

PADSTOW TOWN COUNCIL: 30 JUNE 2020

AGENDA ITEM 18: REOPENING OF TOWNS

- 1. Monday 15 June 2020** saw Government allow non-essential retailers to reopen.

In preparation for this the Town Council:

- Opened Railway Car Park Public Conveniences from Friday 12 June 2020 (7 days a week; 10 am to 4 pm (2 pm on quieter days). Fully risk assessed and regular cleaning imposed and undertaken. Social distancing measures put in place.
- Cancelled all bandstand performances from June to September 2020 as not to put further pressure on our town with gatherings/social distancing.
- Liaised with Cornwall Council to assist in advice and provide appropriate signage, especially around social distancing.
- Liaised with Cornwall Council Richard Buscombe, CALC, other parish/town councils in ways to assist and help during this time.
- Took stock of seating in and around the town and removed/resited seating where appropriate.
- Public information signage in all our shelters in respect of social distancing.
- PPE ordered, sanitation units etc. Car Park machines cleans being made and sanitation stations available on cash taking machines.

- 2. Saturday 4 July 2020** will see further relaxation measures from Government to allow for further businesses to open, such as pubs and restaurants, as well as holiday accommodation. However, as we understand it some local campsites/caravans are not opening or part opening i.e. statics/self-contained only. We are expecting to see an influx within our town during this time. There has been some concern voiced in how this can be best managed, what can be done for our town during this time. Some evening asking to close car parks to stop people coming. As we know people will come and just park on verges or outside people's homes. There is very much a fine line between welcoming visitors to support our businesses during this time, but also the concern we know which is felt in our community around a potential second-wave with the influx we may see. Furthermore, as we know as a local Town Council, we don't have any powers of enforcement.

- 3. Road Closure:** Councillors would have already been sent a proposal from one business on a road closure (Appended to this report). Cornwall Council are the authority to grant road closures however, the Town Council (as well as anyone else) can make a request, ensuring appropriate safety measures are in place, as well as our public liability insurance. However, Cornwall Council as its on their highway would need to be happy with the proposal before granting any permission.

I have liaised with both Cornwall Councillor Richard Buscombe, the Harbour Master and have also sought advice from a Transport Officer on the proposal put forward and also any thoughts on potential closures. As Council will know Padstow does not have a Chamber of Commerce, so ascertaining the views of businesses isn't possible. The Town Clerk has also tried to contact the local TIC to ascertain their views, but it was not possible to reach anyone. The following was raised/mentioned:-

- Councillor Buscombe's view is that initiatives such as widespread road closures and pedestrian schemes should only be carried out after much thought and consultation with those effected whether they be businesses and residents. He also advised of other areas he was aware of back tracking on their road closures as there wasn't the general consensus of the towns.
- The Transport Officer had commented that:-
 -there is no simple solution in diverting traffic in Padstow, the attached proposal would only ever be suitable for a small cars, as Strand Street and the turn onto Lanadwell Street is problematic for anything bigger;
 - The brief is to assist and facilitate wherever possible with the main steer coming from the Town Council on what would actually work and what you feel is supported from a local community/traders prospective.
 - A road closure doesn't necessarily need to be manned a full closure can be achieved with signs and barriers, several of the other Towns which are in my area are currently operating 10-4pm closures on specific streets, or reversing this during the evening and closing streets for food & drink, it appears to be a real work in progress with a lot of the plans I have been involved in and usually it isn't until its implemented do you actually know whether it will work or not, or will require some amendments.
 - We can certainly arrange signing an information boards stating the times if that's an option that is preferred in Padstow and we would want to work with the Town Council once anything is installed on site, with regards to putting up taking down and daily checks as necessary.
 - From my prospective I happy to advise on any firm proposals the Town Council have, once confirmed that they are appropriate from a Highway Authority prospective we can implement straightaway (subject to some signs being made up), so a closure can be implemented as an Emergency, this then gives us 3 weeks to then apply for a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) which we can use for up to 3 months for anything more permanent that could see us through the main holiday season.
- The Harbour Master raised the following:-
 - Particular concern with the proposed traffic route through Middle Street and Mill Road in that this is a very narrow part of the town with increased traffic going past the lifeboat land rover response garage, if this area is busy or blocked with traffic then it could not be able to respond quickly to an incident;
 - Queried how the other side of town would work i.e. if over on North Quay how could you leave the area with the proposed road closure in place. Would this be back along one way system and through their car park?
 - When discussing other possible solutions, he commented on difficulty of traffic, particular larger vehicles would have through Commercial Terrace, remarked on camper van being stuck there and subsequent issues and traffic blocked behind.

Things to think about if Padstow Town were to have a road closure:

- Whilst completely understanding as to why the business who contacted us is keen to see a road closure in place, it is difficult to see what would work best for the town, particularly as although temporary, it will be in place for a sustained time.
- Its difficult to seek all businesses views, there is no Chamber of Commerce in Padstow. We have not been contacted by any other business about a road closure, one did contact us but more around what are we

doing on social distancing and this was mentioned. We are also unsure of likely impact a road closure could have on the issue of street trading, it may well exacerbate the issue, inviting more to our town?

- The proposal put forward puts vehicular traffic down narrow roads which are well used by pedestrians, especially Mill Road (public walking down from Hill Steps) which does not have pavements, Middle Street is busy with various other businesses that would be affected by the traffic more so than usual, the Spar/Post Office would be affected. This proposal has been sent to Transport Officer at Cornwall Council for their advice. As it stands it does not seem like a viable solution.
- Some businesses may be keen to extend their businesses outside, which again is understandable, indeed there has been a lot of this in the press.

4. Possible Way Forward?

- If any proposal is put forward for a road closure, as Cllr Buscombe outlined it needs careful management and engagement. We are hearing some towns back peddling on their original road closures, as this didn't happen. Also careful through as to why it should be closed. Councillor Buscombe commented that perhaps a wait and see might be advisable, we don't truly know what to expect.
- What could be done if no road closure? Perhaps approaches should be made to Cornwall Council to remove allowing to park (concessions given for deliveries) in some narrower/expected busier areas so that people don't have to walk around parked cars and furthermore there is more space:

- Duke Street;
- Middle Street;
- The square (opposite the fish and chip shop as impacting on queuing)

Other parking areas could still be kept as street wider, parking directly outside of the chemist to be maintained, as this is important as people will need to access the chemist and collect prescriptions that may have difficulty walking into town. There may well be summer time restrictions in place already but this could be an option, but CC would need to agree to the same.

CC has confirmed that it can suspend some parking by implementing barrier on site closing the parking areas off, in some areas we have still allowed access to disabled parking as necessary, but closing the parking off with barrier will then **create more space for pedestrians/queuing in the highway**, again this is done using the emergency powers and then a TTRO is submitted if this is going to take place for longer than the 3 week period.

- Road signage at key points as you arrive into Padstow: This would involve CC support, but something to perhaps ask that people avoid driving through our town to help the public to maintain social distancing. CC has provided one sign for us, placed as you drive around the quay side, asking people to be careful as people in the road.

5. Other Measures

In preparation for Saturday 4 July 2020, what have we/could we actively do:-

- Toilet times to be revised to be able to be open longer.
- Once North Quay toilets are completed to open the disabled and family room (timing determined when signed off) [NB: *initial risk assessment on*

both Cory and North Quay is that we could not open them due to concerns with the public not being able to safely manage social distancing]

- Hand sanitiser units to be placed on the bandstand and outside of the TIC [*this to be confirmed once spoken to them*]. PPE is taking awhile to arrive, months, however, we do have a couple spare units we could utilise at this time.
- Signage now put up in the town to encourage and remind of social distancing. More signage to be put up in other areas to remind – not over the top.
- Public information leaflet being pulled together by PTC staff, to be copied in house, to be put on social media and PDFs emailed out to key contacts to copy. This is being drafted and therefore I would request final signed off by Town Clerk in consultation with Chairman and Vice-Chairman if this is considered worthwhile doing – it's to welcome people to Padstow put a reminder of how to keep safe, social distance, wash your hands, key contacts if concerns etc
- We have been receiving various enquiries on "what are PTC doing" – a lot is out of our control and we have no jurisdiction. The towns who have been working more with their businesses have active Chamber of Commerce in place or BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) which are not-for-profit companies responsible for delivering a number of innovative projects that aim to improve the trading environment of Falmouth. They are set up for this and actively encouraging trade to their towns.
- Some concern being raised is that Padstow will be too busy – and what are the Council doing about that i.e. trying to dissuade people coming into own town.

6. Council's View:

- i) Are Council supportive of measures as outlined in item 5 above, in particular a public leaflet?
- ii) What are Council's views in respect of the road closure request made and possible way forward (item 4) thoughts on this or other ideas to take forward?

Proposal to temporarily pedestrianise parts of Padstow Town Centre

1 Background

The Government has set out a draft timetable and associated rules for the gradual easing of lockdown following the Covid-19 pandemic. These will require continued social distancing, the use of Personal Protective Equipment and increased sanitisation.

2 The problems

- Recovery from COVID-19 will demand social distancing.
- Visitors will need to avoid each other as they use the amenities and browse the shops.
- The pavements are not able to cope with current visitor numbers and the roads become a pedestrian extension.
- Queues are expected outside shops as customers wait until being allowed in
- Any vehicles using the town centre roads will cause pedestrians to have to move much closer together
- Restaurants, bars and pubs will need more space to achieve viable numbers.
- Daytime congestion (in season) makes it difficult to drive through the town after 10am
- The risk of road accidents is ever-present.

3 Proposed Solution

Pedestrianise the Town Centre for normal retail/eating/drinking activities:

- Allow delivery vehicles into Padstow between 11pm and 10am.
- Vehicles discouraged from the Town Centre after 10am
- Pedestrianise selected streets from 10am until 11pm (suspending parking bays)
- Allow retail businesses to define queuing areas outside their premises
- Permit hospitality businesses (restaurants, pubs & bars) to place tables, chairs, umbrellas etc in the street (within defined boundaries)
- Ensure pedestrian walkways for browsing/shopping

The Government has relaxed procedure for setting up traffic free areas in recognition of this requirement to recover from the impact COVID-19.

British Improvement Districts (BIDs) Loans are available from Cornwall Council.

An initial proposal for the scheme is set out at Annex A.

4 Precedents

- Bristol is implementing plans for pedestrianisation in response to COVID-19
- Manchester implemented more pedestrianisation in just one week.
- Vilnius (Lithuania) is allowing a large part of the city to be used for outdoor seating specifically to address the post-Coronavirus requirements for physical distancing
- Soho in London is considering temporary pedestrianisation for this summer.
- Falmouth and St Austell already have pedestrianised areas that have timed vehicle access.
- Wadebridge, Looe, Redruth all have existing pedestrian areas.

5 Timescale

- Introduce the scheme as soon as possible, for the remainder of the 2020 season (if appropriate).
- Assess whether the scheme improves amenity, access and popularity of the town after a trial and consider an extension of the pilot for the 2021 season (Easter to October). This will allow the benefits to be fully assessed against a potentially 'back to normal' situation later in 2021.

6 Possible concerns

Concern	Possible solutions
Deliveries can't be achieved before 10am	Delivery companies will be familiar to this new requirement in towns with existing pedestrian areas.
Residents can't get to their property	There are very few residents in the proposed area. We would ask them to abide by the same timetable as delivery companies
Visitors can't get to the front door of the property they've rented	This is the case in many European cities with extensive pedestrian areas. They find a way.
There will be rubbish in the streets	Businesses must be liable for keeping their space clean, as they already are now
Suspended parking bays mean difficulties for shoppers	Most shoppers are sufficiently able-bodied to use the town's car parks
No disabled parking	Create temporary parking for disabled residents/visitors on the South Quay
The street will be made too narrow due to tables and chairs	This is manageable by strict walkways, and preferable to pedestrians being squeezed together to pass a vehicle
It will look unsightly	Define simple parameters for business to follow so there is sufficient uniformity and pleasing aesthetics. Potted trees/shrubs to delineate queuing areas, seating areas etc
Through traffic can't get up Mill Road	A flat-bed van regularly uses the route for rubbish removal from restaurants. However, large vehicles may need to be banned after 10am.
Certain establishments won't be able to have outdoor seating under these proposals	True, there are some roads that must be kept clear for through traffic and access to the North Quay. The solution would be to deny access to all traffic after 10am.
Emergency vehicles can't access where they need to get to	Most areas can be accessed quickly from the South Quay. Any access to properties on pedestrianised streets would need to be achieved by moving outdoor furniture. Although a sub-optimal solution, the incidence is thought to be extremely low and statistics should be investigated

- Middle street
- Mill Road
- Strand Street

Unchanged to preserve access to North Quay

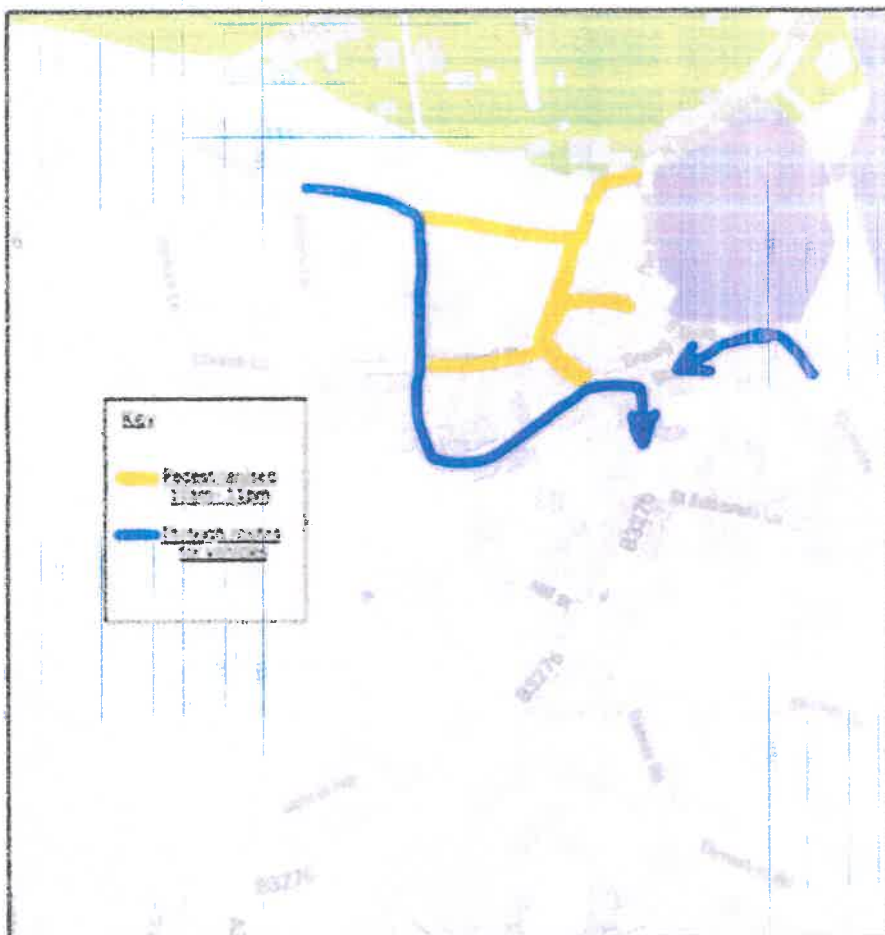
- South Quay
- The Strand

Annex A

Requirements

- Permit vehicle access for deliveries up to 10am each day, 7 days a week.
- Ensure access for through traffic is maintained
- Define access for emergency vehicles

****These are our initial thoughts and only a first draft which requires input from others****



Pedestrian Streets

- Duke Street from the junction with Middle Street
- Mill square
- Market Street
- Lanadwell Street
- Market strand
- Broad Street

Through traffic