns of the long-standing traders have been ignored, and those of us who have lived in Thornbury for over 40 years despair at the mess which SGC have made of our once-thriving High Street.

The first we heard of the closure to traffic was on BBC1's "Countryfile"! Even our (useless Lib Dem) Councillors were not put in the picture. Two public meetings were called, and the Council Leader was not at either - but then he lives on the other side of the Severn, rather like the rest of the pompously named "cabinet" who live miles from Thornbury, yet took the decision to close the High St to traffic.

Councillor Rachel Hunt was quoted in "Thornbury Voice " saying that there had been "consultation". As far as I can tell, there has not been any such thing! Just recently a diagram was circulated showing what SGC wants for our High St which doesn't show a bus stop! Luke Hall MP supported the return of buses to our High St, but it seems that bringing them back is a problem, but, amazingly, re-routing them was not!

Surely it is time to withdraw funds for further ridiculous tampering with our High Street. Please let us have our High Street back as it was before the pandemic.

Yours faithfully
John Davies

STATEMENT 5 – Rob Galpin for Thornbury Town and District Residents Association

Statement to be read out at the WECA meeting on 28th January 2022 on behalf of TTaDRA

We request that South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) put their current proposals for Thornbury High Street to one side - at least until June 2022. This is when SGC claim they will eventually respond to many of the questions in our Freedom of Information (FOI) requests - some 8 months after they were first raised

This will allow time to conduct a Full, Fair and Respectful Consultation with the Public. It will also enable time for plans to be prepared that are relevant to Thornbury, its users and businesses

Would it not be best to assess the problem, come up with some potential solutions, test these with the community and then agree together on a suitable way to progress?

Consultation

These are definitions for **Consult** taken from Collins English Dictionary:

“You ask for their opinion and advice about what you should do”

“Talk and exchange ideas and opinions”

“In order to find some information”

Shamefully, SGC preferred definition appears to be

“To impose ones will upon”

We should bear in mind that **“project fear”** at the start of the Pandemic was the trigger for SGC to hastily introduce an Experimental Traffic Order in June 2020. This was for Temporary Pedestrianisation and Closure of the High Street to through traffic in order to make public spaces safer and enable social distancing

SGC overreached themselves and thought the Pandemic presented the opportunity to make permanent changes to Thornbury that they knew could not possibly be agreed to in normal times

With the introduction of vaccines in Spring 2021 and the current phasing out of government restrictions in early 2022 there is absolutely no excuse to continue with the Pedestrianisation and Closure of the High Street

SGC produced a Survey, held between July 2020 and February 2021, that was heavily biased to the then status quo of Pedestrianisation and Road Closure

The public, focus groups and businesses clearly, and by substantial margins, rejected SGC proposals for Pedestrianisation, Road Closure and called for the return of Buses in the High Street despite this bias

This did not prevent SGC imperiously carrying on with their original scheme. They claimed that they had listened and that the “revised” scheme was not Pedestrianised nor was the High Street Closed to traffic

The current drawings in Atkins Business Case prove that this is claim is incorrect – **If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck**

Eventually, in November 2021, SGC relented on one point and agreed to reintroduce buses to the High Street. When and if that will be is anyone's guess, but maybe they will get their act together for full services to run 7 days a week on completion of construction work in Autumn 2023 – after 3 years without bus services. Even that is open to doubt since SGC continue to procrastinate

In the meantime, the High Street traders are losing business, blue badge holders and bus passengers can no longer access the High Street and the Community sees the High Street as a place to avoid despite the best attempts of businesses to retain trade

Restricted sessions were held in September 2021, ostensibly to consult with the public on SGC proposal to introduce Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). Those people that managed to attend found that SGC showed no empathy and had no real intention of heeding any comments from the public

The subsequent report showed 90% of comments from the public were against introduction of the TROs but, true to form, SGC signed them off just the same

After concluding these "Consultations" In September 2021 SGC did hold some drop-in sessions during December 2021

Whilst these were once again poorly advertised the SGC officers present at the sessions were at least able to enter into intelligent conversation and gave the appearance of wanting to learn about the ongoing problems caused by SGC actions. Unfortunately, the only changes they can make at this stage are cosmetic relating to materials, placing of street furniture and landscaping.

Far too little and far too late

The Residents Association raised a Freedom of Information request in October 2021 which, eventually, after 8 weeks, was responded to on Christmas Eve. Many of the responses to individual questions will not be provided until **AFTER May 2022**

This shows that SGC has never held sufficient reliable information to make informed decisions on the future of Thornbury High Street

Responses to our second FOI were once again delayed, from the normal 20 days to 40 days, and were only received on 24th January 2022, conveniently too late for use in current assessments of the project. Again, they are incomplete and show SGC even this week have not done their homework

Finally, the Atkins Business Case which was only published on Friday 21st January 2022 contains numerous incorrect assumptions, comparisons to unrelated Town Centres and statistics, errors, omissions, misleading figures and statements leaving little time for the public to digest let alone prepare questions or statements for the WECA meeting on 28th January 2022

The Business Case is not Fit for Purpose

We can understand that WECA members may be reluctant to withhold support to a fellow Council in their quest for funding

However, SGC do not deserve support from any quarter, until such time that they carry out a Full, Fair and Respectful Consultation with the residents of Thornbury, the outlying Villages that rely upon the High Street and of course the Businesses in the High Street

STATEMENT 6 – Clive Washbourne

I wish to voice my objection to South Gloucestershire Councils (SGC) request for monies for funding their alterations to Thornbury High Street. I have worked and lived in the area, especially Thornbury, all of my 81 years. I have served as a Police Officer for the district and been involved in many local activities such as The Sports Council, consulted on the security of St Mary's Shopping Centre, numerous Road Safety activities, the area Youth Committee, three youth clubs and much more so I have a concern for Thornbury High Street.

As a local campaigner against the closure and alterations to the road system in Thornbury I am aware that SGC has not carried out a full consultation of business owners trading in the High Street or of people who work or shop in the area. All decisions made by SGC have never been subject of a meaningful consultation. They (SGC) have relied on a low circulation newspaper and the Web to promote their views neither of which reaches the wider community. The web articles called for a password to be able to respond to proposals which were not known by those wishing to respond and object.

I am aware that SGC did not consult with English Heritage on the alterations to the conservation area until I raised the matter in December 2021 with both parties.

I and many others have challenged SGC on their lack of consultation only to receive non committal replies.

The adverse effect of the closure/alterations have caused the change to public transport which SGC have stated that it will be reinstated but plans recently published show no provisions for this. The greatly increased traffic on Midland Way have caused some residents to purchase air purifying equipment because of increased dangerous fumes entering their homes. I challenged SGC on this only to be told that NO survey on air pollution had taken place even though they had previously been carried out. Two public meetings called by myself were attended by hundreds of people all (except for one) were totally against the closure. The general public opinion is that the closure is killing the centre of our historic town.

I have received adverse comments from people I know visiting from several parts of the UK in addition to comments from people living in Germany and Holland. All consider the continued changes unnecessary and detrimental to the historic nature of the Town.

When replies to my challenges to SGC on the closure have been replied in the views that I do not know what I am talking about makes me angry. Communications to the public have not been backed by consultation or reasoning behind SGC actions even though business owners have publically stated that their business will not survive 2022 with the continuation of the restrictions.

It is ironic that the SGC Executive Committee making these decisions comprise councillors who do not appear to have any connection with Thornbury or its immediate surrounding area,

Yours sincerely

Clive Washbourne

STATEMENT 7– David Whitfield

Re Thornbury High Street

Please can you withhold the £4.6m to South Gloucestershire Council for the changes they want to make to Thornbury High Street

The High Street prior to the temporary changes were made was a vibrant busy High Street – always lots of cars parked, visiting the shops, Rock Street did not have stationery traffic like it does now – the pollution from this traffic is so much worse than the combined streets together. It is more dangerous when buses are parked both in the pull in bus stop (especially when there are two buses parked) and even more dangerous on the other side when cars trying to get out of the car park as the view is obscured by the bus. The council has not done any consultation fairly – the original survey excluded replies from outside of Thornbury even though people from neighbouring villages visit the High Street. Over 60% of replies wanted the High Street reopened as it was originally – Cardiff reopened the closed road after just over 50% wanted it reopened.

Luke Hall has said that buses will start using the High Street in one direction but the South Gloucestershire plans that are being worked on now do not have any bus stop on the High Street even though there was one upgraded prior to the closure outside Lloyds Bank. How can the residents of Thornbury ever trust South Gloucestershire Council again

There were two public meetings organised by Thornbury Town Council – the first one was so over subscribed that another meeting was organised – this was full as well in a much bigger venue. A number of no confidence motions were carried - one in Thornbury Town Council for not fighting the changes for the business of the High Street and another one in South Gloucestershire Council for putting through these changes against the wishes of the majority of the residents of Thornbury. The High Street is now incredible dangerous – you don't know which way traffic is going to come – pedal bikes fly down the High Street – certainly not keeping to the 20 mph speed limit –

Please ask South Gloucestershire Council to put the High Street back to how it was and then look at how to increase the type of shops to the empty stores that are now on the High Street and also in the St Mary's Shopping Centre

Many thanks
Dave Whitfield

STATEMENT 8 – Julie Day

I want to express my views on the enforced closure of Thornbury High Street.

In 2020 when the High Street was closed, we were told that was due to Covid and was to enable social distancing etc.

It appears that Covid was just an excuse for a plan that had been in the making for a while.

- The majority of traders on the high street were against this plan, I can fully understand the Malt House and Swan would want this as it gives them outside space other than the pub gardens they already have.
- The traffic going out of Thornbury is now often at a standstill, as there is now only the ridiculous mini roundabout to contend with. Which means that the 3 retirement homes along that road are constantly inhaling the fumes from cars at standstill, causing more congestion and traffic emissions. This is also a hazard to vulnerable people from Grace Lodge trying to cross the road.
- The bus stop that used to come into the high street has now been sighted in a potentially dangerous place.
- The whole journey into Thornbury is now an eyesore. Instead of driving into a pretty little town, you are directed around industrial units, carparks, back entrances with rubbish bins and even a disused toilet block. Why would you want to stop and explore?
- The way Thornbury used to be with short stay parking outside the actual shops enabled less mobile and people on the way to work to pop into the shops.
- South Glos council talk about cuts to services due to lack of funds, but have already spent vast amounts of money on this scheme, which could of been used to funds schools, hospitals, filling pot holes etc. How can this be justified?
- There was a petition previously submitted, which the council refused to consider, stating that the traders had forced people to sign. The petition on Change.org has gained over 1300 signatures within a week, and that was on line only.
- The consultation survey was heavily laden towards closure so that results could be in plans favour. The consultation was even closed early, so say due to administration error. Then the majority of 89% who wanted High Street reinstated as it was, were ignored.
- Why has this been enforced on Thornbury, where the pavements are wider than say Chipping Sodbury, which already has a bypass so could be possible?

Just a few of the reasons why this scheme should be scrapped and our high street returned to what it was, money wasted could of been put towards helping the traders with a recovery scheme, such as reduced business rates.

I strongly wish, that you refuse further funding for this vanity project.

I would also like to thank Mr Norris for attending the public meetings and listening to the people that live in Thornbury.

I look forward to your response.

Regards

Julie Day

STATEMENT 9 – Angela Brace

Please could you confirm when the bus service will resume in the high street ,as it is not practical for any elderly or a person who does not hold a blue badge but struggles,having to walk from Aldi to the post office or any shop at the lower part of the high street,eventually the bottom of the high street will be all close shops because half thornbury residents couldn't get there.

Also the traffic congestion around is not good for health, my family live in Gloucester terrace and the amount of traffic residue that for the past year has been left in blind window frames proves the current system is causing more pollution let alone hold ups,

The furniture is a disgrace and a large percentage of the year is not used ,it also creates a hazard ,when walking past the pub doors there is no clear view for staff or public to see if anyone is coming out with hot drinks or food ,,I take it risk assessments are in place to cover this ,as I can't see any health and safety passing this ,

I was born in thornbury and I'm ashamed to say people who live outside thornbury call it a dump.now totally ruined by the stupid closures,,

I have great memories of carnival processions ,, Xmas fairs,and many other events that happened it's sad to say my granddaughter who also was born in thornbury will never experience these memories because the high street is out of use for all these events,,which brought a massive amount of people to thornbury and support all shops,I now sadly choose to shop outside as I can no longer just pop into a shop in my way home,many people have busy lives and being able to park in the highstreet was a life saver,, but all that has been taken without any thought to the age of thornbury resident whom are mainly retired,

Rick street is a accident waiting to happen ,how on earth you expect the residents of the retirement homes to get across the road is a joke,I've witnessed elderly residents try to cross they can't even have a safe place due to traffic and the turning to the car park has traffic coming in out trying to see around a bus,it's bad enough for a very visual person to deal with let alone assisted living residents.

I do not understand why it has to change we have as st Mary's center that is 99 percent of the time empty,,why can't you make this area more attractive ,as Yate have ,, more appealing and leave our high street alone

STATEMENT 10 – Carole Sowter

I would like to ask how south gloucester council and local council can get away with what they have done to our beautiful high street, I am 77 years old and lived in Thornbury for 60 years because they have stopped the bus going into the high street i now find it difficult to shop in lovely high street and access my bank as i have to walk to far to get to them takeing away my independence. The high street is so unwelcoming with ugly planters and empty seating on both sides. The road is so dangerous with bikes allowed both ways and access only cars and pick ups. Confuses people. Also doubling traffic on rock street causing danger for the elderly living there pluss air quality is very bad ..The underhanded way the council have gone around getting this mess done was without any consultation with locals and done using covid as the reason please please do not let them throw any more money into this and make them put our lovely high street back to how it was.

STATEMENT 11 – Graham Shipp

I would like to ask how south gloucester council and local council can get away with what they have done to our beautiful high street, I am 77 years old and lived in Thornbury for 60 years because they have stopped the bus going into the high street i now find it difficult to shop in lovely high street and access my bank as i have to walk to far to get to them takeing away my independence. The high street is so unwelcoming with ugly planters and empty seating on both sides. The road is so dangerous with bikes allowed both ways and access only cars and pick ups. Confuses people. Also doubling traffic on rock street causing danger for the elderly living there pluss air quality is very bad ..The underhanded way the council have gone around getting this mess done was without any consultation with locals and done using covid as the reason please please do not let them throw any more money into this and make them put our lovely high street back to how it was.

STATEMENT 12 – Ann Jones

I thank Dan Norris for his response to my email, and would like to make the following points for consideration by the WECA Joint Committee:

1. At no time have South Gloucestershire Council asked the one single question during its “consultation process” – “Do you want the High Street closed, YES/NO”. The initial questionnaire simply asked whether people wanted improved paving, seating or a children’s sandpit. The latest one asks if we want a rain garden!
2. At no point were the shopkeepers on the High Street consulted. In fact Toby Savage accused them of trying to force people to sign the paper-based petition initiated by Clive Washbourne. This is an absolute calumny for which he has never apologised. He refused even to accept the petition. Probably because he knew that it would not fit his narrative.
3. Where are the data and back up information that provides beyond doubt that the footfall in the High Street will increase if the road is narrowed/pedestrianised? SGC have never produced any; particularly as many towns across the country are now reversing their decision to pedestrianise as it often does not work.
4. SGC engineers and planners do not seem to have visited Thornbury to see the layout for themselves, otherwise they would have made proper provision for the flat dwellers above the shops located on the burgage plots which have no rear access at all. If they narrow the High Street, it is likely that deliveries to the shops will hold up any traffic. The SGC Officer to whom I spoke in the library, said that the Engineers were looking in to it. Somewhat late in the day I feel.
5. I was assured by the SGC Officer taking residents’ views at the library that there would be extra parking for Blue Badge holders and for people who needed to park for up to half an hour to go to the bank, the chemist, the Post Office or simply pick up a bulky item. There is no such increased provision on the plan attached to lamp posts in the High Street.
6. I was further assured by the same Officer that the consensus of opinion of residents was that the Town Pump should remain a stand alone island and not be included in any pedestrianisation. This is not shown on the aforesaid map.
7. Any pedestrianisation should only start from above the entrance to Castle Court to allow vehicles to access the new houses, apartments, John Groom Home and the elderly residents home. This is not shown on the aforesaid map.
8. We already have a large and successful pedestrianised area in St Mary Centre, currently owned by the Peer Group, the High Street should be totally different to enhance visitors and residents experience. Although we have been told by SGC Officers that they are not in the least interested in residents, they wish to attract people from outside the area.
9. I sincerely hope that SGC and the Town Council will ensure that the wholly cheap and tacky chairs and tables that some hostellers have

- put out will be removed. They are an eyesore and not up to the standard that is expected in the High Street.
10. It is ridiculous to propose that cyclists can cycle both up and down the High Street, they should use the same route as motorised vehicles.
 11. By making the High Street “bicycle friendly”, although very very few cyclists use it; SGC have not considered that people from the outlying villages such as Littleton, Oldbury, Rockhampton, Hill, Shepperdine, Stone etc. can only access Thornbury by car. It is too far to cycle and carry home shopping and there is no bus service. The same can be said to apply to the new build housing estates on the edge of Thornbury at Morton. This mania for cycling is all very well in towns, but out here in the country it is not a practical option.
 12. It is imperative that the bus is re-routed up the High Street. The current siting of the bus stop in Rock Street is extremely dangerous. Vehicles coming out of Bath Road are blind to anything passing the bus. If cars are coming from the Midland Road roundabout vehicles coming up Rock Street from Gloucester Road or Gillingstool cannot pass the bus, this causes traffic tailbacks often to the mini-roundabout at the top of Gloucester Road. Two buses, one behind the other causes absolute chaos. Stationary cars cause an excess of emissions on Rock Street, which did not happen when cars could drive up High Street.
 13. I note that Ambulances cannot drive down the High Street. If High Street is pedestrianised they will have to follow the route from the roundabout on to Midland Way and into Rock Street, or through Chapel Street. Because of the traffic congestion in and around those roundabouts this will add extra time to their journey which might prove vital in saving someone’s life. Blue light services should be allowed to drive up or down the un-narrowed High Street.
 14. Our High Street is wide for a good reason. The ancient market was held there until the new market (now destroyed and flats built) was built. To narrow the road is to destroy what makes Thornbury unique. I can imagine the uproar if SGC tried this in Chipping Sodbury.
 15. The pavements in the High Street have always been wider than most so that social distancing is very easy. SGC are using covid (which is now in decline) as an excuse to damage Thornbury’s heritage and uniqueness.
 16. The decisions made by SGC are undemocratic to say the least. I firmly believe that this is a vanity project put forward by the leader Mr Savage, who I may say, does not even live in the Unitary Authority and therefore has no right to make such a momentous decision without a full, respectful and open consultation.

I hope you will take very seriously the views of the majority of Thornbury residents and not agree to release the £4.6 million pounds for the work proposed by SGC until such times as they have proved the need for any changes to our ancient and historic High Street, have the data to back up their claims and have carried out a proper meaningful, respectful and full consultation.

Yours faithfully
Ann Jones

STATEMENT 13 – Lindsey Hall

Please see the article below as my written statement objecting to the Closure of Thornbury High Street. This has been submitted to the Gazette and cc'd to Dan Norris, Toby Savage, Luke Hall and Thornbury Residents Association.

As some of you will know, the Experimental Thornbury High Street Traffic Regulation Orders come to an end this month. So, as a reminder, here are a dozen reasons why the closure was, is and will continue to be a terrible idea and why the TROs should be scrapped.

- 1) Local shops, businesses and food outlets who were already suffering due to Covid-19 are continuing to find life harder still, the opposite of what was intended. Just about every shop and business in the town is against the idea and they should be the ones who know. Many of them relied on passing trade and people's ability to park. This, as well as free parking, helped keep Thornbury buoyant for many years, good work that is being undone. Now, yet more people will simply go to The Mall depriving Thornbury of much needed business in difficult times.
- 2) The closure has already cost the Council – and the taxpayer – many thousands of pounds. Because of it, traffic is being directed on to other roads and there is now talk of a requirement for further infrastructure including putting a roundabout on a junction everyone now uses to avoid the High Street. I am no expert on roundabouts but they can't be cheap without considering the immense further disruption this will cause spending money that is completely unnecessary. SGC's defence apparently, is that this is "capital expenditure from Central Government" – basically other people's cash, not theirs but all still ours.
- 3) The closure and resulting congestion is slowing down the response times of emergency services, notably our retained fire fighters who at times are now taking over ten minutes to reach the local fire station whereas most could previously do it in less than four.
- 4) Much has been made of the benefits of "pedestrianisation". Well, we've had a pedestrianised area for years called The St Mary Centre. It's a pleasant enough space but I can list 4 shops in the 2 years pre Covid that closed as they found it hard to survive without the passing trade of the High Street.
- 5) SGC's actions were originally carried out on the spurious grounds that they would allow better social distancing in the pandemic, yet most of the pavements are plenty wide enough. I visit the High Street regularly and found that people were very sensible in how they moved round each other, without stepping into the road. Bizarrely, the closure of the top part of the High Street, has resulted in a much narrower pavement there so that social distancing is now more difficult than it used to be.
- 6) Can we please ditch the idea that cars are on the way out. Internal combustion engines certainly are and we may all be driving electric vehicles in 10 years' time. In fact, we may not actually be driving them as we'll just tell them where we want to go but lets get real, personal

metal box transport is going nowhere and people will continue to rely on it to get as near as they can to where they want to get to. Areas of shopping and commerce that keep that firmly in mind will continue to flourish. Areas that ignore it will not.

- 7) Thornbury also has an ageing population many of whom rely on their cars to get close to shops and amenities. The lip service paid with a few disabled spaces is derisory, particularly as they are mostly used by the customers and delivery drivers of the local takeaways, and many now find the town inaccessible.
- 8) Neither should we be convinced by the argument for more cycling and walking. Granted, many of us should probably take more exercise but I have been a regular cyclist for over 40 years and am embarrassed at the idea that someone needs to close a popular High Street so that I can enjoy a bike ride, particularly when this makes the surrounding roads far more dangerous than they should be.
- 9) Catching the bus is also now more dangerous and not just because of Covid. For those that do use public transport, including many children from The Castle School, the siting of the High Street bus stop to a cramped piece of pavement on the corner of a road leading to the main town carpark is (another) serious accident waiting to happen. Not only does this further increase congestion, it puts the children in more danger from traffic, deprives the town shops of much of their business and makes it harder for a new local retirement community to access the main town across a road that is now much busier. Hopefully, following recent consultations this will change in the next few weeks but I am yet to see any evidence.
- 10) Antisocial behaviour thrives when no-one is looking and for much of the time, the High Street is like a ghost town. Yes, there are now more CCTV cameras, but that is not the same as the deterrent of a through put of local residents going about their legitimate business.
- 11) Outside of the Christmas window, our High Street Post Office has seen a significant drop in trade, even as businesses and people's lives start to open up again. Yet, two smaller Post Offices in surrounding villages seem to be really busy, both locations you can drive to.
- 12) The most galling aspect of this saga has been a complete lack of reasonable consultation, particularly at the start. We as a business, situated close to the High Street, only received a letter 3 days after the closure stating that extensive consultation had taken place. This was a complete fabrication as no-one seemed to be aware of the plans and certainly didn't have time to properly respond. Having visited Brecon in South Wales in the late summer of 2020, I was interested to note a flyer on a shop counter advising local businesses that a full consultation was proposed about changes to their High Street and surrounding roads post the start of the pandemic and that all views would be considered before decisions taken. A way to do things, surely? I also understand that it never happened and other South Wales towns such as Monmouth are furiously back-tracking on any tentative moves they made towards pedestrianising their High Streets.

I acknowledge there are still those in favour who love the idea of sipping their lattes or wines in an outdoor café society - about 10% if letters to this paper

are anything to go by and a up to a third according to last year's Council survey, although the wording of that was so heavily biased it was a joke. However, we do live in the UK, not the Mediterranean. So be honest, apart from the Boxing Day Hunt Meeting, when have you seen anyone sat in any of the seating outside the High Street pubs and cafes in the last 3 months? There may have been a few smokers but as soon as the cigarette is stubbed out they nip back inside quicker than you can say "fancy another" and not much will change in that regard until the Spring or early summer. Okay, let us have the ability to close the High Street for Market days, other events and summer weekends so we can all enjoy that café society at times but for the rest of the time, let it return to how it was or the only thing to look at will be a lot of boarded up shops and businesses.

The closure of Thornbury High Street continues to be an arrogant and costly exercise in the irresponsible, undemocratic and unwanted spending of other peoples' money. It is also potentially dangerous for local residents needing emergency services, isolating for the elderly and disabled and damaging to local business, to say nothing of the reputations of the SGC counsellors and executives who continue to blindly plough ahead with this scheme. It needs to stop, which will be the only "improvement" the vast majority of Thornbury residents want and might at last give the good readers of this newspaper something else to read about.

Kind regards

Lindsey Hall

STATEMENT 14 – Peter Travis

public statement.

Somerset catch the bus campaign

Somerset bus partnership.

Gloucestershire catch the bus campaign.

we are very concerned about the reductions in covid 19 bus service recovery grant from £25 .3 to £226 .5 from from October 2021 to April 2022 .

with 33 bus being withdrawn or cut back on the 30 th January 2022.

Leaving areas of the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council with reduced bus service or No Evening or sunday services .

places in the to have reduced services are Portishead with its link to Bristol bus and coach station x3 and 3 being withdrawn leaving just service x4 x5 to Bristol via pill or Portishead.

service 23 from Ashton vale to Bristol is a replacement for 24 a Shuttle bus service Ashton vale to Ashton gate .

connections on to service 24 from Ashton vale to Southville, Bedminster Bristol city centre, Oid market, Stapleton Road Eastville park, lockleaze, Horfield and Southmead hospital bus station.

The present services 23 Ashton vale to Bristol city centre has no evening or sunday service.

Ashton vale is on the Bristol city council North Somerset council boundary .

Other concern is the loss of services 37 from Bristol bus and coach station to oid market Lawrence hill Station St George ,Hanham ,longwell green ,Bitton cherry garden, Bitton ,kelston, Weston Bath spa bus and coach station.

The replacement services is service 45 from Bristol city centre Broadmead Lawrence hill station st George Hanham longwell green Bitton cherry garden connections with services 19 at Bitton cherry garden for Bitton,Kelson, Weston and Bath bus and coach station.

.The concerns we have is the interchange at cherry Gardens Bitton has no CCTV or lighting no help point .

This issue need look into as an interchange policy with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

Bus service improvements plan.

Along with the interchanges at Bath Grand parade with services 6 and 7 larkhall and Fairfield park terminal for interchanges to Bath bus and coach station Rail station and the Royal united hospital. services 3 .

Better interchanges facilities at Portishead town centre. with services to and from Bristol city centre and Bus and coach station. x4 x5 X 5 to clevedon and Weston super mare new bus and coach interchanges with Portishead Town services run by stagecoach west for North Somerset council.

we are concerned Somerset catch the bus campaign and Somerset bus partnership welcome the new £ 6.8 million pounds new bus and coach interchange but members has Expressed concern about the bus and coach waiting shelters and hope theses are weather proof.

on the positive side we are please to see the mayor reinstate the following services to operate from the 30th January 2022
178 Radstock ,Westfield ,midsomer Norton, Paulton ,Timbury ,Marksbury Keynsham ,Bristolington ,Arnos vale; Bristol Temple meads ,Bristol bus and coach station
D1 Bath spa bus and coach station, limpley stoke,Winsley, Bradford on Avon Trowbridge ,Westbury ,warminster.
with a connections on services 24 Warminster,colford, Salisbury .
with funding from Wiltshire council.
services 8 Bath to kingsway.
services 620 69 Bath spa bus and coach station to lansdown,Wick,Puckchurch Yate bus station , chipping sodbury Tetbury and Stroud bus and coach station.
service 5 Bristol bus and coach station to Downend evening and Sunday service.

But we are very very concerned about the loss of bus operators recovery grant from the 4 th April 2022 with bus services in the Greater Bristol and Bath city region and south west England.
with bus services only carrying 60.% to 62 % on pre covid 19 figures .
we must retain covid 19 operators recovery grant otherwise vital bus and local coach services will be reduced or withdrawn in April 2022.
Has the mayor Dan Norris metro mayor and the leader of North Somerset council.
raised this issue with the m10 core cities.
Regional Transport Boards western Gateway. and South west Transport Board.
western gateway Partnership.
urban Transport Group.
Transport Focus .
Transport select committee.
Regional mps and members of the house of lords.

we also support the City region Transport plan and bus service improvements plan for North Somerset council and the west of England mayoral combined.
with the Transport corridor Along the A4 from Bristol bus and coach station to Arnos vale, Bristolington ,keynsham Salford, Newbridge ,Weston and Bath spa bus station for mass transit bus .
and bus service 39, x39, 178, 349 .
A367 Bath spa bus station to peasdown st john Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton Paulton shepton mallet Chilcompton and wells bus station.
171 ,172 ,173 ,174 .
A37 Street Glastonbury wells bus station chewton mendip, Farrington Gurney Clutton, Pensford, whitchurch Hengrove knowle Bristol Temple meads and Bristol bus station 3 3a 376 bus corridor
A4018 city centre park street Clifton Down station, Henleaze Southmead Brenty and cribbs causeway bus station
no 1 3 3a Corridor.
we welcome bus interchanges.
At Farrington Gurney Pensford for the chew valley.

Henbury crow lane we have concerns about and community safety .
But would welcome bus interchanges at Radstock, midsomer Norton Paulton
and Keynsham Ashton way for a new bus and coach facility.

We support the A38 bus corridor from
Bristol bus and coach station to Bristol Airport, Churchill Brent Knoll Bridgwater
Taunton Wellington Cullompton Exeter Newton Abbott and Plymouth.
in partnership with North Somerset Council and Somerset County Council and
Devon County Council and Plymouth City Council.
Bristol bus and coach station. to Pill and Portishead bus corridor x4 x5

Bristol bus and coach station to Weston Super Mare bus coach and
interchange.
corridor. x1 x2 .
with new buses .
A370 .

Bristol to Nailsea and Backwell station Nailsea and Clevedon bus corridor.

we wish to ask for Evening and Sunday services on these corridors 18 hours
a day .
with provision for some night services.

on information points we like to see like Cornwall Council bus information
points and Tourist information centres in Bus and coach stations in
Bristol, Bath and Wells and at the new information point at Weston Super
Mare. by the Town Council. at Yate Uwe Cribbs Causeway and Southmead bus
and coach station.

on the new fares booklet we like to see more promotion of Avon Rider Bristol
Rider Bath Rider , Weston Super Mare Rider , Wiltshire Rambler West of
England plus ticket across first group West of England and first group South
West Bus Network. and the Freedom bus rail tickets as these are cross
company and mode under bus back better the National bus strategy.
Along withabus services Advisory Board and passengers forum.
please bring statement to the scrutiny commission 24 th January 2022 .
28 th West of England Mayoral Combined Authority meeting and joint
committee.
please we will send a representative to these meetings

Peter Travis .

Somerset catch the bus campaign
Gloucestershire catch the bus campaign.
Somerset bus partnership.

STATEMENT 15 – Chris Holland

This is to register my objection to the provision of any further funding for changes proposed to Thornbury High Street. I make this request on the basis that South Gloucestershire Council did not carry out full, fair and respectful consultation before implementing the alterations that are currently in place.

The consultation was not full because the questionnaire conspicuously failed to provide any opportunity for respondents to select a "make no changes" option. It was not fair because the consultation information and questionnaire were not adequately publicised beforehand, and it was not respectful because it was conducted without the involvement of the town council and presented as if the changes were "faits accomplis" and introduced alongside measures stated to have been taken to make social distancing easier for pedestrians.

The entire enterprise has been a fiasco from the start and has gone a long way to destroying the vibrancy and appeal of the town. All of this without the democratic consent of the vast majority of the residents.

STATEMENT 16 – Ashley Smith

Thornbury High Street

I remain amazed, confused, bemused and overall angry that this terrible plan has even got this far. It ignores the residents, community, traders and the local environment. Two popular shops will leave if this goes through, with no passing traffic means many more will be following them. How is this viable for anyone, how will the town get busy with no shops and no residents. The streets are now dead nearly every day, the shops are empty and they have no reason to remain in place. This is obvious to everyone except the councillors who don't live here.

The surrounding roads are packed, so massively increasing pollution and danger for pedestrians. You won't attract new people if they can't get to town safely. The people from local old peoples home have to take their lives in their hands to get to shops they have used for many years. Many who relied on a bus or parking on the high street dont go to Thornbury anymore. Many go to Yate or Cribbs as has better access. So the climate emergency policy can't be enacted at the same time as the High street plan as they contradict each other.

With 90% opposition in the survey and sgc representatives telling us our opinions mean nothing there are a lot of very angry people in Thornbury and surrounding areas.

It would be nice to answer one important question, Why?

We have not had a good reason for doing any of this. Covid got the blame initially but no reason sense. All shops are losing money, the street is quiet and the surrounding roads are dangerous. This is what SGC want to keep going and nobody can see why. How is it a good plan to kill the street for no reason. The shops are losing money and won't stay, how does this revitalise a town? Especially one that didn't need it in the first place. Everything has got worse, there has been no improvement to anything yet. The plans will make a bad time worse.

There has been no plan what happens once its imposed and nobody has said what the plan is, personally I am like many others in believing there isn't a plan. Get the £4 million, waste it and then run away seems the only plan. At the very least please get sgc to do everything they have claimed they have done, consult, plan and engage. Better still abandon this stupid ideas and spend the money where its needed and people want the money spent.

Ashley Smith

STATEMENT 17 – Jane Mitchell

I understand that there is a possibility that on Friday 28th January 2022, South Gloucestershire Council's (SGC) Business Case for Thornbury High Street will come up for discussion and decision.

As an individual I am against the funding of the SGC project on the basis that there has not been Full, Fair and Respectful Consultation.

Toby Savage and his cabinet are convinced that they know what is right for Thornbury High Street, they believe that they are 'saving' our High Street but they are slowly destroying it. Thornbury High Street has always been well used, with lots of individual shops. Indeed as many local people will state, it is the reason we moved here, driving down the thriving High Street towards the Castle and seeing the bustle and variety there.

I walk to the High Street every single week and try to shop there, the High Street is always empty, it's completely shocking what they have done taking a thriving, profitable High Street and using their own preconceived ideas to destroy us.

SGC have not carried out a full, fair and respectful consultation. They consulted, but ignored the recommendation of the vast majority of Thornbury people. If you analyse the figures, in excess of 90% of people wanted the High Street returned to pre pandemic situation. They massaged the figures and came up with around 62%, but that is still a clear majority of people don't want the High Street changed, as we know our High Street and want it to be successful.

This is not FAIR and it is not RESPECTFUL to impose something on Thornbury that we don't want.

They have held limited consultations since, but no one of working age has been able to attend. If you asked questions at these consultations, answers were not given. I have personally had access to some officers who are working on the plans due to my leadership of a local group for the disabled. Though I feel listened to by the officer who runs that group, it is very hard to get significant concessions. For instance we have asked that for safety reasons there remains a pavement and a road, but that is 'non negotiable' they want to raise the road to the pavement level to which will be very confusing for our elderly, blind and dementia members. As is their insistence on removing the crossing at the top of the High Street. We are getting mixed messages about disabled parking, being told by one engineer that disabled will be able to park anywhere using Blue Badges and then by another that they won't. We try to discuss the safety of a one way street which allows bicycles to go two ways (on a hill, where speeds can be really high) and it's 'non negotiable'. WHY?? A bike can go around the other way in about 2 minutes, why do they have to endanger people on the High Street by whizzing down a one way street.

A proper redevelopment of Thornbury High Street would not be a scheme which is 'cobbled' in place to chase funding, for them to look like they have invested in Thornbury for political ends. A proper redevelopment would work with the town, asking us what is the best way to redevelop Thornbury and not imposing something they think works for us that we don't want, particularly something the traders don't want.

I personally asked Luke Hall why they are doing it. He said it is to 'save' the High Street which is dying. I genuinely think he doesn't understand that his decisions are destroying the High Street.

Please vote against the business plan being brought forward by SGC.

STATEMENT 18 – Gil Gilroy

In respect to Thornbury High Street, I will be attending the meeting on 28 January 2022 at the Guildhall, Bath 2pm and would appreciate the opportunity to read out my statement.

We, the residents of Thornbury believe SGC **have not carried out full, fair and respectful consultation or Impact study on the changes** to Thornbury High Street in respect of:

- **Economic , Traffic management or Environmental impact**

It is therefore a bewilderment to Thornbury residents, why Toby Savage, leader of South Glos Council is so persistent in going ahead with this scheme when 90% of residents rejected the High Street changes, on the Council's own online survey.

The changes have only served to:

1. Reduce retail footfall and income following the application of Covid emergency measures and which are now to be made permanent
2. Evolved into a street allowing limited access for traffic and limited parking including future access for buses
3. Why have the revised version of the Council's vision and their future plans based on this, have not been put to the **public for full and unbiased consultation and comment prior to the undertaking of any permanent works?**
4. How are SGC able to justify their claims for the scheme, which has already been rejected by a majority of Thornbury residents including six of the nine groups contacted opposed the changes

South Glos Council been unable to produce substantiated answers to two Freedom of Information requests submitted by Thornbury and District Residents' Association, which would have been available had the Council already carried out the following necessary **impact assessments** via information obtained prior to and after the application of emergency measures in the town centre on:

- **Economic, Traffic management, Environmental and Health**

The current diversionary route on the narrow road of Rock Street has resulted in:

Regular Traffic congestion including Grid Lock during rush hours. Additionally, this route has caused substantial pollution - Shifting the combined airborne traffic pollution onto one route, resulting in a number of Health issues for residents living there:

For the first time, **Respiratory** issues for a number of residents living along Rock Street are being recorded.

Pollution, not experienced before the changes to the High Street, is now so great that they are now **unable to open windows** and have purchased of **Air Purifiers**, sitting outside in their gardens is now not an option.

South Glos Council have not carried out full, fair and respectful consultation or Impact study on the changes to Thornbury High Street

Gil Gilroy

STATEMENT 19 – Maureen Gilroy

In respect to Thornbury High Street

We believe SGC have not carried out full, fair and respectful consultation or Impact study on

- **Economic**
- **Traffic management**
- **Environmental**

It is a bewilderment to Thornbury residents, why Toby Savage, leader of South Glos Council is so persistent in going ahead with this scheme when 90% of residents rejected the High Street changes on the Council's own online survey.

The changes have only served to:

1. Reduce retail footfall and income following the application of Covid emergency measures and which are now to be made permanent
2. Evolved into a street allowing limited access for traffic and limited parking including future access for buses
3. Why have the revised version of the Council's vision and their future plans based on this, not been put to the **public for full and unbiased consultation and comment prior to the undertaking of any permanent works**
4. Why has South Glos Council claimed to have undertaken **full, fair and respectful consultation** with the residents of Thornbury over the current and proposed changes to the centre of the town, when six of the nine groups contacted were opposed to the changes

South Glos Council been unable to produce substantiated answers to two Freedom of Information requests submitted by Thornbury and District Residents' Association, which would have been available had the Council already carried out the following necessary impact assessments via information obtained prior to and after the application of emergency measures in the town centre:

- Economic
- Traffic management
- Environmental

How are SGC able to justify their claims for the scheme, which has already been rejected by a majority of Thornbury residents

Issues not ever encountered when the High Street was open to traffic. In the barring of traffic through the high street, the diversionary route has resulted in: shifting the combined airborne traffic pollution onto one route, resulting in a number of Health and other issues for residents living there:

1. **Health:** respiratory issues for a number of residents, unable to open windows and the purchase of Air Purifiers, also unable to sit outside in their gardens

2. Regular **traffic congestion** on this route has caused additional and substantial pollution -

NO Environmental Impact or Traffic management were conducted

Maureen Gilroy

STATEMENT 20 – Megan Walden

Dear sir/madam,
regarding the recent bulldozer actions, rendering our beloved High St. an almost empty no man's land, THIS MUST BE STOPPED. The residents were not consulted until plans were well under way, the High St was suddenly drained of its bustling customers, local trades people are facing closure and we, the paying public daily face a sea of unoccupied trestle tables at which few want to sit and fewer want to eat or drink out in the freezing cold.

Get a grip! Whatever the barmy thinking behind this scheme was the result is a bleak, unpleasant, dreary, poor version of what was there before, a beautifully functioning High Street now potentially destroyed by people with nothing better to do than push pens around and interfere in affairs they do not understand.

Regarding the diverted traffic, this leads to a serious build up in Rock St. every working day with fumes from banked up traffic, as far back as Gloucester Rd. (do they even know where that is?) gathering outside the elderly residents' flats. Very healthy!
Every power drunk individual who had a hand in this hair-brained scheme should resign and leave the job to someone who knows what they are doing and who really cares about Thornbury.

Megan Walden (Mrs)

STATEMENT 21 – Pam Shipp

I have lived in this area for 48 years, and always been very fond of our High Street.

It was a great pity when South Glos Council decided without any consultation whatsoever, to mess it all up.

It has caused a lot of consternation, the majority of residents hate what has been done.

I belong to several organisations in the town and many of my colleagues etc tell me they never go near the High Street now, and many can't because it is too far to walk from the car parks.

The best thing for Thornbury would be to have made the High Street one way, and reduce speed all around town to 20 mph. Returning the buses to the High Street as before.

It is dangerous having the bus stop in Rock Street, so near the entrance to the main carpark, and causes traffic problems, which we never had before.

The High Street is a very sad place now, please put the buses back, reduce the speed limit and stop S G C interfering, what do they know about our town? They don't live here.

We were always very proud of our town, and for many years have won top awards for how we decorated it, (Thornbury in Bloom), kept it immaculately tidy, (litterbusters), it was a well-loved, bustling historic small town. But no more, it's just a sad empty street with white lines, and barriers all over the place.

Please listen to those who care, not SGC.

Pam Shipp.

STATEMENT 22 – Angela Crabtree

I have been following the Thornbury High Street proposals since the Experimental Traffic Order began in June 2020.

I am fully under the belief that South Gloucestershire Council have not carried out **full, fair and respectful consultation** and are ploughing ahead with their proposals without full justifiable reasons and consensus to do so.

I asked via a FOIA request for the written response to the questionnaire that was held in 2021. It was evident to me that **OVERWHELMINGLY** the Thornbury residents **DID NOT WANT** a closed or pedestrian High Street. In fact a 1 way system could be tolerated but this was under the impression that it would be for through traffic and not just for drop offs/waiting.

The consultation has not appropriately considered, elderly, infirm and those that rely on public transport and blue badge spaces. They have ignore the businesses again who overwhelmingly disagree with all of these propositions.

The only ones set to gain are the 3 pubs and SCG who have this “utopia vision” of a town they don’t even live in.

There are many considerations to be looked at by the SGC and these have not been explored to the fullest extent.

I would respectfully request Dan Norris and the other voting members to vote against release of any further funding until a new, just and transparent consultation has been held.

Respectfully Angela Crabtree – Thornbury Resident

STATEMENT 23 – Ian Gauld

I wish to register my objection to South Gloucestershire Council's (SGC) application to WECA, for funds towards their undemocratic and undesirable changes to Thornbury High Street.

The road was closed to vehicles under false pretences and despite the majority of opinion being against their actions, SGC continue to force through their plans.

The best way to allow Thornbury to recover from covid-19 losses is to re-open the High Street to through-traffic.

Regards

Ian Gauld

STATEMENT 24 – Melanie Fraser

I love the pedestrian high street in Thornbury and do not want cars or vans to use it again. I use my bike and it's much nicer without the traffic.

I don't want the vocal car users to override the current pedestrian priorities.

Melanie Fraser

STATEMENT 25 – Steven Freke

I have been a resident of Thornbury for many years and during that time I have witnessed the decline of the High Street and the disappearance of many shops. The High Street lacks diversity in choice I think mainly due to the lack of vision and investment in the Town. I fully support the changes that SGC are proposing and request that the funding is released so that the Council can implement the pedestrianisation scheme as quickly as possible. The scheme will not only attract business to Thornbury but it will also contribute to a safer more liveable neighbourhood.

I also hope that future schemes for walking and cycling in the area are supported to provide for real alternative options to car usage for shopping, exercise and social activity.

Best Regards
Steven Freke

STATEMENT 26 – Steve and Sharon Edmundson

We are writing to you as two long term residents of Thornbury. We both moved here as children.

We are quite heartbroken at what has happened to our High St. It has always been a vibrant place to visit, shop & eat out.

The sudden closure in June 2020 was shocking & the pathetic 'consultation' from SGC after was disgusting. Then SGC dismissed our requests to re open the High St as we didn't understand what they were trying to do.

It feels as if the heart of our town has been ripped out of it. The only businesses we feel are pleased with this outcome are the pubs & cafes who have put bits of scrappy furniture outside of their premises. This can only be used for a few weeks of the year due to the English weather.

It isn't safe to even walk in the road, as it seems SGC want us to do, as cycles as speeding from both directions & cars & vans still travel up the street.

We have been older friends who cannot visit anymore as the bus doesn't go up the High St & disabled friends who find it too far to walk from the car parks.

The traffic on Rock St now is awful. People get stuck at the traffic lights when they are green as the buses are in the way & all the traffic is directed to one mini roundabout at the top of the street. The idea SGC has to cobble over the whole of the High Street & the Plain, directing traffic down Castle Street is absurd. It will mean less parking spaces on the Plain & the top of Castle Street. The traffic will be directed pass two special needs schools, two primary schools & The Castle School, travelling down the narrowest road in our town!

We feel SGC should withdraw or, at least, delay the application to WECA until at least until June 2022. This will give time for the FOI requests put in by Thornbury Residents Association which will not be available until after the end of January 2022 (for half the answers) & May 2022 for the rest. We don't feel that SGC have even don't any research into what would happen if they shut our High Street. It all seems to be about the money they would receive.

This would also give time for a full, fair & respectful consultation with the public as is out right.

We would like to ask why we weren't consulted fairly, just given THREE days notice! We weren't even given chance to choose the best for our town, which we have to live in & loved before all of this.

Regards,

Steve & Sharon Edmundson

STATEMENT 27 – John Reynolds

If this statement is selected for presentation to the meeting, I wish to read it out personally.

South Gloucestershire Council's report to Cabinet, on 7 June 2021, was heavily reliant upon the report produced by massaging the figures from a biased public survey, to justify closing the High Street. What is more damning, is that the Council did not undertake any movement survey of traffic, pedestrians and cycles in Thornbury Town Centre until 17 and 19 July 2021, so that the decision by Cabinet, one month earlier, to go for permanent changes, was based on a complete lack of up-to-date information and was, therefore, misinformed and terminally flawed.

The movement survey in the Outline Business Plan is also meaningless, since it only reveals figures obtained on two days in a summer month, and cannot be compared to any pre-Covid survey figures, nor any winter month figures. For this reason, the statistical base of the Council's Outline Business Plan is far too narrow and is untenable. There are also glaring errors in that survey and the derived statistics and traffic modelling, such as not counting pedestrian movements within the High Street, not counting pedestrian movements to and from Castle Court car park, predicating a traffic model based on buses in Rock Street stopping only for 30 seconds, and not counting the number of cyclists who actually stopped in the High Street to do shopping, rather than using it as a short cut.

The entire scheme to make changes to Thornbury High Street was, therefore, a rushed job in a compressed timeframe, not based on common sense comparisons of summer and winter, of pre- and post-Covid, and not based on longer term auditing, so as to eliminate deviations caused by, for example, reliance on figures obtained on only on two days in the same week.

For this reason, South Gloucestershire Council needs to go back to the drawing board on all counts, start with viable proposals backed by current information, consult with the public in the right way, and develop a plan which meets both the requirements of the High Street traders and the support of the town's residents.

John Reynolds

Addendum to presentation by John Reynolds

Not to be part of the oral presentation to the WECA Joint Authority meeting 28 January 2022, but to lie on file for reference as necessary

The SGC Outline Business Plan for the changes to the centre of Thornbury makes the following statements.

In Section 2.1. Project Background and Context

- Within this [housing] growth context, there have also been emerging shifts in local travel patterns and walking and cycling levels increased whilst car use fell.
- It was recognised that Thornbury's town centre itself could benefit from targeted investments to support changing travel behaviours

The Plan does not base these statements on long-term vehicle and bicycle counts. It is possible that the perceived changes could be attributed solely to the effects of the Covid pandemic, lockdown, and people taking the permitted amount of exercise whilst otherwise housebound.

In Section 2.1.1.1. Stakeholder and Public Engagement

“SGC began an extensive programme of public engagement and consultation to gauge and understand the views and needs of residents, employees, visitors, businesses and other organisations... this included a consultation survey, which received 2,890 responses..”

The Report to Cabinet 7 June 2021 elaborated on the responses, claiming that certain answers were not representative of the Thornbury community (Section 33)

That claim in the report was reliant of figures produced during the 2011 Census, which were grossly out of date by 2021, considering the interim increase in residential developments in the north and north-west of Thornbury.

The consultation survey noted that

- 83% of respondents regularly travelled to the High Street by car
- 61% disagreed that a full pedestrianisation and cycle zone should be made permanent
- 65% disagreed that parking should be moved from the pedestrianised area
- Businesses were keen to express their concerns about market traders that are not based within Thornbury, that could detract (sic) business away from their shops

Despite the clear majority views expressed in that consultation survey, SGC persisted in enforcing their vision of the future of the High Street, thus showing no respect for the views which they obtained. Was this truly “consultation”?

In Table 2-4 of the OBP Assessment of Options against Strategic Objectives

The entire Table is based upon whether the available options, ranging from full pedestrianisation to reversion to 2-way traffic, support the SGC vision and “new travel patterns”. The travel patterns have yet to be substantiated as ongoing, or different in style from a pre-Covid period, because SGC has not obtained such definitive information. The Table, therefore, is misleading and not based in fact.

In Section 3.4 Movement surveys and future demand

- The surveys, which were counts of pedestrians, motorised traffic and bicycles, were carried out on only two days in the same week, 15 and 17 July 2021, a Thursday and a Saturday
- The figures produced show car movements as an average number of vehicles per day, whilst cycle movements are shown as a range, but still termed an average
- The OBP states that, based upon cycle movements, which purported to show more cycles in the High Street than in Rock Street, there was a ration of 2:1 in the proportion of cyclists stopping in the High Street as against travelling through Thornbury.

The selection of two days in the same week for the movement survey can produce erroneous figures, since these days were in a summer month, where more cyclists could be expected on the roads. There are no comparable movement survey data for pre- and post-Covid, nor for winter months. This part of the survey, therefore, is unbalanced and unreliable.

There are no figures to substantiate the assumption that cyclists travelling into the High Street actually stopped for shopping, rather than using it as a convenient downhill short cut

The “averages” of movements of cars and cycles should be an average or a range, but not both. This is a mis-use of terminology.

In Section 3.4.2 Active Travel Demand

- The examples given for similar schemes are located in larger towns and cities than Thornbury
- The examples include New Zealand, which may not be a good parallel example
- The OBP states that “Further analysis of locally specific data would help to define the plausible ranges of impacts that might be achieved with similar walking, cycling and urban realm improvements in Thornbury”

This is essentially unsubstantiated in the case of Thornbury, and is, therefore, groundless assumption

In the Consultation Output Report (May 2021) The following numbers are quoted for participants in focus groups, as total of 80

- Chamber of Commerce- 17 participants
- Businesses not represented by the Chamber- 2 participants
- Hospitality businesses- 1 participant
- Town and Ward Councillors- 4 participants
- Seldom heard groups- 3 participants
- Residents group 1- 20 participants
- Residents group 2- 12 participants
- Residents group 3- 14 participants
- High Street residents- 7 participants

It is not clear which residents were selected to take part in the focus groups, and it is questionable whether the findings of this element of the focus groups represented accurately the same proportions answering the initial consultation survey.

STATEMENT 28 – Vivien Reynolds

My name is Vivien Reynolds and I moved to Thornbury in 1978. For a number of years, I taught at The Castle School, Thornbury and both my children went to local schools. The town has changed gradually over the years but, until recently, I have regularly visited the High Street and its shops, and have developed friendly contacts in some of the longer-established businesses.

When South Gloucestershire Council carried out what it called Covid emergency measures in the High Street, I considered, and still consider most of these to be unnecessary and a waste of public money. Pavement widths in the centre of the High Street were already wide enough to permit social distancing for shoppers, and the banning of through traffic achieved nothing other than to divert all traffic onto Rock Street, with the entirely foreseeable consequences of traffic congestion and increased airborne pollution along the diversionary route.

I am aware that the Council has belatedly undertaken engagement meetings with the public in the Library and at Turnberries Community Centre, but these are no substitute for their abject failure to respect the majority opinion expressed in their own earlier online survey, in which a clear majority expressed a wish to have the High Street returned to its pre-Covid situation of through traffic and on-street parking.

The original vision for the High Street, as shown in the Council's literature, was for a fully pedestrianised street, attracting people to stay and shop for longer. That vision proved unworkable almost immediately, since residents required access to their properties, and businesses without rear access required loading and unloading facilities. Since then, the Council has had to backtrack over permitting these users, as well as blue parking badge holders, access to the street, and finally made a major U-turn over allowing buses once more to drive through the street. All these changes constitute a major deviation from the Council's original plans, which formed the basis of their online survey, and which now need to be reversed, or at least put on hold, whilst full, fair and respectful consultation is carried out by the Council before it commits to any permanent changes.

South Gloucestershire Council has also failed to carry out a timely economic impact assessment of their changes on High Street trading in Thornbury, since they failed to establish a baseline by consulting with businesses before and immediately after closing the High Street to through traffic. On top of this, they were unable to include in their Outline Business Plan accurate data on street-level pollution on the High Street diversionary route, which will have increased at least two-fold, based on the increase in vehicle movements, particularly at peak times, and the slow movement of the vehicles caused by the pinch-point at the Rock Street/Midland Way roundabout. Traffic Engineers have found no published solution to the volume of traffic and associated pollution, on the diversionary route, although the obvious answer, which is to re-open the High Street to through traffic, is staring them in the face.

Since South Gloucestershire Council has failed to meet the expectations of Thornbury residents and businesses in terms of the economic, traffic and environmental impact of their changes, and are in no position to substantiate their request to WECA, armed with current data, for funding for making the changes, I submit that the Council be denied any more public money until they can prove their case.

Vivien Reynolds

STATEMENT 29 – Gareth Blackwell

On behalf of my wife and myself I urge you to do all you can to prevent the plans of SGC, to vandalise Thornbury high street, from being implemented on a permanent basis.

The arguments against these plans, and the initial reality of them, have been made vociferously since the hasty implementation in 2020. I will not repeat all arguments here as they have been ably presented by others.

Some additional personal opinions are:

1. Thornbury High St has become a ghost street in the evenings, particularly in autumn and winter, with so little pedestrian presence. With traffic, parking and buses stopping in the high street it brings a sense of the street being inhabited rather than deserted.
2. Thornbury centre is essentially one street (the high street) and reducing its accessibility is essentially cutting off access.
3. SGC have often been illogical in their arguments. For example; having closed the high street in order to allow more space for social distancing it then hired out the street to a monthly market which was usually overcrowded.
4. **I responded to the on-line "consultation" and I found that its questions were biased and leading. The results of this consultation did not correspond to my opinions nor those of many other people. Why was there no full, fair and respectful consultation conducted?**
5. Recently I have seen cars, vans and cycles going both ways along the high street, also skateboards and scooters. This is not a safe pedestrian area by any account.
6. One of the arguments of SGC is that the plan will facilitate new cycle and walking routes. This is nonsense, there is no need or feasibility for this around the centre.
7. Many other areas of the country also jumped on the bandwagon to pedestrianise and increase cycle lanes. Many of these have now been rescinded as they are impractical and as they are recognised as just a way to grab government money for vanity projects such as the SGC action.

Yours Faithfully
Gareth Blackwell

STATEMENT 30 – Graham Bartlett

I have been a resident in Thornbury for over 40yrs+ so not quite a local yet - however I was flabbergasted when the high street was closed off without any survey being carried out prior to closure (the local businesses must have been apoplectic) - after a period of 3-4 months after the closure - the action group did get SGC to run a survey - which they did eventually (worded in such a biased way towards hoped for result) - however the closing date was apparently extended - to early Feb 2021 - however no result has been published to date as far as I know - although the rumours are that it was 70% for reopening the high street -

So after all this time and thanks to a few guys managed to get a group together (Thornbury and District Residents Association) and held a meeting at the Leisure centre - actually 2 meetings as the 1st could not accommodate all who wanted to attend

I believe that there was no rep from SGC at either meeting - there was also a rumour that Buses were to return to the high Street - when - it seems SGC were quick enough to close the high street but acting at a snails pace to put back or unpick what they have done to date

All traffic now using a route which is at times chaotic with the potential for accidents and injury to occur -

Democracy seems to be a word with no meaning within the SGC - they are elected to serve us and it appears in this case not to be - They appear to have a tunnel vision and have used pandemic monies to cover the cost of this under hand way of treating Thornbury Residents - their excuse initially for road closure was social distancing - well we have some of the widest pavements in S Glos in High street but on the traffic diversion we have some of the narrow'est

Bring back the High street before it dies completely as over the winter months it looks like a ghost town

Regards

Graham Bartlett (Resident)

STATEMENT 31 – Mo Newton

I am writing to voice my concern that I believe SGC have not carried out full, fair and respectful consultation.

It is my believe that local shops have repeatedly voiced their concern about survival of their shops.

The footfall has dropped immensely and is clearly visible to anyone that lives in Thornbury and can use the High Street (fit and able to walk from the central carparks). These shops will be lost if they are not viable and it will have a severe impact on the community and the town. These shops helped the local community through the pandemic, they went out of their way to help with local deliveries and support people stuck at home. They should be awarded NOT punished!

The majority of friends that I know disagree with making the pedestrian and cycle zone permanent, and most would prefer a one way system with parking on one side. That was not even in option in the so called online consultation that went out. The consultation document was lengthy and very heavily favoured towards questions and answers that would support the closure. It was not a fairly balanced document at all.

The permanent closure is a "huge" problem, especially for the elderly and disabled.

It was stated that the responses to the consultation was not representative to the demographic makeup of the Thornbury population. That is not actually a point that needs to be considered as a sole decider. Whilst it is important to consider who responded, the people that replied to the consultation are the people that are using the High Street and their views are important!! They are not the people that can just jump in their cars and go to Cribbs.

We want a Town with a personality and community. We do not want to end up another clone town with an Tesco on the outside and everyone has to drive to Cribbs for anything else. That is happening in so many towns. It needs to be stopped from happening in Thornbury!

The closure and predestination of the Highstreet is punishing the traders there. They're really struggling because of footfall. And the new "outdoor" eating facilities are always empty and not really what Thornbury needs or wants or what is appropriate. The whole layout is ugly and uninviting and should not be allowed to continue.

The High Street closure also has massive safety implications. The traffic now backing up on the Quaker Lane and Rock Street makes getting about in Thornbury during busy period impossible and should (god forbid) an accident happen, the way through for Emergency vehicles would be near impossible. The roundabout Rock Street and Midland Way is nowhere near appropriate to deal with the amount of traffic now being [ushed that way in a safe manner. It is a disaster waiting to happen.

Thank you for your time

Mo Newton

STATEMENT 32 – John Rigby

The experiment in Thornbury has killed a bustling high street and condensed traffic elsewhere without any gain in safety or trade for Thornbury residents and businesses (irrespective of COVID restrictions). Drivers are ignoring restrictions and the cost of full implementation will not outweigh the 'do nothing' option. The money could be used to improve existing facilities in the town such as playparks, entertainment and sports facilities (eg Armstrong Hall and youth projects) or hospitality businesses hit by COVID.

I like change, but this is unnecessary meddling and a waste of funds where majority opinion is being ignored. If it ain't broke, don't squander taxes fixing it.

STATEMENT 33 – Matt Scarborough

I understand South Gloucestershire Council has requested £4.6 million to make the pedestrianisation of our High Street permanent.

The overwhelming majority of local residents are baffled by this plan - why would such a sum of money be wasted on a project that virtually nobody living and working in Thornbury wants, especially when you consider how under-funded local schools and surgeries are.

It's not good for businesses or shoppers, it's not particularly safe and it's causing major traffic flow issues and worst of all the consultation was in no way inclusive.

Yet you seem intent on proceeding with the plan.

Why would you do this?

STATEMENT 34 – Anthony Mitchell

I believe you are going to have a WECA meeting on 28th January to consider granting further funding to South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) for their project to complete and finalise changes to Thornbury High Street.

I am appealing to you to reject this scheme on the grounds that SGC have patently failed to complete a full and fair consultation with local residents - the vast majority of whom have already made known their feelings against the changes to you when you attended the two Town Meetings on the subject.

Nevertheless, SGC have continued on their seemingly unstoppable quest to pursue this 'vanity' project. On every aspect of a proper business plan their proposals fail. Their communications with local residents have been abysmal to say the very least.

As a classic example, I would refer to the 'information sharing' sessions held in late November/early December in Thornbury library. I attended one of these on 1st December around 3.00 pm, which was manned by three SGC Officers. When I asked it became clear there was no new detail or latest proposals to share as they were still 'being worked up' - unbelievable! Also, as there were no other residents in attendance I queried how these 'sessions' had been 'advertised' or communicated to local residents. The answer I was given was that 'notices and details have been posted all over the High Street' - which I found hard to believe as I had just walked from there.

Intrigued, I walked back and after careful searching found a few of the said 'notices'. The attached photos show how ridiculous the SGC 'communications' were! Just A4 laminated pages stuck on various lamp posts and railings and virtually illegible! The classic was the notice posted in the Thornbury Town Council glass notice cabinet - the SGC page can be just about seen in the bottom left-hand corner - and if you could read it through the condensation on the cabinet glass it would be a miracle! Absolute fraudulent 'communications'!

I could go on as this totally flawed 'vanity' project fails on virtually every logical test - but does that seem enough to stop it? I hope your intervention will!

Thornbury is, as you well know, an historic market town with its High Street at its heart. SGC claim their scheme will re-vitalise the High Street instead they have effectively 'euthanised' it!

Sorry to shout, but needs must!

Please, please Mr Norris stop this scheme in its tracks and force SGC to conduct a fair, proper and transparent consultation with Thornbury and local residents to determine what they actually want their High Street to be.

Addendum

Dear Sirs,

I have already written to request you to refuse the South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) request for a further £4.6 Million of public funds until a proper full, fair and meaningful consultation/local referendum is held on the future of the High Street with local residents.

I now wish to give you another reason for refusing this scheme and that is the High Street forms an integral part of the B4061, which links Thornbury with the A38 trunk road, both North and South.

A lot of comment has been made about the 'shopping' aspects of the High Street, but very little weight (it seems) has been given by SGC as to the fact that the High Street is a part of the B4061 and it is key to making the whole traffic system work in Thornbury.

As roads and transport are part of your remit as Metro Mayor, please recognise this now before it is too late - with the ongoing development and expansion of Thornbury the town will choke on congested traffic if the vital artery of the B4061 High Street provides remains cut off.

Please, please refuse SGC this money!

Yours sincerely,

Mr Anthony Mitchell

STATEMENT 35 – Julie Mitchell

I believe you are going to have a WECA meeting on 28th January to consider granting further funding to South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) for their project to complete and finalise changes to Thornbury High Street.

I am appealing to you to reject this scheme on the grounds that SGC have patently failed to complete a full and fair consultation with local residents - the vast majority of whom have already made known their feelings against the changes to you when you attended the two Town Meetings on the subject.

Nevertheless, SGC have continued on their seemingly unstoppable quest to pursue this 'vanity' project. On every aspect of a proper business plan their proposals fail. Their communications with local residents have been abysmal to say the very least.

As a classic example, I would refer to the 'information sharing' sessions held in late November/early December in Thornbury library. I attended one of these on 1st December around 3.00 pm, which was manned by three SGC Officers. When I asked it became clear there was no new detail or latest proposals to share as they were still 'being worked up' - unbelievable! Also, as there were no other residents in attendance I queried how these 'sessions' had been 'advertised' or communicated to local residents. The answer I was given was that 'notices and details have been posted all over the High Street' - which I found hard to believe as I had just walked from there.

Intrigued, I walked back and after careful searching found a few of the said 'notices'. The attached photos show how ridiculous the SGC 'communications' were! Just A4 laminated pages stuck on various lamp posts and railings and virtually illegible! The classic was the notice posted in the Thornbury Town Council glass notice cabinet - the SGC page can be just about seen in the bottom left-hand corner - and if you could read it through the condensation on the cabinet glass it would be a miracle! Absolute fraudulent 'communications'!

I could go on as this totally flawed 'vanity' project fails on virtually every logical test - but does that seem enough to stop it? I hope your intervention will!

Thornbury is, as you well know, an historic market town with its High Street at its heart. SGC claim their scheme will re-vitalise the High Street instead they have effectively 'euthanised' it!

Sorry to shout, but needs must!

Please, please Mr Norris stop this scheme in its tracks and force SGC to conduct a fair, proper and transparent consultation with Thornbury and local residents to determine what they actually want their High Street to be.

STATEMENT 36 – Ron Hayhurst

THORNBURY HIGH STREET CLOSURE

I have been a Thornbury resident for many years and occasionally meet our South Gloucestershire Councillors, as well as several of those on the Town Council. I am dismayed by their inability to determine the body of opinion that wishes Thornbury to remain as it was prior to the Government's suggested pedestrian Covid Measures. Amongst my Thornbury contacts, I find those in favour of the changes, now in hand, are outnumbered by some twenty to one by those who wish for the High Street to have been left as it was. The opponents are further frustrated by the traffic problems created in Rock Street. I was at the first of the Town meetings, called by those who felt the decision to close the High Street had been imposed with no consultation, so I know you were there to sense the anger very many feel.

One of the High Street traders told me that Toby Savage appeared in his shop, a week before he or anyone knew of the proposed changes, to extol the virtues of "Getting rid of all the traffic". He appeared unable to understand the downside in terms of lost passing trade. A week later, when the news that closure was imminent, there was so much incredulity across the town it was looked on as "fake news"!! So much for consultation!

Any claims that there has been full, fair and respectful consultation can be dismissed by the situation described above, where none of the town traders knew of the plans, and all were against their implementation. When they objected, they were ignored. Similarly, no thought has been given to those who find walking difficult but do not qualify for a Blue Badge. They make up a surprising number of the town's demographic that no longer visit the High Street.

There was no consultation amongst bus users over the revised route. You will be aware of the resistance from South Gloucestershire Council to have it rescinded. There is no published date when buses will again pick up in the High Street.

Contrary to the council's intentions, they have killed footfall. An independently prepared consultation document would have highlighted the problems now evident. True consultation would have left well alone.

Ron Hayhurst

STATEMENT 37 – Fenella Tait

I am so upset at what has been done to Thornbury High Street without full consultation of the residents & those who always used Thornbury for shopping, using the bus services & if using a car plenty of parking for those unable to walk far who do not have Blue Badges. The money used has been wasted on something not asked for & no consultation with residents. The ramps down are so close instead of being spread apart better .

The town is a pub alley . So many tables that sprawl the street which are an absolute sight they are certainly not needed. A few near the pubs on the pavement with room for wheelchairs & prams to get past fine. The Swan has a garden at the back so certainly does not require all those blocking the road. The Knot of Ropes at the top of high street is just a boozing pub, not sure if anyone goes there for coffee in the day & the flower tubs are so far into the road it is very hard to park where there is parking allowed.

Thornbury used to win top awards (Britain in Bloom etc)for it's beautiful flowers along the street & shops . People used to visit Thornbury for its past history & the Castle. It's not inviting anymore ,the traders are losing money & a lot are going to close & bribing them with money wont get customers there.. One can't get to the shops,Banks ,Post Office, Citizens Advice Bureau, Stationary , Charity shops, hairdressers, even the coffee shops as no transport for the lame & elderly .

I do not think Tax payers money should be given to rectify what South Gloucester Council have taken to ruin without proper consultation for all the residents & not just a few. Thornbury Council should have been consulted to inform the residents what was going on . They did not seem to have any communication with SCG but they are useless. Only if they change it back to how it was even if one way up for cars to be able to park as well as go through,buses & cyclists who are very few should also only be aloud up & not down. (They speed down so should be speed restricted if going down. There have been quite a lot of near collisions with pedestrians) The loaders are always sprawled across the roads . They all come at once & should have restrictions to times early morning & late evenings.

Rock Street is diabolical . Congestion & fumes for those along the road (there is a retirement home) are being polluted as traffic that used to use Thornbury High Street to drive through (& able to stop at shops & continue) can't anymore & all have to go down & up Rock Street . The bus stop is another thing causing the problem. The traffic then causes more pollution problems as the queues go right down past all the houses in Gloucester Rd.at certain times.

Please refuse the Tax payers money unless things are done properly & residents consulted . Send to every household like or don't like, yes or no.

Thank you for taking note & caring.

Fennella Tait

STATEMENT 38 – Margaret Bishop

We are very concerned that although 90 % of the population of Thornbury don't want the High Street closed South Gloucestershire Council seem to be carrying on with their plans.

Reason 1

There was no discussion with shopkeepers or residents before this decision was taken by Toby Savage.

Reason 2

Thornbury is a Historic Market town, not a suburb of Bristol and we want it to retain it's character and the general thriving busy country market town that it was, not the empty ghost town that it is today, it is heartbreaking to see the demise of it within the last 2 years.

Reason 3

There aren't enough disabled parking spaces and no provisions for the elderly which is mandatory in this day and age. The buses need to go back up the High Street .

This whole saga has been so that South Gloucestershire can make some money out of Thornbury and spend it elsewhere.

STATEMENT 39 – Mike Whitfield

Re: the bulldozing efforts of SGC seeking to enforce the very unwelcome pedestrianisation of Thornbury High Street. There has been negligible real consultation with all the many residents affected by this imposition. It is becoming increasingly clear that real damage has already been done and a majority are against the current plan with the numbers growing. Please help to force a properly managed reassessment of this massively important matter.

My contribution already recorded in opposition to the current plan:

I'm personally totally opposed to the pedestrianisation of the High Street. It already has become a dead area and everywhere-else has become dangerously busy with the displaced traffic. I have long been a vocal critic at CEFs of the massive increase in housing permissions with no matching enhancement of the road & parking infrastructure. The loss of high street parking is a major loss to the local non-infirm but ageing population (like us at 82 !) who do not live in Thornbury but used to view it as our local shopping centre. It now looks uninviting for anything but a prolonged visit. The range of shops with too many unoccupied has been a growing concern now made considerably worse as those remaining valued shops are now seeing a reduced footfall as a result of pedestrianisation. The idealised vision of lots of alfresco activity is not supported by any parking to enable the majority of residents not in walking distance to participate. We must reject SGCs imposition of the undesirable development.

Kind regards,

Mike Whitfield

STATEMENT 40 – Paul Morrish

South Gloucestershire Council have not carried out **full, fair and respectful consultations**.

I have been receiving physio treatment from a Thornbury High Street Physiotherapist for two years, and he tells me that the only information that he has received from SGC, was to inform him that the High Street would be closed – there was definitely no consultation.

So, he was **not** asked for his views and whether he thought if the closure would affect his business!

Another business owner, who I regularly purchase from, has also said that his takings are drastically reduced due to the High Street being closed, and he was not consulted.

He was only told that the High Street would be closed!

There are numerous errors in the Outline Business Plan relating to Traffic movements, Pedestrian movements, use by Cyclists, and detailed misinformation on the Buses using Rock Street.

Councillors really need to look very closely at the Outline Business Plan and make a visit to Thornbury High Street and surrounding roads to see what a disastrous situation we have at the moment.

South Gloucestershire Council need to pause for a while their intensions for the changes, so that a proper view of the residents can be obtained.

The whole thing has been rushed through by Councillors, most of whom do not live in Thornbury.

Zoe Gilbraith resident of Thornbury.

I have lived and worked in Thornbury for almost 40 years. I am also the secretary for Thornbury Chamber of Commerce and have been involved in meetings regarding the closure of our High street from the very beginning in June 2020 and I would like the following to be taken into account when reviewing any funding application to make changes to Thornbury High Street.

When the road was closed under emergency measures none of the local businesses or the Chamber were consulted prior to the closure. It is still being published that a consultation was undertaken, however we have had confirmation more than once from different South Glos councillors and employees that they agree this was not the case. I was invited to a Town Centre Partnership meeting on the 1st June 2020, the only information I was given was that it was to discuss the issues of helping businesses to reopen safely with support from South Glos. At that meeting Mark King of Streetcare, informed the meeting that the road was to be closed on the 7th June. I tried to explain why this was not a good idea, only to be told the decision had already been made. The only notice – not consultation that any business had was my feedback from this meeting. After my insistence that businesses should be informed South Glos issued a very hastily delivered letter pushed through the High Street businesses doors in plain white envelopes, so not even highlighted that the information inside was of importance, on the Thursday prior to the closure, so 2 business working days notice.

The Survey Consultation document put forward by South Glos on 21/07/2020 and Survey questionnaire only mention COVID as the reason for the emergency closure of the High Street. However the slides we were presented with at the Town Centre Partnership meeting on Wednesday 2 June 2021 mentions The Local Plan, The Joint Local Transport Plan and the DRAFT Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan as the policy for the survey results, which is completely different from the reasons given to the public when completing the survey. Had these examples been given to the public when completing the survey, you may have had a completely different response. How then can the results of this survey be used to move forward the pedestrianisation.

The survey itself was very biased, nowhere did it allow the public to say that they used to park in the High Street, and nowhere did it ask if they wanted the High Street returned to the way it was prior to the emergency closure.

Q6.of the Survey asks how often people visited the High Street since the closure on Monday 8th June. However it did not allow any response as to why they no longer visited the High Street so this question is flawed and should be discounted as without further clarification the response is irrelevant. Their reason for not visiting could have been very varied for example. No longer able to access the street for mobility issues, shops still closed, I am on furlough, I am shielding, none of these questions were asked. The response to this question has been used in the survey results paper, No34. Key findings, page 207, to make the responses look more favourable to the closure by discounting anyone's response if they didn't visit the High Street more than once a month after the closure.

Q13. Of the Survey was asking for comments about the temporary changes, there were 2114 responses, a member of the public has reported to us that after reading all 2114 comments he felt that even being generous around 10% had a positive comment, however on the survey summary document page 261 or page 40 (double numbered) there are 8 speech bubble comments shown, 5 showing positive comments and 3 showing negative comments, thereby giving a false impression that the response to this question was 62% positive rather than the actual 10% responses, so unless

the full responses were made available and cabinet have read the same they have been given a misrepresented picture of the survey results.

The Survey summary of over 300 pages itself mentions that only 29% agree with making the pedestrian and cycle zone permanent, so how with such a clear picture even with such a biased survey can this be ignored by South Glos for them to carry on with the plans suggested.

I believe that the council should move to a trial one way system something The Chamber of Commerce requested back in September 2020 but were told this was not possible as the consultation process would have to be started. Surely it is better to take more time to get the correct result for the town, rather than to blindly follow the first idea. If a trial of one way, with the bus stops and some herringbone parking bays for short stay visits for both disabled and convenience were reinstated into the High Street we could then compare this to the mismatch we have at the moment.

One of the reasons given for the changes is to enable hospitality to utilise the space for outside seating. This seating is present outside only 3 pubs within the High street closure and although the seating has remained outside for the whole period it is noticeably empty and has been so since at least mid October and is likely to be so until we get some warmer, sunnier weather, how then is this to sustain the High Street, it just makes for an even more desolate space.

At the Town meetings, organised by residents, Dan Norris attended the meetings to say that he would not sanction the spending unless a full consultation had taken place. I and many others are agreed that no such consultation process has taken place. Below are my main reasons to object.

1. The survey undertaken between 21/07/20 and 07/02/21 was so biased as to not allow a full consultation, and even though the outcome showed more people were against the closure of the High Street their comments were represented in such a way that the resulting summary was even more biased than the actual survey. It has also since been stated by South Glos that it was never intended as a consultation but only to give South Glos some feedback.
2. The additional drop in sessions at the Library in November 2021 were again not consultations, they were purely information sessions for South Glos to relay the next steps. No notes of the public comments were taken down and fed back to South Glos, so how could this be considered further consultation. There was no information at these sessions, other than conversations with some council employees. They were not advertised locally, and they were only held during working hours so anyone employed for normal office hours would not be able to attend unless they worked within the town and could drop in during the day, so were attended by a very limited number of people.
3. Focus group findings. South Glos ran some online focus groups to try to engage with the local population. These events were solely online and were vastly over subscribed and again the majority were not in favour of the option we are being presented with. There should be a halt to the process to enable a full and frank discussion and consultation with other options being available for discussion.
4. South Glos are determined to push through their vision, regardless of local opinion. You only need to read the letters listed in the appendix to the meeting agenda, page 84 section 5. "Other Representatives", where you can find the comments from not only Thornbury Town Council but the other local Parish Councils that Thornbury High Street supports, to see

that all local knowledge about how Thornbury High Street operates has been ignored. We have all called for more consultation and more options such as a proper one way system with parking to be looked and trialled before such a momentous and expensive decision is made about the changes to our town.

5. All case studies and comparisons to the changes South Glos want to make to the High Street are comparisons to areas with a completely different demographic and infrastructure to Thornbury. They are all inner city areas or vastly more populated towns. Thornbury does not have sufficient footfall within a walkable distance to sustain the businesses in the Town.

One final note I would like to make is that the OBC details that the changes will take from July 2022 – October 23 to be implemented. This is going to cause even more disruption to businesses who are trying to keep their businesses going coming out of a pandemic. How are we to organise and run events if we do not know if we will be able to have access to use the High Street for the whole of the summer. The eye watering amount of money, whilst coming out of central government funds, is still to be paid for by the hard working tax payers. A much more scaled back, one way system with traffic calming measures should surely be considered, not only for the good of the town but also the good of the countries coffers. The last time I looked we did not have money trees growing in our High Street.

STATEMENT 42 – MEG WISE

DECISION MEETING REGARDING FUNDING FOR ALTERATIONS TO THORNBURY HIGH STREET TO BE HELD ON 28TH JANUARY 2022

I strongly object to the plans to make such extensive changes to Thornbury High Street, where I believe consultation has been inadequate. I have been a volunteer at Thornbury & District Museum for over 20 years, researching the town's long history and producing exhibitions and publications. I am therefore objecting on the grounds that the promoters and planners involved in this scheme seem to be unaware of the importance of the historic context of the High Street and its junction with The Plain and Castle Street.

QUESTION: HOW DO THESE PLANS STAND UP AGAINST SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL'S OWN DESIGNATION SINCE 1975 (& CONSEQUENTLY RENEWED AT REGULAR INTERVALS) OF THE CENTRE OF THORNBURY AS BEING A CONSERVATION AREA?

I quote from the Council's own documentation in the form of an 8-page leaflet which has been regularly handed out in the town and is available online. All shop owners and residents have to follow the special controls and policies that are associated with this Conservation Area:

"Thornbury Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance." "Designation is a recognition of the group value of buildings and their surroundings and **the need to protect not just the individual buildings, but the distinctive character of the area as a whole.**"

- The leaflet stresses the importance of the "high quality" of the "lively" High Street which includes, as shown in its accompanying plan, the junction with Castle Street and The Plain.
- The leaflet notes "The varying street and pavement widths contribute greatly to the character, including the pinch point created by the Bristol & West building*. A sense of place is generated by this projecting building – which juts forward to provide a visual focal point..." * 30, High Street - now Hot Nails

The pinch point and varying widths of the High Street, with its surviving historic Market Hall, reflect the history of the ancient borough of Thornbury, which from its foundation c 1252 hosted regular markets and three annual trade fairs in the High Street. The existing layout is much closer to the old street and maintains the historic feel of the town.



Historic pinch point early 1900s



High Street & Market Hall early 1900s

In the leaflet the Council's Enhancement Strategy for the High Street states:

- “Ensure that the variety of street widths and enclosure is retained and that special care is taken so that all highway works are sensitively designed to reflect the special character of the area.”
- “Any new development needs to be in scale and sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is important that it does not adversely harm the setting of the existing historic features...”

I would like to add that the High Street has been the main highway through Thornbury for centuries. It flows into Castle Street very naturally because until the early 1700s it was all one street. The wide area known as The Plain was another area providing space for market activities. I notice that the current plans suggest making a T junction of the High Street with Castle Street and The Plain; I believe this also will harm the historic context of the area.



High Street looking towards The Plain and Castle Street early 1900s

The streets were laid out to allow for market activities with the back street, known as St Mary Street, allowing access through the town when these markets were taking place in the High Street. St Mary Street was fully pedestrianised as part of the major redevelopment in the early 1970s which created the St Mary's Way Shopping Precinct. In fact, when drawing up plans for this redevelopment, Thornbury Rural District Council stressed that any plan "would not touch the attractive High Street (*Western Daily Press* 28 March 1963)."

The limitations now affecting access via the High Street are already causing traffic flow problems around the town centre and have made Rock Street much more dangerous for pedestrians; these problems are likely to get worse as Thornbury continues to expand.

I fear that events that have historically taken advantage of the wide High Street will be hampered and potentially made dangerous by its narrowing; these include the Carnival Processions, Remembrance Day Parades, the putting up of the wonderful Christmas lights and its associated Lights Switch-On Fair, and the traditional Boxing Day Hunt Meet, which rides several times round the town centre.



The historically wide pavements already allow plenty of space for pedestrians and crossing the street was never difficult. The arrival of cars and short stay parking on the High Street which brought in lots of people made the centre of the town feel lively, reflecting the busy nature of the former market area. Many residents feel that the special character and ambience of the centre of the town is going to be lost. I have heard descriptions that "the heart has been ripped out", that the town is "hollowed out". Many residents of the surrounding villages are no longer coming regularly to Thornbury.

I would also like to comment that various district councils seem to have a habit of making changes to Thornbury, without listening to anything the townspeople have to say. In 1924 the historic pump on the Plain was removed overnight by Thornbury Rural District Council stating that it was hazardous to traffic, causing outrage and protest in the town. A replica pump was reinstated 60 years later as a traffic calming measure! In the early 1990s Northavon District Council gave themselves permission to erect large council offices totally out of keeping with the Conservation Area; local people objected and pointed out that they thought Thornbury was not the right place for such offices. They were proved correct and the building has recently been demolished (at what cost to the environment?) Residents of Thornbury have not asked for any changes to be made to the High Street, so again we are having something imposed upon us. The expense of these unwanted changes is particularly galling at a time when important community facilities like The Armstrong Hall Complex, developed to enhance the town in the 1970s, are under imminent threat due to lack of funds.

Yours sincerely,

Meg Wise

STATEMENT 43 – Jean Goddard

I would like to object to the funding of SGCs proposals for Thornbury High Street; I do not believe they carried out a full, fair and respectful consultation.

I attended one of the information sessions at Turnberries with an open mind, however the plans on display were poorly constructed. In spite of strict booking times, social distancing was a joke, making it difficult to take on board the additional measures they had added, such as the alterations to the bottom end of the High Street.

I understand that although SGC has reported an improvement in the high street re pollution levels, they have not produced similar information regarding the road next to Aldi, which now has significantly more traffic as a result of the High Street closure. The changes have adversely affected traffic as the original mini roundabout system was not designed to take ALL through traffic. There is significantly more congestion around the centre of Thornbury since these changes were implemented. Has any impact on the time it takes for emergency services to get through?

I walk through the High Street on a regular basis, it is significantly worse now than pre covid measures - most of the pavements were wide enough to socially distance; the addition of outside seating has meant the pavements seem more narrow than before, particularly by the Swan, where SGC has not taken into account the pillars at the front of the pub. Vehicles that are permitted to drive up the high street do not always adhere to the speed limit and cycles, permitted to go in both directions end up using all of the road, making it harder to know where it is safe to walk. I cannot see SGCs plans making an improvement in these areas.

I am puzzled as to why the high street has been singled out as the worst place in Thornbury for cycling/pedestrians. There are so many more pressing issues and ones that would have benefitted far more from attention during lockdown than the High Street, such as the hill leading out of Thornbury; the bottom of Castle Street where the pavement is tiny and the road narrows right next to a brick wall and where two vehicles cannot pass.

I would like all measures to be scrapped until a proper and complete investigation can be undertaken, with the full consultation of those who live in the town.

I feel the money could be better spent - it would be far more useful to improve cycle access around the town itself as well as better/ safer cycle links between other towns.

Many thanks for your attention
Mrs J Goddard

STATEMENT 44 – Michael Barsley

As a long-time resident of Thornbury and previously a regular customer of the shops, restaurants, banks and post office on the high street I'd like to object in the strongest possible terms to the restrictions that have been imposed and to the way South Gloucestershire Council have behaved in this matter.

As far as I'm concerned the process has been neither fair nor democratic for the following reasons:

1. The consultation process was not widely publicised and was insufficient. A simple email or circular posted to every property in Thornbury and surrounding areas would have been a start.
2. The online petition and the objections from businesses, residents and others appear to have been ignored by SGC apart from a few relatively minor concessions after pressure from Luke Hall, MP.
3. There has been a democratic deficit during the entire process and SGC appear to have forgotten that it is responsible to the voters and other stakeholders and not the other way round.

I would be most grateful if you could support the re-opening of the High Street pending a full democratically-conducted consultation.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barsley

STATEMENT 45 – David Walker-Cornes

I object to the SGC Bid for £4.6millions for Thornbury High Street for three reasons. The first reason I believe that the SGC consultations have not been conducted properly. In particular the questions in the initial consultation were heavily biased towards the high-street being closed and completely missing a clear and definitive "Yes I agree with closing" or "No I don't agree" question at all. At a bare minimum SGC has a legal duty to conduct a fair and unbiased consultation.

The second reason is despite the biased consultation the majority of the Thornbury community have demonstrated in their response and in hundreds of submissions since that the community is against closing the High Street.

Finally the bid for funding from SGC is a considerable amount of tax-payers money and it is important for all public spending to be the best value for the community. Spending 7 figures on changes that a huge proportion (or any proportion) is against should be considered carefully. A sum that big would be better spent on a project that the community heavily backs.

Within the last two years a core (Town Council run) asset to the Town has been closed down due to lack of funds. Before the pandemic the Armstrong Hall Complex was planned for a £4-5million investment to rebuild a large proportion of the facilities to ensure that the venue remains the cultural, community and performance heart of the town. These plans were put in motion following a consultation that the public responded very positively to. (Within this consultation the community wholeheartedly rejected an alternative involving a SGC owned venue.) Now that the pandemic has hit the Town Council have said that there is no funding available for the Armstrong Hall Complex rebuild and so have permanently shut the venue down and instead the Town Council are now colluding with SGC for the rejected plans to go ahead.

STATEMENT 46 – Patricia Howarth

I am a resident of Thornbury. The changes to Thornbury High St have had a severe impact on my social life and my independence. I have a disabled badge and am unable to access the High St now.

I object to these changes being implemented as I feel there has been no proper consultation. I have completed surveys but it was very biased? I find it almost impossible to to know what is happening as you have to be able to use online forms or social media to find information or give feedback which makes it almost impossible for me and many others in my situation.

The amount of money spent to date is going to have an impact on our council tax in the future at a time when everyone is starting to struggle and when it is being spent on something that the majority do not want it is criminal.

Statement 47 – Malcolm Best

In respect to South Gloucestershire Council's Outline Business Case for Thornbury High Street being considered by the West of England Combined Authority Committee

I am a member of the Thornbury Town and District Residents Association (TTaDRA) and have lived in Thornbury for almost 40 years.

TTaDRA have previously requested sight of the Outline Business Case (OBC) document from South Gloucestershire Council (SGC), but this has not been forthcoming. I have only just managed to gain access to it through a buried link in the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) section of the Reports Pack produced for the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) Committee Meeting on 28/01/22. (After helpful support from a WECA Officer).

Economic Appraisal Conclusions

In the limited review time available, I have identified major errors in the calculation of the monetised benefits of the OBC proposal.

Section 3.10 – Table 3-20 concludes that **£3.723m** of benefit is accrued from 'Physical Activity' and a combined **£2.142m** of benefit is accrued from Commuting, Other and Business 'Economic Efficiency'. A total of **£5.865m**, representing just over **90%** of the total monetised benefits predicted.

Each of these predicted benefits are analysed in more detail as follows.

1. Predicted Physical Activity Benefit

The monetised benefit of Physical Activity is indicated to be derived from an increased uptake in cycling and walking activities as a result of the interventions described in the OBC. These are then calculated through to a monetised value for Reduced Mortality Risk and reduced Absenteeism using the identified UK Government generated tools.

Section 3.4 of the OBC describes how vehicle, cycle and pedestrian movements were collected and collated. Section 3.5 – Active Mode Appraisal, describes how these are translated through to monetised benefits.

Cycling

In section 3.4 it is intriguing as to why the movements survey was restricted to just two days in mid July 2021, and as part of that survey, cycle movement numbers are expressed in ranges, but vehicle movements are expressed in absolute numeric terms?

The Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT) is used to calculate and predict the potential for an increase in cycle usage. The tool uses **Origin to Destination** data from the 2011 Census **Journey to Work (Commuting)** data between Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) – defined areas, roughly in a 5 mile radius around Thornbury town centre. A selection of four progressively optimistic scenarios can be applied to calculate the increased uptake in cycle usage along the 'origin to destination' journey to work routes that might result from infrastructure and policy interventions along those routes.

It is preposterous to believe that making approximately 200m of Thornbury High Street into a pedestrian/cycle only zone will induce or incentivise anyone living in Rockhampton, Oldbury, Alveston, Tytherington or even the new housing developments off Butt Lane, to want to cycle to work – which is how this tool is intended to be used. Any associated Benefit Value must be excluded from the Value for Money Statement.

We want improved cycle and pedestrian access from these and other areas, but please do not try to deceive us that the proposed interventions in the OBC will deliver the indicated Physical Activity 'Value Benefits'.

I have reviewed some of the reference studies stated in the OBC, for example the Cycle City Ambition Report (CCA) (Ref 28) – all examples relate to Urban Cities and include interventions such as '4km of segregated cycle path along radial routes to the city centre', '7km of segregated cycle superhighway', three canal towpath routes (16km)'.

Pedestrians

Section 3.4.2.2 of the OBC estimates the pedestrian flow and movement around the St Mary's Centre (again based on the two day mid July 2021 survey). As a result of the proposed intervention changes for the High Street, the study predicts (conservatively) that an additional 200 pedestrians per day will now migrate from St Mary's Centre to use the High Street. The study indicates that currently 5000 pedestrians per day come to the St Mary's Centre from Rock Street and St Mary's Street Car Parks, and the Bus Stops on Rock Street.

The Active Mode Appraisal Summary (Section 3.5.3) then undertakes some sensitivity analysis for both cycling and pedestrian increment variation. Table 3-8 (*you will notice the data in columns 3 and 4 has been transposed and is therefore misleading*) then summarises the range of Present Value Benefits according to these sensitivity parameters. Using the 'Core Scenario' this table indicates that there are £3.197m of Physical Activity – Reduced Risk of Premature Death benefit value, and £0.526m of Physical Activity – Reduced Absenteeism benefit value (due to increased cycling and pedestrian walking activity).

But again, it is preposterous to conclude that an additional 200 people per day that migrate from the St Mary's Centre to the High Street can be considered as a Benefit Value through 'Physical Activity' consideration, when they will only have walked an additional 100 – 200 metres to get to the High Street. As the study identifies, they originally arrived in the St Mary's Centre from the car parks or the bus stop in this analysis. There are no interventions included in the OBC that encourage people to walk to the town centre from any of the surrounding residential areas which could then be considered for 'Activity' evaluation. Any associated Benefit Value must be excluded from the Value for Money Statement.

(It is accepted that improving the public realm features of the High Street may well induce this level of migration from St Mary's Centre, but it can not be counted as a Physical Activity Benefit Value).

2. Predicted Economic Efficiency Benefit (vehicle delay reduction benefit)

Section 3.6.1 of the OBC assesses the benefit values that can be achieved through junction improvements. The implementation of the Emergency and Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETRO) from June 2020 and the subsequent closure of the High Street has created considerable congestion on the surrounding road network. Particularly at peak times at Bristol Road/Midland Road, Rock Street/Midland Way, The Plain/High Street and at the repositioned Bus Stop on Rock Street.

The assessment again uses UK Government recognised tools, and data from the two days of the survey in mid July 2021. It then goes on to calculate Total Annual Delay Savings (veh-hrs) at each of the 'pinch points' identified in the study. It then goes on to calculate a monetised value for the accumulated delay time, and then assumes that all of these delay costs will be eliminated by the proposed interventions detailed in the OBC. The benefit value of total vehicle delay time is summarised in Table 3-15 of the OBC.

However, there is a fundamental error in the consideration of this Benefit Value. The congestion and vehicle delays were only created by the introduction of the ETRO's and the relocation of the Bus Stop to Rock Street. There was very little congestion and delay at any of the identified 'pinch points' prior to the ETRO being implemented in June 2020. In essence, a problem was created that previously did not exist, and a benefit value is now being claimed for the subsequent potential solution of that problem?

The only way that this benefit can be correctly evaluated is by using typical vehicle movement data corresponding to the traffic situation before the implementation of the ETRO's, and the exclusion of through traffic from the High Street.

All of the aggregated £2.142m benefit value attributed to vehicle delay savings – 'Economic Efficiency' in Table 3-20 must be excluded from the Value for Money Statement at this stage.

£4.6m is a large sum of public money to commit to spending – even by WECA measures. **Please carefully consider and further review the serious economic deficiencies identified in the OBC above, before making any decision today. The calculated Value for Money Factor is now at best 'Poor' (BCR between 0 and 1).**

I have a few short questions to close my statement, and I do not ask these in any accusative way, but simply to prompt an honest and open minded review and consideration of this proposal.

Mayor Rees – Why have you not imposed a similar arrangement on Park Street in Bristol?

Cllr Davies – Why have you not imposed a similar arrangement on Hill Street in Clevedon?

Cllr Savage – Why have you imposed this on Thornbury and not Chipping Sodbury?

Cllr Guy – In a soon to be completed arrangement in Keynsham High Street, why did you choose to maintain a one-way through traffic system, rather than close it totally to vehicles?

Mayor/Chairman Norris – I know you do not have a voting capacity on this committee, but I believe as Chairman you do have the authority to remove this item temporarily from this Agenda and re-instate it for inclusion in a subsequent Meeting Agenda.

STATEMENT 48 – Stan McCarthy

I'll keep this short as I feel you'll be inundated with mail pleading with you as I am to stop this funding before it's too late to save our town. I'd love to know what vested interest SGC have in this project, the town is now dead. The traffic route now runs past derelict buildings and loading axes for town businesses, and 2 care home complexes. Rock Street is a very busy pedestrian area as it is the ONLY access to the main car park. I beg you to reject SGC request for more funding.

STATEMENT 49 – Susan Blick

My Statement outlining my Objections to SGC's bid to WECA

Joint committee in respect of proposed Thornbury High Street alterations

Meeting to be held on the 28th of January 2022

I feel I must write about South Gloucestershire Council (SGC), as throughout this procedure they have been imposing their ideas onto THORNBURY Residents and Traders without due regard and proper Consultation.

Using Public money at a time when National funds are stretched is one thing, but to undermine the viability of long-standing businesses in Thornbury High Street, needs to be challenged. Not only that, but their proposals still affect the access and quality of life of many older Residents who may have limited mobility.

From the outset, it seems that SGC have realised that National Government were making money available for “Green improvements” and then decided to try to get some of it. Why Thornbury High Street was chosen I do not know. They seem to have put the cart before the horse, and decided to “chase this money”, and then design something to benefit from the scheme.

Instead of consulting IN ADVANCE with local Residents, Shopkeepers and Businesses, South Gloucestershire Council suddenly shut the High Street to traffic, (using the COVID-19 outbreak “2-meter rule” as an excuse). Thornbury High Street, already has very wide pavements, certainly along 3/4 of its length. The changes also included altering the road usage, initially banning cars and parking *and* removing the Bus route. The Local Traders first found out about the changes, as Toby Savage was being interviewed by the BBC Countryfile team !

QUESTIONNAIRE

SGC designed a Questionnaire and asked Residents to complete it on line. There were a number of ambiguous questions, and it was difficult to register the fact on their Questionnaire that the High Street should continue to stay as it was ~ with 2-way Traffic. **N.B.** Over 65% of Respondents, didn't want any change to their High Street. SGC then apparently discounted some responses, due to the low number of visits some people made to the High Street, which as it was completed during Covid 19 many couldn't leave their homes!

LITTLE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Those who designed the new “Pedestrianised High Street” seemed to have very little local knowledge. For example, half of the High Street shops rely on deliveries to be made outside their premises, as they do not have any rear access to their properties. Therefore, delivery drivers would have to use the High Street, as well as Council and Commercial Bin collections. In addition, there are private dwellings in the High Street that also need vehicle access and some larger properties, are currently being made into flats which will increase the daily use of vehicles in the High Street.

Initially the Scheme showed a Tree Lined High Street, which Locals knew would be difficult, as Thornbury sits on dense rock. “The Planners” then found this out, and now any Trees will have to be put into Planters.

SGC SEEMED TO ONLY THINK ABOUT ABLE BODIED RESIDENTS

~ “2 FEET GOOD, 4 WHEELS BAD”

The original plans, seemed to want to encourage Walking and Cycling and got rid of the majority of Parking in the High Street and then advised Residents that there were 3 areas of car parking “not far from the High Street”.

There seemed to be little thought by SGC about Disabled Residents, Visitors or those with mobility issues continuing to have access to their High Street. Under the Disability Act ANY changes should not reduce existing access.

CHANGE OF FOCUS

Now realising that better access was legally required, instead of *redesigning their whole Plan*, and working with Residents and Traders to include vehicles, parking and making changes to Thornbury High Street together, ~ SGC have “tinkered around” with the old plan, added a few Disabled Bays, plus a very short time “Drop Off area”, which they think will be sufficient. **This is still discriminatory.** It assumes that those with Mobility issues *ALL* have Blue Badges to park, *which they do not* and that everyone has a partner, who could drop them off!

There have been discussions recently, that SGC *may* allow buses up the High Street again, as campaigned for by Disabled representatives and the local MP, Luke Hall. The new painted lines on the road surface, will need amendment and thought ~ currently a “winding road” is drawn, but buses apparently need straight roads! In addition, SGC have been promoting a “compromise situation”. Instead of 2-way traffic, as it was before ~ they intend to restrict Traffic, to “through Traffic only” if shopping in one direction.

Although the High Street has 2 levels currently, (a step down from the pavement), which Disabled and Focus Groups preferred, SGC want to alter it ~ to a “shared surface” (road and pavement the same).

This potentially will increase the risk to young Children and elderly Residents. Then, SGC intend to allow Cyclists to use the High Street in **BOTH directions!** There have already been incidents, when Cyclists have nearly hit pedestrians. Sadly, I fear that it is an accident waiting to happen.

PEDESTRIANISATION WORKS ~ LOOK AT STROUD AND CHELTENHAM

During Focus Group meetings I have been told that other Towns have embraced Pedestrianisation. However, it is important to remember, that they are much bigger towns and have *several* Retail roads, *and not all of them restrict parking*. Consumers have a choice, where they park and shop.

Thornbury High Street however, is our **main shopping thoroughfare**, which not only supports Thornbury Residents, but very importantly, many surrounding Villages too. There is already walking access from the High Street to our existing Pedestrianised area. Why does parking still need to be restricted to Blue Badge holders? Particularly as the new amendments, to the old Plan mean access to more vehicles.

Bristol's Mayor Marvin Rees has agreed that Disabled Drivers should be reassured over City Centre Access to Park Street, and said “We are fully committed to having an inclusive City” and that disabled drivers can continue to park there. Parking in Thornbury High Street should also be inclusive and not restricted.

ATTRACTIVE MARKET TOWN

Thornbury was ~ is an attractive Market Town with a beautiful historic High Street. It delighted Visitors and Residents alike driving through it on arrival. NO attention in SGC Scheme has considered the approach to our Town today. Instead of enjoying the pretty flowers of Summer and the Christmas lights ~ everyone is compelled with new road signage to travel along Midland Way past Retirement Flats to a very dangerous Mini Roundabout. Then left onto Rock Street past Grace Lodge, (more Retirement Flats). Past the rear entrance to Aldi, and past a number of parked Commercial Waste Bins, then disused Public Conveniences and another Mini Roundabout.

At School times, this creates a Gridlock situation, and more pollution as vehicles are stuck stationary for many extra minutes. Some Residents of Midland Way, can no longer be in their gardens, or open their windows because of the increase in traffic. Some have had to buy air purifiers!

DAMAGE HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE ~ GOING ELSEWHERE

I am saddened that SGC may have already done irreparable damage to our High Street, by preventing Residents for over 18 months to park in their High Street. I have been told by a number of “able bodied” people, that as a direct result of not being able to park there to “pop in” for items, or post letters etc, that they are now going to Alveston, Falfield and Olveston Post Offices. Longer journeys, using their car. Many commuters, no longer pick up their Paper, Sandwiches or Coffee going to work from Thornbury ~ or Birthday cards and gifts on their way home!

WECA FUNDING

The funding from Government, allocated by WECA should be for the improvement and enhancement to benefit the High Street, as well as Thornbury Residents and Traders. This ill-thought-out scheme should **be cancelled** ~ and Thornbury High Street re-opened! After that, a meaningful and proper Consultation should be started, to include Residents, Businesses, Thornbury Town Council together with SGC Planners, to ensure ALL generations benefit from an enhanced and safe Thornbury High Street.

Susan Blick

STATEMENT 50 – Julian Cooper

I am a local Thornbury resident and business owner, and I would like to support South Gloucestershire Council excellent proposals for the High Street, which I regard to be forward looking, well considered, sensitive and exciting. In my opinion they will provide a sound future for Thornbury which will allow local shops and restaurants to thrive, it is an idea whose time has come. The alternative to go back to a car park based High Steet which will result in a slow degradation of this wonderful place. I believe the High Street should be destination based and pedestrianized. Any concerns can easily be solved by good design.

STATEMENT 51 – Frank Walters

I live in one the villages close to Thornbury which is our local town and used frequently by me, my wife and fellow villagers.

- 1 I am writing to plead with you to not go ahead with the plan for Thornbury High Street. It is a planned opposed by many of the businesses and traders in the High Street. Every time you go into any shop they start to talk about it. Their businesses have suffered enough and to add this will only damage them even further. For us I am currently mobile and can manage. However in the future I have a condition that will render me disabled and I can see the plan being a major drawback to using the town for regular shopping.
- 2 The majority of local people oppose the idea. So why go ahead with an improvement which the people who use the town DO NOT WANT.
- 3 It will cost a huge sum of money. It does not take much imagination keeping in mind the current economic situation to imagine far better uses for the funds – more support for those with low incomes, improvement in social services so blocked hospital beds can be cleared and many others.

We have all suffered much in th4e last 2 years. Governments are meant to work for their people, to protect them. It would be a grave error in my view to press ahead with a plan that few want and to use funds desperately needed by more and more people.

I URGE YOU TO OPPOSE THE PLAN PLEASE

Frank Walters

Statement on Thornbury High Street

By Jill Cyphus (resident) – 22nd January 2022

The Cambridge dictionary definition of “**consultation**” is “*the process of discussing something with someone in order to get their advice or opinion on it.*”

This has not happened with the closure of Thornbury High Street. No consultation with anyone, other than South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) members and employees, prior to the overnight closure. An almost military style operation of closure; installation of security guards and vans, with noisy all-night generators, enabling them to live on site, redirection signs and road closed signs. a well-planned and prepared operation. People SHOULD and COULD have been consulted but were not.

Public and business opinions to this dictatorship style behaviour were all ignored. The High Street stayed closed, street furniture was introduced, traffic including essential buses rerouted, disabled parking no longer available in the street, and much more.

As businesses could not function without deliveries, the street had to be opened one way, with access for drop off and pick up, and for some disabled spaces, with people now highly confused about what they are and are not allowed to do. It can no longer be considered a pedestrianisation project so most of the other changes are now pointless.

Grant Shapps said at the outset; “*I want to make it absolutely clear; we are not prepared to tolerate hastily introduced schemes, which will create sweeping changes to communities without consultation and ones where the benefits to cycling and walking do not outweigh the dis-benefits for other road users.*” He also stated; “*The crucial test is does it deliver to the community and has it been done with their consultation.*”

Sheila Kisson, from the department of Transport: “*The Government has made it clear to local authorities the importance of consulting on schemes, whether temporary, permanent or experimental. Engaging with the communities is key to delivering a scheme that works for all.*”

More recently she responded to a further enquiry on 4th January 2022; “*Local authorities are free to make their own decisions about the streets under their care, provided they take account of the relevant legislation they are responsible for, ensuring that all their actions are within the law and are accountable to local people for their decisions and their performance. Local councillors are responsible for ensuring that local decisions about street infrastructure take account of the needs and opinions of local people.*”

I state my case. **This has not happened and is still not happening now.**

The South Gloucestershire Council Community Engagement Forums’ (CEF) written stated claims are; “*About listening and responding to local people’s real issues. People in their community know what is best for them.*”

“*It is to empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decisions, making a service delivery by increasing strength. capacity and engagement of the local community.*”

If any aspect of any of these lofty aims and claims had been truly followed, then we would not be in the situation we currently find ourselves.

Statement on Thornbury High Street

By Jill Cyphus (resident) – 22nd January 2022

In the first CEF zoom meeting I attended, Kristy Spindler, the then representative for SGC Council Leader Toby Savage, when challenged over the Grant Shapps statement, even acknowledged that there had not been proper consultation!

Over the last 18 months there have been a variety of meetings and so-called consultations, many of which I have attended. All of them showed a very high proportion in favour of reopening the High Street and allowing shoppers to park, in order to keep the High Street alive. We were ignored. Atkins consultancy firm, ran some Zoom meetings, with exactly the same results. Ignored again.

The **6 Month Survey**, which was supposed to be the definitive document for listening to the community, despite being appallingly biased in its questioning, also showed an overwhelming support for reopening the High Street and returning most aspects to how it was before. Many agreed alterations to improve things such as, one way traffic, 20 mph restriction, amongst other ideas.

The one-way system had to happen as deliveries were needed. Reducing access for disabled and vulnerable has to be returned as people are worse off now than before. However disabled spaces are still very limited, and the bus has not reappeared with the SGC saying they don't know when it will, or the route the buses will take! It's not complicated; the route is back up the High Street, as before.

A report was given to "The Voice" this week, by a SGC spokesperson. It read as follows; *"We have carried out a wide range of consultation and engagement for Thornbury High Street to gather and understand people's views, and all the comments received have been considered during the adaptation of the interim measures and the design of the final vision of Thornbury High Street. We have continued to engage with residents and businesses throughout and have made a number of changes to improve accessibility and address concerns raised."*

Blatantly untrue. None of the results of meetings and so-called consultations have been taken on board, as they have all had a majority against the changes in their totality.

- 2 petitions obtaining around 2000 and 1500 signatures
- 2 independently called local meetings
 - The first could only accommodate 100 people but had a further 200 people outside.
 - The next had a turn-out of approximately 300 people. All, bar one, were against the extreme measures in the closure.

Full and proper consultation has not taken place. We would welcome it happening in the very near future, so that residents and businesses can work together to find the best future for Thornbury Town Centre and reinstate its life and livelihood.

Please take time to consider this and all the other statements.

Jill Cyphus (resident)

STATEMENT 53 – F Ebbs

I understand that WECA will be meeting this Friday and that South Gloucestershire Council's (SGC) business case and proposal for Thornbury High Street's future will probably be discussed.

I strongly believe that SGC's actions and decisions to largely pedestrianise Thornbury High Street are misguided and have been carried out in a wholly undemocratic way. There never was a case for pedestrianisation, and this has at no stage been sought or requested by the inhabitants, businesses and traders of Thornbury.

90% of Thornbury residents rejected this scheme.

I believe that SGC has acted in an undemocratic manner by not conducting proper impact assessments before or after the arbitrary implementation of the current scheme.

It appears that the inhabitants and businesses were not properly consulted, and for reasons unknown, an expensive (in implementation and in even greater long term financial costs to the town's prosperity) vanity scheme created by SGC has been forced upon us.

I therefore request that funds are not released by WECA in order to prevent the current changes becoming permanent.

Yours sincerely

F.R.Ebbs

STATEMENT 54 – Paul Williams

I have been a local resident for 37 years now and have followed this topic with great interest over the past 18 months. I was shocked when the closure of the High Street was imposed so suddenly and this measure has certainly had a detrimental impact on my use of the High Street.

Before closure, I used to travel up and down the High Street on my way to work in Bristol and would stop off at least once a week on my way home to use the local shops. Closure meant it was no longer convenient to do so and so my trade went to shops in Bristol instead.

I duly participated in the South Gloucestershire Council survey (despite the apparent bias in the questioning) and awaited production of the results with interest. Despite the efforts to sway the outcome, there was clearly overwhelming opposition to the plans with only 29% of local residents in favour. Despite this, the Council somehow deemed it appropriate to push ahead with their plans!

I was astonished to read about how much money is being sought to cement these proposals into a permanent feature. Surely there must be a more worthy use for such funds rather than ratifying a project that the vast majority of local residents and businesses do not want.

I would like to urge the meeting to decline this proposal please.

Yours sincerely

Paul Williams

Statement 55 - Julia Galpin

Paramedics and Ambulances

I live just a 100 metres or so North of Thornbury High Street

I am very concerned that the response time for Paramedics and Ambulances travelling from Southmead Hospital has been extended ever since the High Street has been closed to Northbound traffic

At certain times of the day there is **severe** congestion on the diversion route of Midland Way, Rock Street and The Plain and I have observed that delays of 5 or more minutes are not uncommon in each direction i.e. 10 minutes in all. That may seem nothing but to me it was the difference between life and death – let me explain

A few years ago, I suffered a Subarachnoid Haemorrhage (burst blood vessel at the base of the brain) and spent a week in the intensive care unit followed by several months in hospital being rehabilitated

I was very fortunate that a paramedic and ambulance were able to reach me quickly and I was on the operating table in Southmead Hospital within the hour

The survival rate for this condition is extremely low and many people that do survive have life changing disabilities

Speed is vital to relieve the pressure of the blood within the brain and every minute of delay reduces the chance of a successful outcome

I implore the Council to allow emergency vehicles, when on an emergency call, to be permitted to drive through the High Street in both Northerly and Southerly directions

If there is a next time I and others may not be so fortunate

In the meantime, I relive the emergency every time I hear the siren of an ambulance and I worry about them being held up in traffic

Cyclists

The aim of the Council should be to encourage walking and cycling from the vast new estates on the fringes of Thornbury into the Town centre

Cyclists on the B4061 regularly travel down the steep hill from Alveston at speeds of 30mph

Most of them are not intending to use the High Street but use it a rat run to travel through Thornbury and beyond

Being still full of adrenaline they barely keep to the 20mph speed limit

On several occasions, I have come close to being knocked over by a speeding cyclist in the “pedestrian” area. I am appalled that an accident is waiting to happen and consider the area has become extremely unsafe

STATEMENT 56

The SOUTH BRISTOL WRONG ROAD GROUP are keen to be kept informed and updated on the progress of the SDS.

SOUTH BRISTOL WRONG ROAD GROUP

STATEMENT 57 – Christine Stone

I am the Owner and Managing Director of Hawkins of Thornbury, one of the longest established remaining independent Retail businesses in the High Street. The property also accommodates 4 tenants who run small businesses, I also grew up in Thornbury and have run businesses in the town for 30 years.

I am writing to express my deep concern and anger at the current changes to the High Street by South Gloucestershire Council, which have merely succeeded in a very short space of time, of destroying a busy thriving town centre, and quite frankly it is now an embarrassment.

My business and others in the high Street have been very badly affected by the changes. The High Street is failing to attract new businesses, and the High Street is mostly deserted or extremely quiet on a daily basis, in addition, the changes have created severe problems for disabled and aged residents, businesses and visitors and has caused daily traffic problems in the town of which I have never experienced in my entire life, in fact these changes and proposals have and will achieve nothing apart from driving residents and businesses away in the future.

These changes were made under the guise of the Covid excuse originally, and we were led to believe they were temporary which proved to be lies as the bus Stop in Rock Street is obviously now permanent (a serious accident is waiting to happen) in addition the standstill traffic along Rock Street now is in no doubt causing serious emissions which did not exist prior to this. Have any risk assessments been done regarding these points???

Also, the most ridiculous and shortest cycle lane I have ever seen outside Riddifords' is outrageous!! It is no way beneficial to cyclists or motorists.

The changes are already a disaster for the town reflected in feedback from our customers which is of anger and disbelief at what South Gloucestershire Council have done to the town and the disgraceful manner at how they have managed to implement the changes with what appears to be lacking any risk assessment or logical thought. Many have also said they would no longer shop in Thornbury as the restrictions and the bus route change has made it very difficult if not impossible to access the high Street.

South Gloucestershire Council claimed they consulted with businesses and residents, this is untrue in my case. Meetings were arranged by Thornbury chamber of commerce at the start (2020) of which I attended when Kristy Spindler was the spokesperson for the council, but I have not been approached by the council to discuss any issues or concerns despite the fact I have written and spoken to Luke Hall, and the council, a petition signed by residents and businesses was also submitted and ignored, there was also a SGC online questionnaire which was ridiculous as the questions did not allow for a straight yes or no answer. Social media has shown that the majority of people are not in favour of these current changes, The Thornbury Chamber of Commerce, Mr Clive Washbourne, and many other people and groups have relentlessly been liaising with residents, and businesses to oppose the changes and have been repeatedly ignored.

Whilst I understand that improvements for Thornbury High Street are necessary for the future of the Town, these current changes are having a serious negative impact on businesses and the vital passing trade has pretty much disappeared.

There are many concerning issues of which I know have all been expressed by many. The meeting at the Leisure centre which was televised goes to prove that there still needs to be many discussions before a suitable, practical, safe and sensible plan for The High Street is agreed upon and that there is undoubtedly serious opposition. However, until such time as this would be put in place, The High Street MUST be re-opened to traffic again, if not both directions then at least a one way, with perhaps a speed restriction of 20mph and the bus route reinstated to the High Street.

I sincerely hope that the closure will not continue and that any proposed changes will be subject to a full and fair consultation allowing input from residents and businesses, risk assessments and logical common-sense planning.

The money that has spent so far is, in my opinion totally unacceptable.

I hope that our voices will be heard and that the sensible and logical decision to remove the current restrictions will be taken.

Yours sincerely

Christine Stone

STATEMENT 58 – Stephen Kinsella

I understand North Somerset Council is mindful of allowing construction of a Banwell Bypass. To do so would produce a large increase in North Somerset's carbon emissions and would be contrary to the council's declared aim of reducing emissions. With humanity now facing terrible suffering this century, and eventual extinction, due to global warming, it is imperative that this project (and all others similar) is immediately stopped. Without even knowing the figures, it is clear that this project would make nonsense of any claim by the council that it is reducing carbon emissions and addressing the climate emergency. We are no longer in a situation where we can consider such projects. Mitigation is impossible. Please would WECA ensure that the appropriate protocols are put in place for this and all projects, e.g expert assessment of carbon emissions. I point out that motor cars and lorries are expected to remain predominately fuelled by petrol and diesel into the next decade and it is therefore vital that every effort should be made to reduce the need to travel, which is particularly necessary in North Somerset with its already high level of car dependency.

STATEMENT 59 – Alexandra Brittain

The South Gloucestershire Council “vision” for Thornbury High Street is Thornbury’s worst nightmare! The outline business case mentions growth in population resulting from housing development on outskirts of town. Where are SGC plans for road improvements, medical facilities, schools etc to support this growth? This is where the taxpayers’ money should be spent, not on ruining a perfectly good and functioning High Street.

SGC claim of an “extensive plan of public engagement” is untrue. There was a limited residents’ exposure to the initial online consultation and the replies that ensued were skewed because of the timing of same (Lockdown, 3000+ over 65’s told to stay at home). We were not asked the question “do you want the High Street to remain closed?” Many of us put our wish for re-opening in the comments, but these were ignored. High Street Traders claim that they were never consulted. Focus group attendees have reported that their views were ignored. The limited consultation since has been lip service, asking us what colour benches do we want? Cartoon drawings of the “Plan” were shown to us at one of the 3 half day consultations where 3 people at a time could attend for 15 minutes. A great many people were at work as it was during 3 half weekdays and many others couldn’t get a slot! Extensive consultation? NO!

Hundreds of residents voted unanimously at 2 Town meetings in favour of a vote of no confidence in SGC and Thornbury Town Council. The Town Council have been bribed with SGC promise of re-surfacing a Town car park. No risk assessment, either traffic or financial, was ever conducted, and the other road through the town centre is residential and has daily traffic jams and queues tailing back to all the feeder roads, Residents in this street keep windows closed now and many have purchased air purifiers. Even now, when asked for readings of co2 levels, SGC reply that these will not be available until later this year. They have no readings pre-closure on Rock Street.

A large number of folk sent letters of objection to the SGC Cabinet meeting on 7 or 8 th June and I do not believe T. Savage and his colleagues even looked at them. Many of us tried to attend the meeting virtually and the video equipment conveniently didn’t work!. So no record of this meeting which I appears to be undemocratic and questionably corrupt. I was told it took less than 30 minutes to unanimously vote for the High St changes to be made permanent. This plan was predetermined.

3000+ , that is 25% of Thornbury residents, are aged over 65, 1500+ are over 70 and 1000+ are aged over 80. These folk were regular visitors to the High Street pre-covid, parking in the 1 hour slots (27 of these) on the High Street. This enabled very many elderly people who drove, to park, shop in co-op, or Riddifords, buy their paper, maybe get a coffee and meet their pals. There was a bus stop right outside the co-op so those folk who didn't drive, could also retain much of their independence. For many of them living alone, this was a very important part of their day or week. Now that there will be no parking on the High Street for more than 10 minutes and there is very little space allocated for even a 10 minute park, unless a blue badge holder, and no mention of when, or even if, any buses will ever return there, a great many elderly never go there now. The ones who drive either go to Yate or Cribbs Causeway. How can this help the climate? So 25% of residents are being discriminated against.

This nightmare is being shoe-horned in against the will of the majority. It appears to benefit the fit, and cyclists and is divisive. Regeneration? – no, it's degeneration.

Thank you for reading this and I ask you, if you have any moral conscience, to please bid against awarding SGC £4.55 million to ruin the heart of our lovely town.

Yours sincerely,

Alexandra Brittain (Mrs)

STATEMENT 60 – Keith Parr

The closure of Thornbury High Street BS35 2AZ up in s glos all I know is about 2 years ago s glos and Thornbury Town Council and chamber of commerce and your organisation all had a get together behind closed doors and closed this wonderful little High Street because of all the Governments in Britain 68 covid restrictions and lock downs I have had a very good look at it all it is taking a lot longer for any emergency vehicles to get there and back a lot of business has lost so much trade they should be taken some one to court the public can't park there but there's a covid testing van there each Saturday this is not fair is it your organisation must re open this High st to full normal

STATEMENT 61 – Rachel Taylor

I would like to add my name to the list of Thornbury residents who are dismayed by the South Gloucestershire Council's plans to permanently change Thornbury High Street. Any funds would be better spent on services which are becoming increasingly stretched due to the increase in new residents such as doctors, dentists and schools.

The gov.uk website says

"LEPs are partnerships between local authorities and businesses. They decide what the priorities should be for investment in roads, buildings and facilities in the area."

Have businesses on the high street been consulted and agree with the changes? Judging by the number with posters opposing the changes in their windows, I think not.

It is also concerning that the LEP does not mention residents/local people - only local authorities and businesses. In my view changes to Thornbury High Street should not be a priority.

Please **do not vote in favour** of these changes.

Thank you.

Rachel Taylor

STATEMENT 62 – Andrew Chubb

The funding request for £4577000 to support South Gloucestershire's vision for Thornbury High Street should be **denied**, infact the request should have never been made.

The decision to implement the scheme at Thornbury was made by officers at the council (Head of StreetCare Transport and Waste Services and Director for Environmental and Community Services) following consultation with the Cabinet Member and Council Leader as an emergency measure.

So the High Street was closed by the council leader alone, the cabinet was not included in this decision. It is also of note that the decision to close the High Street was not minuted or appears on the council web site as a notable decision.

The initial closure was extended using in July via an "**Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for Thornbury High Street**". Decision reference ECS57/20, the form used to justify this decision did not reflect the true reality of the known situation at that time. It was clearly written to continue the closure and signed off by the Director for Environmental and Community Services. Again, no involvement of the council cabinet in this decision. Would appear council officers and Council leader acted as South Glos in this regard. Also note no formal assessments had been made to the closure and the likely impact it may have. A complete divorce from normal procedure.

Was this closure demanded by covid guidance? Long Street in Wotton under Edge with its narrow pavements remained open.

The results of the respondents to the retrospective consultation conducted by south Glos rejected the High street closure. However the results were presented not one element produced support for the closure. Yet the report recommended to progress with the changes. This was also against a back drop of local petitions, letters in the gazette, social media, all demanding the High Street be returned to pre-covid staus.

In my 54 years spent in Thornbury and the surrounding area nothing has galvanised the local residents like the High Street closure, yet South Glos did not respect the residents and traders wishes. 57 statements presented to the 7th June cabinet meeting, 56 rejecting the scheme.

On the 7th June 2021 South Glos rubber stamped the scheme against fierce local opposition.

All through this saga South Glos has remain focused on the High Street and the request/spending plan appears to continue in this vein. The fact is the negative impact of the closure on the High street is dwarfed by the impact to the surrounding areas.

South Glos have no credible plan to resolve the issues around Rock Street/Midland road roundabout. Doubled the traffic and increased use of the crossing on this route.

South Glos has, I believe approved another 500-600 Homes on Oldbury Lane to the North West of Thornbury on top of the currently housing being built. This will only exacerbate the traffic issues in the area and south Glos seems to have no coherent infrastructure plan for the Town.

Thornbury High Street is a sad place with reduced footfall and no passing trade.

The scheme proposed by south Glos is likely to reinforce the culture of stay at home and order online, the opposite of what is required to attract people to the High Street. The convenience of the High Street is gone, the passing morning/evening trade gone elsewhere.

Statement 63 – Sheila Watson

In respect to South Gloucestershire Council's Outline Business Case for Thornbury High Street being considered by the West of England Combined Authority Committee

I am a member of the Thornbury Town and District Residents Association (TTaDRA) and have lived in Thornbury for almost 40 years.

TTaDRA have previously requested sight of the Outline Business Case (OBC) document from South Gloucestershire Council (SGC), but this has not been forthcoming. I have only just managed to gain access to it through a buried link in the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) section of the Reports Pack produced for the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) Committee Meeting on 28/01/22. (After helpful support from a WECA Officer).

As a result of this, some elements of my statement are initially referenced to the 'Future High Street Vision Report' (FHSVR) produced by SGC in June 2021 and approved by their Cabinet on 07 June 2021 - in essence a brief for preparation of the OBC.

1. Consultation

The initial Consultation Survey was hurriedly pushed out within a few weeks of the start of implementation of the emergency covid street closure of 08 June 2020, clearly with the intention of seeking to make the closure permanent at the end of the process. Even 'The Consultation Institute' www.consultationinstitute.org recognised that the process had all the hallmarks of pre-determination as the survey included five questions on '*if the High Street was pedestrianised*'.

In Paragraph 34 (Key findings) of the FHSVR the report selectively identifies that '29% agree with making the pedestrian and cycle zone permanent' but omits to record that **65%** of 2890 respondents were **against** closure and pedestrianisation. This paragraph goes on to make further misrepresentation of the statistical data in stating that the 29% increases to 47% for those who visited more than once per week after pedestrianisation. But the 47% relates to a much smaller subset of the total survey population, as it eliminated those who did not want to visit as a result of Covid, those who then found access to the High Street much more difficult due to total pedestrianisation and those who chose not to visit due to finding it unpleasant, as a result of bollards, barriers and security staff and equipment.

The Atkins 'High Street Catalyst Report' (HSCR) dated 06/05/21 was the output from additional consultation with selected Focus Groups and is included as part of the OBC. This identified that 9 of the responding Focus Groups wanted a return to either one-way or two-way through traffic for the High Street, and were against pedestrianisation, with only 3 responding to be in favour of it.

The most recent consultation process (September 2021) to consider the making permanent of the five Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETRO) is another example of the 'go through the motions' approach taken by SGC. Over 90% of the respondents to this consultation were against the ETRO's being made permanent, but they were subsequently approved by SGC, without any recognition of the views and concerns of local residents.

It was very difficult to find and book available spaces for the Engagement Sessions for this consultation. My partner did manage to book a slot, but was very disappointed to be informed by an SGC Councillor who was in attendance at the meeting *'People think that they can write to Luke Hall and stop this, but it doesn't matter what people say, we are not turning the clock back now'*. This demonstrates SGC's undemocratic approach to the whole process.

2. Consideration of other options

In the seventeen page 77 paragraph Future High Street Vision Report produced by SGC for review and decision by the SGC Cabinet on 07 June 2021, only three short paragraphs (49, 50 and 51) consider the other options available, despite the overwhelming preference of Thornbury residents for one or other of these confirmed in the prior consultation process.

Admittedly, the Atkins produced OBC would now seem to retrospectively and subjectively expand on some of these, but the first draft of this report was not produced until 26 August 2021, long after the decision by the SGC Cabinet had set the end point for the outcome into concrete.

Many of the beneficial features and proposals identified in the OBC can be incorporated and adapted into the other options. It should be remembered that Thornbury already has an existing pedestrianised area suitable for additional markets and events. The High Street has direct access to the excellent Munday Playing Fields for the benefit of children and recreation. Additional cycle parking, seating and waymarking features could easily be incorporated into the other options identified. I believe all High Street businesses continue to support the periodic temporary closure of the street for events such as the Carnival and Christmas Lights Switch On, which have taken place successfully for many years.

The recent commitment by SGC for the re-introduction of bus services to the High Street is welcomed. This will effectively result in a one-way through traffic system for the High Street, and therefore require serious reconsideration of many other aspects of the current plan. The cost of introducing a one-way through traffic system would be minimal, over and above that required for the re-introduction of the promised bus services. We should therefore at least explore and expand consideration of that option before going further.

3. Traffic, Cyclists, Pedestrians and Active Travel considerations

It is disappointing that the OBC outcome is based on just two days of survey for the above on the 15 and 17 of July 2021, and therefore some weeks after the SGC Cabinet made its decision on their Future Vision for Thornbury. No reference data has been presented in the OBC relating to pre High Street closure statistics. It is recognised that the various stages of pandemic control measures made the collection of representative data more difficult, but therefore even more reason for collecting additional data before summarising this data as 'annual average' statistics in subsequent cost/benefit calculations.

For example, based on the 12 hour periods on the two survey days, the OBC (Section 3.4) states that on average around 180 – 210 cyclists per day enter the town centre. TTA/DRA members undertook an albeit more limited survey on 11 January 2022 (4.5 hours over the peak morning, lunchtime and early evening periods) and concluded an average of just 12 cyclists per day entered the town centre.

The OBC refers significantly to active travel initiatives, indeed most of the economic benefit concluded from its future implementation are derived from the outcome of these initiatives. However, the methodology outlined at paragraph 3.4.2 of the OBC - 'Active Travel Demand' and the Propensity to Cycle Tool' (PCT) clearly states this is based on an '**Origin to Destination**' principle. There is no 'Origin' consideration in any of the evaluations or impact assessments contained in the OBC.

Paragraph 38 of the FHSVR also concludes that the Vision will embrace and encourage active travel '*through improved safe cycling and walking routes to the High Street*'.

We would all like additional safe and improved cycle and pedestrian access to the town center from the peripheral residential areas of Thornbury, but there is nothing in the OBC that supports or even identifies any initiatives for this.

The majority of the conclusions subsequently stated in the OBC regarding these issues must therefore be considered invalid.

4. Safety and Environmental issues

The OBC also makes claim that improved safety and environmental outcomes will result from its implementation.

As a start point, we should make clear that the most recently monitored and published Air Quality Data collated by SGC does not indicate there was a previous Air Quality problem in Thornbury. The 2020 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) dated September 2021 indicates that of approximately 170 Nitrogen Dioxide monitoring locations in South Gloucestershire there are approximately 140 locations that have higher recorded values than those for Thornbury. Perhaps these should therefore require higher priority attention?

This report also confirms that Air Quality in Thornbury has been slowly improving over the last four years. And in any case, at best the changes that have been implemented to date as part of the plan simply shift any issue from one location to another. However, there is anecdotal evidence that overall air quality has now deteriorated, due to increased traffic congestion.

This same increased traffic congestion is also likely to have resulted in a minor increase in global warming gas emissions.

Without doubt, there are no gains relating to these issues that can be derived from the OBC.

It is claimed that improved levels of safety will result from implementation of the OBC. However, the Atkins HSCR states that for the period 2016 – 2019 there were no reported accidents on or within Thornbury High Street. For the same period, it identifies that there were ten accidents incurring minor severity injuries on the peripheral roads within 1 km of the High Street – the very roads that now have more traffic diverted to them.

The increased traffic and congestion on these peripheral roads can only increase the risk of accidents and casualties. I have personally witnessed a number of near miss accidents that have resulted from the revised traffic arrangements.

STATEMENT 64 – Jacqueline Howard

PLEASE MAKE OUR THORNBURY HIGH STREET ONE WAY!

Having moved to Thornbury in 1990 to bring up our family, I am now horrified at what is being done to the High Street since it was suddenly closed during the peak of the pandemic.

Please understand that I am not opposed to change when it well planned, well executed with measurable benefits but what is currently being done is the polar opposite of this.

What I fail to understand is how South Gloucestershire Council are pressing ahead with their undemocratic, ill-thought out plans without the necessary **impact assessments:**

1. Economic
2. Business
3. Environmental
4. Traffic flow
5. Social

South Gloucestershire Council keep stating that they want Thornbury to become a 'destination town'.

What is their official definition of a DESTINATION TOWN?

This phrase is regularly used by Tony Savage and other Council spokespeople but no-one can tell me what this actually means.

The expenditure to date is allegedly over £400,000. This is an eye-watering sum that has been used recklessly and more money will be wasted without the above assessments being:

- **independently** commissioned
- conducted
- reviewed
- reported on

1 Economic Impact

Our High Street is now deserted most days. (This is not due to internet shopping or change of shopping habits, it is because we cannot access it, visitors now go elsewhere).

The footfall has dramatically reduced.

Many shops have stated that they cannot survive because passing trade has stopped due to the road closure.

Outdoor pub and café seating is now totally deserted as the colder weather is here, so it is useable for about 13 weeks out of 52.

Where is the economic sense in that?

2 Business

Pre-Covid, Thornbury used to be buzzing. The businesses are now struggling through lack of passing trade.

3 Environmental

My understanding is that South Gloucestershire Council's environmental impact study will not be released until after the deadline has passed for the final decision on the High Street!

There are now >3000 extra vehicle movements every day on Rock Street, it is regularly gridlocked.

Many home owners in Midland Way have installed air purifiers and cannot open their windows.

4 Traffic Flow

The current situation is dangerous, with regular gridlock, buses overtaking buses on the very narrow Rock Street, junctions with reduced visibility. Several accidents have already occurred.

The new Traffic Orders, with a closure date for comments of 25th September 2021, were not only complex to interpret but also difficult to access online.

There was not one overarching plan that explained/showed the whole scheme.

My husband is an aerospace engineer, conversant with reading detailed plans, but it took us both several hours to interpret the plans and how they all joined together.

It was an excellent example of how to deter the lay-person from responding.

Where is the traffic flow modelling?

Please could Traffic Engineers model traffic flow for the centre of Thornbury, based upon:

- **one-way traffic flow**
- **one-way for cyclists**
- **southbound on the High Street for**
- **motorised vehicles and bicycles, including the bus route**
- **a bus stop in a layby at the western end of St Mary's shopping arcade**

- **20 mph speed limit**
- **parking on both sides of that one-way traffic lane**
- **adequate 30 minute parking to enable passing trade and those with mobility issues to visit the bank, post office, shop etc.**
- **outside seating to be dramatically reduced, as it is only used for 13 weeks a year and only benefits a few businesses, some of whom have gardens at the rear.**

This could be a logical, sensible and pragmatic compromise.

5. Social

The accessibility impact is immeasurable but I'm sure you have been inundated with the facts on this.

However, what does not get mentioned is that as a community we used to bump into friends and colleagues on the High Street. This no longer happens, it is so sad. It makes us less of a community.

Please ensure that the correct processes are adhered to and independent assessments are conducted and reported on BEFORE any final decisions are made.

Thank you and Regards

Jacqueline Howard

Statement 65 – Rob Galpin

Statement for WECA meeting on 28th January 2022 by Rob Galpin

- a resident of Thornbury

Originated, Checked, Reviewed and Authorised

The Outline Business Case had been through ten drafts and yet it is not even vaguely Fit for Purpose.

According to the Document History either Atkins or SGC have Originated, Checked, Reviewed and Authorised the Outline Business Case on each occasion

So, in theory it has been subject to close scrutiny 40 times in its history

How come, the OBC is littered with errors? Anyone with even a casual acquaintance with Thornbury and fair practice would have picked up many of these “errors”

It is unbelievable that such a shoddy document has been firstly produced and secondly deemed to be suitable as a basis to apply for Public Funding from WECA

Economic Appraisal

There are three periods that could be used for an Economic Appraisal

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| A. Pre-Pandemic 2019 or earlier | The High Street was thriving |
| B. Pandemic 2020 & 2021 | The High Street was being decimated by the pandemic but more relevantly SGC road closure and traffic diversion |
| C. Living with Covid 2024 onwards | Following proposed works to be completed in 2023 |

The Business Case is based upon comparison of periods B & C

Without doubt It should be based upon periods A & C

SGC’s brief has apparently instructed Atkins to use the incorrect periods. The reasons for this are best known to themselves. Could it be arrogance thinking that the everyone would rely on the headline figures without reading through the document and checking the facts?

The writers of the report then compounded the situation by use of unsuitable statistics, references and models – Please see Malcolm Best’s Statement for details

So, through a combination of arrogance and creative use of erroneous information the Business Case produced a wildly inaccurate and misleading figures in the Economic Appraisal to support SGC proposals

£700,000 has been spent to get to this stage and SGC propose to spend a further £4,000,000

If only a fraction of that sum was spent to refurbish the High Street it would leave £3m or £4m to provide safe walking and cycling routes from the fringes of Thornbury into the town centre!

Source of Funding

The Metro Mayor has consistently indicated that funds would only be released if SGC could show that a Full, Fair and Respectful Consultation had taken place with the community

SGC have recently and abruptly changed the route to apply for Funding of their project

Is this an admission that they realise consultations to date are not full, fair and respectful?

It is difficult to come to any other conclusion

Divisive

SGC thought that the community would appreciate their intervention at the start of the pandemic, supposedly to reduce the spread of covid, but with an ulterior motive of making the pedestrianisation, road closure and traffic diversion permanent

Toby Savage eventually admitted that SGC proposals were divisive

As time as goes on opposition to the proposals has grown. The public is experiencing at first hand the problems caused by the “temporary” measures and understands the underhand way in which SGC have acted throughout. This has brought the community together to fight SGC proposals

High Street Businesses

The Residents Association has recently conducted research with the High Street businesses to find out if and when SGC approached them regarding the viability of their business

I would appear that they were not approached either before introduction of the pedestrianisation, road closure and traffic diversion or subsequently

The Future

SGC should withdraw their bid for funding

The High Street should revert to the situation as it was in 2019

SGC should draw up new proposals for Thornbury based around a full, fair and respectful consultation

Only then should a bid for funding be considered

STATEMENT 66 – Ross Howard

The High Street should remain open to through traffic, possibly one-way, to allow for passing trade to keep the High Street vibrant.

My wife and I have recently bought a house in the centre of Thornbury and we see first hand how it has declined due to the ill-thought out closure of the High Street.

Before any more money is wasted destroying our community, please review the independent impact assessments that should have been carried out using valid information obtained prior to and after the application of emergency measures to close the High Street:

- Economic
- Traffic management
- Environmental

Only then, should any changes be considered.

Thank you

STATEMENT 67 – Brian Cason

Having written twice yesterday, may I draw your attention to this newspaper letter attached below. This cutting makes many points about the Thornbury High Street closure. I am aware that an outline Business Case is to be reviewed (This is at a meeting of the West of England Joint Committee will be held on Date: Friday, 28 January 2022 Time: 2.00 pm or immediately after the West of England Combined Authority Committee, whichever is the later Place: The Banqueting Room, Bath Guildhall).].

On the face of it some £4.577m is to be allocated to this Business Case including some £833k (22% of the Business Case overall estimated possible approval). It is noted that £229k has already been spent on Preparation and Project Management (PPM). **£833k (22%) is allocated to risk, this seems very large as £229k has already been spent on PPM.** No doubt the £229k has been spent on consultants and not the Local Government Officers (LGOs) costs - they (the LGOs) just let the contracts to a value of £229k to give them a perceived high risk project solution, that in many respects is not required. It is wondered if the costs include vat., are exclusive of vat. or indeed reflect which price base! (Note: figures obtained from Public Reports Pack attached)

This 22% of risk is disproportionate for a project which is basically a series of simple one-off infrastructure (turnkey civil works) additions/changes. It is hoped; that the Business Case will include a series of "firm priced" (not with price escalation clauses) costs, competitively sourced quotations to implement the work which can be traced back to the "required" requirement. Note that South Gloucester Council has made all the changes required, in their opinion, to close the High Street because it's now there for all to see, nothing seems to be temporary now.

It is known that a roundabout may be added at the Rock Street/Gillingstool Road "T" junction but was postponed. This seems to be expensive and not that risky in terms of a road infrastructure/street furniture project. My conclusion is that there must be more inappropriate changes to be added (along with the "unrequired" already in place Alfresco Dining, street art, barriers, signage, traffic rerouting, planters (only if a modal filter), markets & events, play areas (not yet), grants & subsidies, green spaces (not yet) and benches **that were not part of the requirement**). Perhaps the risk allocation is to account for poor Preparation and Project Management as SGC "stumbles on" more activities and changes to add to the High Street and its surrounding estate without really understanding what the end point is. It's like putting more and more sticking plasters on the mess that has already been made to justify the original decision.

Perhaps this risk is more about "uncertainty" in all the activities required and not understanding what "risk" is. In addition risk and uncertainty attracts an attendant timescale extension to a project - it is wondered what this is - is it 22% or more as this is not always a linear relationship? So when will this project end - the longer the project is the more resources it consumes.

This leads back to the fact that a detailed Investment Appraisal has not been done or that it was very scant. This is to review all the options (do nothing, do minimum, do all or some other option). This is to support the proposed Business Case costs, what is **justifiably** required to meet the requirement, prices agreed (to do the work), risk understood and appropriately reduced to a manageable margin of costs and time which is not 22% of project costs.

Is it Democratic?

There has **not** been a published document that details all those citizens that have not or have supported the High Street closure. Many consultations have been done together with the letters and correspondence sent to the MP and the Town Council to name but a few. An "open analysis" of these would give a more "visible, open and transparent" analysis of the true democratic support to this project - this perhaps would also give a measure for not continuing, save much money for something more useful or come to a less expensive compromise. Observing the conduct of SGC has suggested that citizens' opinions have not been well received, ignored or SGC are too arrogant to be bothered to understand them or their needs.

Now that the threat of COVID is receding (this is what started the High Street closure and expenditure) one could ask why maintain this closure. COVID preventative measures are being relaxed (including border controls) and thus any further expenditure is not now beneficial. Perhaps the best solution now is to leave the High Street as it is as a "memorial to COVID" and to those councillors who have "messed-up" without fully understanding or being bothered about what they have done or whether the spending so far was appropriate! It will cost to reverse the changes!

It is to be noted that this type of closure was not done in Chipping Sodbury (Local MPs constituency office at Chipping Sodbury). Nor was it done to Wotton-under-Edge to name but a few albeit WuE is not part of WECA. Both of these towns had plenty of scope for road closure, traffic diversion, the introduction of much street furniture and minor civil works projects.

Perhaps some of the above, and where appropriate could be fed into the discussion of the outline Business Case.

This is my email to Cllr Toby Savage, as referred to in email dated 10:37 dated 26/01/2022 Cason/Mayor@westof england-ca.gov.uk. I appreciate that it is detailed and long but unfortunately it's a complex matter that has been created by South Gloucestershire Council.

However the email does try to lead to points about what's been lost (eg disabled parking), what's been gained, why Alfresco dining, extra pollution and so on and to make comparisons about changes before and after and their consequential costs, their effectiveness, if they are necessary or even appropriate or could be spent on something else more useful and beneficial to the citizens.

Brian R Cason

Dear Cllr Toby Savage,

It is a concern that much finance, money, funds and effort has been spent (and will be) on the Thornbury High Street closure by South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) Further, it is clear that the announcement from Grant Shapps in May 20 (See Attachment A) only covered a narrow band of activities which was the enhancement of walking & cycling and pollution reduction.

Thornbury High Street is only 0.2km (or 0.12mils) long or less, if the shop area is included only as one end is residential. The High Street is wide including the pavements (not like Wotton under Edge with its narrow High Street) with a large green space called the Munday playing fields running parallel to the west of the High Street. St Marys Centre is on the east side with the large and small car parks (Rock Street) and Castle Court on the west side. Note that when the non-essential shops were closed along with restaurants, gyms, bars and cafes social distancing became easier as there was less footfall and traffic due to government order. No modifications were made to St Marys Centre and nor was Wotton-under-Edge (a narrower High Street but plenty of scope to divert and close it but it was not implemented). Perhaps there is a more diligent spending approach in Stroud.

From what is understood a similar set of measures were to be applied to Chipping Sodbury with plenty of scope (and real estate) for rerouting traffic (a bypass) and adding street furniture (similar to Thornbury) but this has not been done - maybe this is because the constituency office is located here for the local MP Luke Hall or is perhaps a recognised Market Town which will become apparent.

Reasons given for closing the High Street

Many reasons to close the High Street were offered by SGC. This was detailed in the "Changes to Thornbury High Street, Consultation Document", undated. This has resulted in:

- **Markets and Events** – but already done before COVID so why is this a reason to close? But a license was agreed before the closure consultation was agreed – why? There are also other parts of the Thornbury estate where this could be done such as the Chantry, the leisure centre, Turnberries and even the small car park. This was not part of Grants Shapp’s announcement;
- The markets encourage traders from other towns not part of SGC (Wales) so revenue is diverted from the indigenous Thornbury outlets from time-to-time – who gets the real revenue benefit and footfall? Note, that markets were already held in the St Marys Centre and the small car park on Saturdays (and continue to do so) before COVID;
- It is also noted that the recent Remembrance Day (2021) procession was cancelled - but why? The Cenotaph Remembrance Day in London went ahead! Part of the reason for closing the High Street was for "Markets and Events" and these have been held when COVID restrictions were more severe - seems a contradiction and a lack of understanding of what has been done!
- **Eating and Drinking outdoors aka “Alfresco Dining”** - but already done before COVID, but this becomes limited as the weather is seasonal. Note that many establishments could do this already as they had rear spaces – it is up to the establishments to make them more attractive but not take-up a road space. This was never part of the Grant Shapp’s announcement and there is not a benefit demonstrated that High Street revenues have been increased when compared, to before COVID;
- Traffic diverted around Castle Street and so on is making the journeys presumably longer – so that's more fuel used, time and emissions – compared to the original open High Street (I.e. before COVID) and is there a true saving to justify the costs of shutting the High Street – including emissions. Where is the evidence to demonstrate this;
- This extra traffic now has to pass school(s) and part of the announcement was reduce traffic at schools – so why was this done without understanding the wider implications of schools;
- A “rat run” has been created in Chapel Street when travelling north to avoid the two roundabouts (Tesco and Midland Way). No 16 Midland Way does block drivers' view when travelling south because the owners or the council allows its hedges/shrubs/trees to overhang on the highway but no one cares and nothing is done to rectify or improve

the situation. The closure has just highlighted a potential hazard that has been increased as buses (now rerouted) are travelling in both directions;

- **Green Spaces** More attractive green spaces in a closed High Street - try the Mundy Playing Fields. The High Street is less than 0.2km long so why and try a create one in the High Street where there is something else more extensive - the green spaces are elsewhere with more scope?!;
- **Street Art** Why is this required in a Market Town having listed buildings and a conservation area – what benefit does this really give – its a gimmick? Not part of Grant Shapp’s announcement;
- **Highway Works (Rock Street and High Street)** Last November a highway repair and resurfacing was done in Rock Street. This had to be done at night as the High Street was closed thus incurring greater costs as the work had to be done outside normal working hours – not a benefit in that sense. The costs could have been lower if the High Street was open;
- More work is planned for Rock Street and the Gillingstool Road “T junction” for a mini roundabout and for enhancements to the two bus stops in Rock Street (one opposite Aldi and one which is temporary by the large car park). Because the High Street is closed there is definite congestion in Rock Street as there is more traffic including two way buses. Another roundabout will make it worse (drivers do not understand roundabout protocol). No doubt this work will be more extensive than last Novembers and will have to be done at night with more costs and would be suspect and with very little measurable benefit. Note the buses avoid the High Street now so alighters and boarders miss the High Street leading to passengers losing contact with the High Street. Most people using the buses will come from the east side of Thornbury not the west as it is just fields (including the Mundays). By closing the High Street you have removed a group of potential shoppers in the working week. No doubt the “rat run” will increase when the new, proposed mini roundabout is introduced with the chance of avoiding two only to encounter the new one! So far no benefits has been articulated for this for before and after closure;
- What traffic assessments have been done to assess flow, emissions and extra journey time to establish if this High Street closure was effective before and after closure?;

- Note that a cost was expensed to hire traffic managers in place for around a month or more with their cabins when the High Street was first closed (May 20);
- **Drop-off, Parking and Loading** The closure has reduced disability parking and loading because “Alfresco Dining” has become the requirement. This must really annoy those users of these previous spaces before the High Street closure. Note that “Alfresco Dining” is a UK summertime activity so there is no real, justified benefit as the weather is not consistently fine and warm;
- **Walking and Cycling** The original consultation leaflet refers to the 1950s. This was of a time when Thornbury was, insulated off the A38, as a market town. Since then it has progressively expanded as peoples’ lives have become more complicated with higher demands on personal time. Transport is required to get to places quickly and efficiently because of time constraints – the High Street is not central as it was in the 1950s – have you not noticed that the small shops that sold items such as shoes, groceries, food, butchers, fishmongers, green groceries, bakers etc. have now long gone;
- Improved pavements and cycle parking – space is available for this, there is already plenty of existing space pre-closure. Note that cycling and walking should not be mixed. Bicycles are thin and short so do not really demand a lot of space to park. There is not a need to shut a road to find space to park a cycle;
- Those that are minded will cycle and walk if time or weather permits. Further, this can be extremely challenging due to the extensive distances, geography and terrain involved (also with small children and shopping). So has this really increased – where are the figures?!
- If one cycles to Thornbury surely then walking with a dismounted cycle/or parked is the aim with pedestrians – why is there a fascination to cycle with pedestrians or could the cyclists just bypass the High Street via Rock Street or use the Chapel Street rat run! If they were to stay they would dismount – no real benefit has been obtained and not required!
- There is two way cycling in the High Street but one way for a limited range of vehicles – seems confusing and creates a hazard and confusion – why do this?;

- People live in the High Street (or just behind it on the west side) and access is still needed to leave Thornbury – what consideration was given to them and is what is available now acceptable for them?
- What measures have been put in place to make cycling to Thornbury easier – any more cycle lanes, manhole and drain covers removed and why do pedestrians walk on the wrong side of the road when there is not a footpath/pavement - what has been done about that? Very difficult in poor weather and darkness cold etc.;
- So expanding on the above bullet, let's say that the extremities are Berkley, Wotton under Edge, Yate and Bradley Stoke and Severn Beach is the catchment radius to Thornbury – what has been done to make the journeys to Thornbury easier as it expands with its growing housing developments?;
- **Inducements to spend in the High Street** Why do I get leaflets (Thornbury Chamber of Commerce) in my door asking me to spend £5.00 in the High Street in a chance to win a raffle – sounds like the High Street shops are struggling now with the enforced closure by SGC – this is Thornbury Chamber of Commerce – so what do they know that you do not about retail revenues perhaps falling?;
- Why is there a need for Bee Trail Challenge/grants – this appears to be spending more money by SGC as the High Street is not now self-sufficient through the reduce footfall as the High Street has become more difficult to access – either a gimmick or a non-sustainable subsidy – why?;
- **"Street Furniture "** – much effort, time and resources have been spent and will continue to do so. This includes signage, benches, railings, cycle parking, planters and children's play area or a "beach". Don't forget the planters are now an additional cost as they have to be watered, replanted and looked after on an annual basis!
- **Pollution** - There has not been a comparison of how pollution (inc. noise) has been transferred from one zone to another over time including normal activity (pre and post COVID). This needs to be compared across Rock Street, Midland Way, Chapel Street, High Street, Castle Street and Gloucester Road. If there was it could be published and the evidence seen to see the effect of the closure and it is worthwhile;
- **Traffic Monitoring** - As understood some traffic monitoring was done in Aug 21 - a holiday period where traffic flows will be low and the results not published. A more meaningful approach would be to monitor over an extended period of normal activity otherwise there is no point in doing it. This is because comparisons can not be made and hence conclusions deducted from the data.

Thornbury High Street Leaflet – Attachment B

- **Leaflet Thornbury High Street** The leaflet is produced by SGC. This leaflet is silent on buses and all cars. While it does mention cycles there is not a need to cycle some 0.2km of High Street if cycling and walking must persist. If one has cycled to the High Street then get off and walk or use Rock Street to continue the journey. Surely walking and cycling together are not safe! Why cycle in such a short length of the High Street?
- More importantly the leaflet is incorrect and lacks attention to detail – “I wish I knew” where Barclays is positioned (Only moved to Thornbury recently!!) but luckily having lived here for 25 years or so it does become apparent. Perhaps if the SGC officials visited Thornbury by either cycling and walking only then they may see where their mistake is or perhaps actually see the mess that has been left by them or at least understand what they have done and not make this mistake again;
- The leaflet is misleading, it uses colouring and nomenclature which makes its obscure. Pictures of the road without buildings projects a wide open space which it is not. The leaflet does not show Rock Street /Gillingstool roundabout and the two bus stops which are to be funded by WECA – why is this?
- Furthermore, it is ambiguous as to what has to be done at the North End of the High Street - for instance is the pump to be removed? Why is there an art feature and why is the roundabout and bus stops not shown in the Gillingstool Road and Rock Street T Junction. This leaves one to wonder what else will SGC be imposing on to the High Street and surrounding area in an effort to spend and waste money in an attempt to to make this closure work and be acceptable for all;
- In summary, the whole picture of the High Street closure is not shown and residents are just fed bits and pieces in the hope that it goes unnoticed. While accelerating to a date of Jan 22 to impose all changes on a progressive implementation timescale which is not published.

- **Council tax** Why should Council Tax rise for 22/23, the council has a “black hole” in its funds as reported in the Spring 21. Why, along with many others, should this be paid for – your management of the finances has caused this – it is suggested that some compensatory savings are made and not passed on to others!

Grant Shapps – Announcement Attachment A

The reading of material suggests that the implementation has actually contradicted the guidance.

Network Management Duty Guidance

No comment

Reallocating road space: measures

None of this needs to be permanent because the High Street was already wide before COVID and COVID made distancing easier as businesses were closed.

There is no reference to the following: green spaces, railings, benches, street art, play areas and “Alfresco dining”. While there is reference to planters as a “modal filter” this, in the case of the High Street these have been used primarily to create "Alfresco Dining" areas which was not a requirement.

No allocation of cycle lanes and indeed on a market afternoon, cyclists are trying to weave around pedestrians – good job the pedestrians are not partially sighted! The road is less than 0.2km - park the bike, get off it or cycle via Rock Street if one is not staying and just passing through! At other times it is two way cycling and one way traffic but with no defined allocation of cycling lanes – a shambles and a safety event waiting to happen in such a small length of road – was it really necessary!

“The removal of social distancing requirements means that temporarily widened footways may no longer be needed in many places and authorities should consider removing these and reinstating the original road layout, including any parking bays. However, the potential to encourage walking and improve public spaces through retaining widened footways permanently should be carefully considered.” So it is possible to remove these temporary measures – it is to be noted that much money has been spent, so it will be difficult as SGC reputation will be lost as it will be expensive to remove or modify – obviously changes were done without understanding the cost if the retrospective changes have to be made – demonstrates little understanding of costs and decision making by SGC!

"Encouraging walking and cycling to school, for example, through the introduction of more 'school streets'. These are areas around schools where motor traffic is restricted at pick-up and drop-off times, during term-time. They have been effective in encouraging more walking and cycling, particularly where good facilities exist on routes to the school and where the parents, children and school are involved as part of the scheme development." This is in contradiction of diverting traffic through to Castle Street and hence to the schools.

Monitoring and Evaluation

"In assessing how and in what form to make schemes permanent, authorities should collect appropriate data to build a robust evidence base on which to make decisions. This should include traffic counts, pedestrian and cyclist counts, traffic speed, air quality data, public opinion surveys and consultation responses." So where is the actual data for this pre- and post COVID to make an informed financial decision? There are, depending on time of day and times of year, a nice long traffic queue in Rock Street. This is caused by the existing traffic lights and the Midland Way roundabout - further, the new roundabout will not reduce this as there is no evidence to show this as the cause is the closure of the High Street.

Other considerations

This section details many reasons for permanent, experimental, temporary, emergency “TROs, ETROs. TROs and TTROs” orders but there an overall theme is that they can generally be reversed but SGC have made them more than permanent making this harder because of the sunk costs;

Engagement and Consultation

- It is understood that some form of engagement and consultation has occurred. However the awareness of this consultation has been sparse because knowledge of the consultation only becomes known by accident if one stumbles on it by chance – or not directly - but by osmosis!
- The results of the consultations have not been published in a clear way. Just a “cut and paste”) which demonstrates that SGC has done the analysis and gives the appearance that it has acted upon it (I guess not done because of laziness, do not want to change or not enough time and therefore the closure should not have not started or be properly staffed). There the majority, individual comments that demonstrate what the residents desire are not implemented but only what SGC wants to impose regardless of feedback that may, or SGC thinks will contribute to cycling, walking and pollution reduction.
- So for instance, how does street art, children, play areas, green spaces and alfresco dining (not part of Grant Shapps announcement) meet cycling walking and pollution, has disabled parking (taken up by alfresco dining) met the need when compared to pre closure, buses not now routed through the High Street but now sent on a longer route via school areas. All of this done before if it is understood or if it is cost effective to do so. It would be true democracy and interactive engagement for local people if these measures can be shown to have met the requirement or indeed contribute in a beneficial way.
- “When implementing these changes, authorities need to consider the impact on all road users, taking into account the need to provide for increased walking and cycling. Different types of intervention will be appropriate in different areas of the country. For example, what is appropriate in urban areas (**including market towns**) may not be suitable in more rural areas where a large proportion of journeys are too long to be made on foot or by cycle and people are more reliant on private vehicles.” So was this section, not read taking into account that the High Street is less than 0.2km long and that it is the journey to Thornbury (from however far away) that perhaps may be more

important for cyclists and walkers is that the journey to and not at the place needs to be made safe.

- Yes consultation was carried out but as understood it was not in favour of the closure so why does it persist. Indeed, why was money spent on permanent features before the outcome of the consultation was known?
- This mentions disability but the number of disability spaces has been reduced presumably taken-up with “Alfresco dining” which is a transient event, taking into account the weather and not part of the requirement so why does it persist!

Conclusion It would have been better to have Done Nothing: then think, analyse and understand what any expenditure and resultant change measures would have done through some incremental changes along the lines of the following:

- Make the High Street a one way system, single lane entering from the north for all vehicles. This was already in place pre-closure for the buses who created some footfall – why was this not done – a least expensive measure but this has not been demonstrated?
- Some signage to divert vehicles to the short and long stay car parks from Thornbury Hill, Gillingstool Road and Gloucester Road, most towns do this – why not Thornbury – the signs are not well positioned or visible – this would aid traffic away from the High Street?;
- Reinstated as much as possible the unloading and disability spaces to the pre -closure levels – to demonstrate that pre-closure levels can be attained avoiding those complaining about the situation;
- Some smart signage for markets and events indicating High Street closure when required – markets and events are not permanent;

- Abandon the Rock Street mini-roundabout, bus stop enhancements and any other modifications that are in the pipeline, as they are not required and seem to be spending for the sake of it without measurable benefit – but do something about the shrubbery to increase driver visibility and hence safety for all. There is no analysis or evidence that it will remove the more prevalent traffic jams and queues since the High Street closure;
- Traffic calming measures such speed reduction are fine, in any setting and will also reduce emissions and noise without unduly extending journey time. Note that electric and gas powered vehicles are emerging – was any analysis done on just this without closing the High Street to an understanding of how funds could be spent?;
- Reorganise the street furniture added after the High Street closure to make a slightly wider one way lane to accommodate cycle parking, benches, alfresco dining where it is appropriate to do so when weather condition permits;
- Perhaps remember whose money it that it is spent without a real benefit without the full consideration of its consequential spending impact and perhaps identified where it could have been spent in a more beneficial way – however this cannot be done because SGC have spent, not done the prior analysis and then have just coped with its resultant impacts – it is just a range of subsequent sticking plasters to hold it all together with no tangible benefit;
- If more cycling and walking is required for this market town then why has the journey to Thornbury from its now extended radius of 0.2km retail section has not been considered of say up to a radius of say 10miles or 16km which is where the journey starts – so thinking about paths, less obstacles in the road (drains, manholes etc. and getting people to walk on the correct side of the road as detailed in the Highway Code has not been tackled – it is presumed that while they (the pedestrians) cannot see vehicles approaching they can at least hear them especially those silent electric vehicles to take evasive action if the driver does not when walking on the wrong side of the road;

- The council have followed an edit without really understanding what the consequences of the actions are to other users (retail, disabled, buses etc.);
- There is not a clear record of why these measures, to close Thornbury High Street have increased cycling and walking but also maintained the footfall through through buses, disability whether pre or post High Street closure – in general the observation is that footfall has reduced and that needs to be confirmed by facts and figures;
- As I write this today, I do not see many people “Alfresco dining” as the weather deteriorates permanently for around nine months. This is what this closure has been all about, (see Attachment C), rather than using the resources on more long term beneficial matters.

As leader of SGC, it seems that you or your officials have not really understood what is required. Resources have been spent without really understanding what the medium to long term implications are (just focused on the short term) or how they contradict with the Grant Shapps announcement and supporting documentation. This is because there does seem to be any supporting evidence of why these measures are effective for cycling, pollution and walking or indeed support a footfall level to pre-COVID levels. SGC have either chosen to ignore any consultations or have used the Grants Shapps announcement to impose, as cover or by stealth, a range of other, not required measures which can not be justified. There is not a detailed published report that explains why and why this has been beneficial or not beneficial or indeed how these measures are justified to meeting the need in the wider sense.

Attachment A - Grant Shapps Announcement Link [Traffic Management Act 2004: network management to support recovery from COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/traffic-management-act-2004-network-management-to-support-recovery-from-covid-19)

Attachment B – Leaflet – Thornbury High Street.

Attachment C – Update - social distancing measures for Thornbury High Street.

Attachment A <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities/traffic-management-act-2004-network-management-in-response-to-covid-19>

Brian R Cason

Statement for inclusion at WECA Joint Committee meeting 28 January 2022

South Gloucestershire Council is currently looking into part-funding the development of the Turnberries Community Centre, to replace the existing facility and theatre on the Armstrong Hall site in Chapel Street, adjacent to the High Street. This site is to be sold to further fund the Turnberries project.

The Armstrong Hall has a traditional proscenium arch style theatre with seating for 300 people, and full amenities. The historic Cossham Hall, on the same site, provides good acoustics suitable for music and cinema events.

This facility has the potential to provide considerable attraction to all-weather events and activities, which will bring more people into the High Street. By contrast, the specific locality of the Turnberries site beside the Rock Street car park means that people tend to return to their cars rather than venture further uphill to meander along the High Street.

A local group, the Armstrong Hall Action Alliance (AHAA), is working on an initiative to repair and reopen the amenities and manage them through the establishment of a social enterprise. This would tie in with the SGC vision, as stated here:

Page 11: *2.1.1 Development of the Permanent Scheme*

*The approach adopted for Thornbury High Street covers all key aspects defining a 'liveable place' as shown in the Place Diagram but focused on seven intervention types relevant to the local population and its historic market town context. This demonstrates the focused scope of the proposed scheme and recognises the fact that **realising the ultimate vision for Thornbury High Street requires a range of holistic investment and projects** including but not limited to what will be covered in the scope of interventions in this business case*

Page 16: *Table 2-3 – Strategic Objectives, outcomes sought.*

Point 3: ***Create a destination where people stay longer and spend more enjoying leisure and culture alongside retail.***

Page 197: (Atkins report Page 2) Background:

*The way people are interacting with local centres is changing from purely functional purposes to more complex ones (Wrigley et al, 2014). **The experience must start to incorporate more holistic approaches** than simply retail offerings in order to thrive (Living Streets, 2018).*

I request that the Committee ask SGC to support this local venture in principle, and to consider it alongside the development of the Turnberries site by means of a holistic review of arts and community facilities in the town with special regard to the impact on footfall in the High Street, whether it remains closed or reopens to traffic.

Thank you.

Jill Dimond

Thornbury resident

STATEMENT 69

I make this statement to express my deep concerns about the action of North Somerset Council in pressing ahead with its plans to build a Banwell Bypass, which will add very substantially to carbon emissions, and have an extremely damaging impact on the Council and WECA's aims to achieve net zero by 2030.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that this project has not been reviewed for its carbon cost, or the impact it will have on local and regional aims to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, which is contrary to provisions in the Joint Local Transport Plan 4, the WECA Climate Emergency Action Plan, and the North Somerset Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan requiring a review.

Appendix A of the WECA Action Plan states 'Review all proposed major transport schemes in the JLTP4 against the emerging evidence base for meeting our jointly stated ambition of carbon neutral emissions by 2030. JLTP4 contains several road schemes which may have an impact on carbon emissions. All schemes will be looked at in the context of the proposed physical infrastructure, the mode of transport, its effects on the wider transport network and the environment' and marks this as a short term action.

North Somerset's Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan states 'Assess all major council projects for their impacts on carbon emissions'. This has not been done, or if it has been done, there has been no public disclosure of this.

I would also like to draw your attention to the fact that the current plans for the Banwell Bypass project are not consistent with the project description which appears in Section 7 and the Case Study of the JLTP4, or the scheme details in the Housing Infrastructure Fund bid documents. This is extremely concerning, particularly as the project is being rushed through

The current Bypass plan design of the Northern route will feed existing traffic, induced traffic, and traffic from the 3,000 new housing units along the Bypass and on to the A368 East of Banwell, and then through the nearby villages of Sandford, Churchill and Winscombe. Previous Bypass design plans provided a direct link to the A38 across countryside.

The design of the current Bypass plan will increase traffic, congestion, air pollution, noise, road safety fears for walkers cyclists and protected groups, community severance, in 3 nearby villages, Sandford, Churchill and Winscombe, not mentioned in the JLTP 4 or HIF bid. The foreseeable

congestion on the A368 and A371 and adverse impact on the Strategic Road Network is not mentioned at all.

There has been no public consultation on the principle of the current Bypass plans. The only consultation so far has been a route options consultation ending in August last year. The Council intends to apply for and grant itself planning permission to build the Bypass later this year, aiming to complete the work by the Housing Infrastructure Fund deadline of March 2024. Environment, equalities and health impact assessments are incomplete, and the transport assessments and modelling have not been disclosed.

Looking objectively at the facts, there are many other good reason why WECA should not be including the Banwell Bypass project in its transport plans, and why it should be reviewed and rejected as part of the JLTP4 and the emerging JLTP5.

The 3.4 km Bypass and a new M5 junction 21A are part of a £66 million plan funded by the Housing Infrastructure Fund to build up to 3,000 new housing units on greenfield and floodplain north of Banwell village, increasing flood risk. The Southern Link Road of the Bypass goes through the Mendip Hills AONB, a groundwater protection zone, and a rare protected horseshoe bat habitat. The Bypass will reduce traffic, congestion and air pollution through Banwell, but traffic including HGVs will still be able to drive through Banwell village centre, and traffic regrowth occurs on bypassed roads in the long term. The Bypass project will increase traffic, congestion and air pollution through Sandford, Churchill and Winscombe, on the A368 and A371 and sideroads, and adversely impact the Strategic Road Network.

When the HIF bid was put in, the housing was referred to as 'Banwell Garden Village', part of the Joint Spatial Plan, which was subsequently rejected by two Housing Inspectors.. Both North Somerset Council's new Local Plan Transport Assessment (AECOM), and the Transport for New Homes Report 'Garden Villages and Garden Towns: Vision and Reality' predict that this housing will be a car-dependent commuter estate. This means that on top of the Bypass embodied carbon, there will be the added carbon emissions of literally thousands more cars, each year, once that housing is built. Further development within the M5 -A38 corridor north of Banwell is also enabled by the Bypass. which sets a trend for car dependency and increased car use, going directly against WECA and North Somerset's stated aims to reduce car use and transport emissions, for the foreseeable future.

I was encouraged when Bristol, WECA and North Somerset Council declared a Climate Emergency, and when WECA decided to accelerate its Action Plan. As someone who is very concerned about what climate change will mean for my grandchildren, and as a Sandford resident, I was appalled to discover just how damaging the Bypass project is, in so many ways.

I was encouraged to hear that Mayor Dan Norris opposes new roads on the grounds that they cause yet more traffic and do not cure congestion, precisely the issues which mean this extremely damaging project should be reviewed and ruled out.

It seems entirely wrong to me that the positive carbon reduction planning by WECA should be damaged by North Somerset's decision to go ahead with an extremely outdated and damaging Bypass project, which will set a trend for yet more roads and more unsustainable housing on greenfield, and is a betrayal of the efforts of community members like myself who are reducing their own carbon footprints.. The climate emergency is worsening, not getting better.

I am making this statement as an individual who is also a member of Sandford Neighbourhood Group, who will continue to ask North Somerset Council to review the Banwell Bypass project.

I ask for this statement to be read out on my behalf please, due to the pandemic related issues involved in attending the WECA meeting on the 28th January 2022

Signed

Cresten Boase

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