

## Thornbury High Street

### Why is the work happening?

The works are part of a programme of investment in Thornbury agreed by South Gloucestershire Council in 2022 to:

- support the recovery from the pandemic
- embrace opportunities from active travel
- support local jobs
- boost the local economy
- make the High Street a central, attractive, accessible place for the whole community
- invest in electric charging for vehicles

The works are part of a programme of investment in Thornbury, to support a sustainable High Street that is fit for the future, improve air quality, make it easier for people to walk and cycle to and from the High Street, and around the town, and improve parking for residents, businesses and visitors.

### What is the vision?

Cabinet unanimously voted to support the vision report with one additional recommendation to include blue badge parking within the High Street.

It is not full pedestrianisation and aims to further enhance the current experimental scheme. Officers are working with the community and local stakeholders to implement this vision.

A high street that is:

- welcoming for all
- provides retail, residential, leisure and culture; encouraging people to stay longer and enjoy all that the town has to offer
- supports walking and cycling whilst maintaining the high provision of free car parking in the town
- one way motorised vehicle access that enables access for those living on the High Street and supports the economic activity of the High Street including loading/unloading and pick up/ drop off points
- through traffic will remain prohibited

## **What elements are in scope of the project?**

We are delivering a three-phase project.

- The High Street – high quality materials and street furniture, support for sustainable travel, green infrastructure, access for all to included dedicated parking, loading/unloading for deliveries, limited time pick up bays for collections, click and collect services.
- Network Improvements – Bristol Road, Midland Way, Rock Street.
- Car Park upgrades – St Mary Street, resurfacing and lining. Rock Street, resurfacing and lining, electric vehicle charge points and ducting to future proof the car parks, green infrastructure to improve air quality, the environment and to provide shade.

## **What is the difference between the interim and the future scheme?**

The council have used temporary, low-cost solutions to retrofit the existing High Street. In the permanent high-quality scheme, all the paving will be replaced with natural stone, all tarmac and lining will be re-laid, street furniture will be replaced, new planting and a bus shelter.

The look and feel of the high street will be consistent and reflect the historic market town.

## **Why can't we go back to two-way traffic or a one-way system?**

On the 7 June 2021 following a 6-month consultation on the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and early stakeholder engagement South Gloucestershire Council agreed to support a vision for Thornbury High Street.

The vision is for one way access only. The report considered three additional options:

- full pedestrianisation
- two way traffic
- one way traffic

It was agreed that these options did not deliver the required benefits for business, active travel, increased footfall or dwell time.

## **What evidence do you have that these schemes work?**

This is set out in the report presented to Cabinet June 2021, this can be found on our webpage, in the project timetable section [www.southglos.gov.uk/Thornbury](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/Thornbury)

## **Why is there 2-way access for cyclists?**

Cycling is one of the sustainable modes of travel we are trying to promote, we are therefore committed to ensuring they are not disadvantaged by the scheme.

It is appreciated there are concerns regarding the behaviour of some of the cyclists but unfortunately, we are unable to influence this.

However, our proposal is to direct cyclists where they should be by placing cycle markings on the roadway directing northbound cyclists through the one-way section, whilst

southbound cyclists will use the road as they do now, clear signage will be erected at the gateway points advising cyclist where to enter and exit.

Cycling on the footways will continue to not be permitted, cyclists accessing any of the new cycle parking should dismount safely and walk their bikes to these points.

### **How will you reduce the speed of cyclists?**

The layout of the road and street furniture will naturally slow cyclists, it will be obvious in the permanent scheme that they are entering a pedestrian prioritisation scheme.

### **Can electric scooters be used on the High Street?**

No one can use an electric scooter legally on the highway unless it is part of the e-scooter trials. The WECA trial South Gloucestershire Council is part of, operated by VOI, has not extended to Thornbury.

It remains illegal to use a privately purchased e-scooters on our roads and paths and the police have indicated they will confiscate and destroy scooters where persistent offending occurs.

### **Is skateboarding permitted on the High Street?**

A skateboard, conventional push along scooter or balance bike are not classified as a vehicle so do not come under the same restrictions a pedal cycle would, so may be used anywhere unless specifically prohibited. However, the police have powers if their use is causing a public nuisance or damage.

### **Who can access the High Street?**

Anyone can access the one-way section of Thornbury's High Street if they have a valid reason such as:

to access a parking bay, loading bay, disabled bay or off-street parking accessible only from that road

to load or unload to or from premises on or adjacent to the road

to set down or pick up passengers.

### **When will the bus return to the High Street?**

South Gloucestershire Council are working with public transport providers and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) to enable the return of bus services to the High Street.

We believe that this is likely to happen after construction on the High Street is complete.

It can be challenging to communicate changes to bus service routes throughout a construction period.

## **Where can I park in Thornbury during the works?**

Thornbury has a range of parking options. There are three free to park car parks, offering a mix of long stay and short stay parking, within walking distance of the High Street:

- Rock Street
- St Mary's Street car park
- Castle Court
- Thornbury leisure centre – temporary park and stride facility

The car parks offer a range of short and long stay parking, blue badge parking, parent and child spaces, motorcycle parking and electric charging points.

## **Is parking available on the High Street during construction?**

For the majority of construction, the marked parking, loading and limited waiting bays will be available, however there may be times when specific bays will need to be suspended. This will be signed.

Parking will be suspended overnight.

## **Can we park on the pavements on the High Street?**

Please do not park vehicles on the newly constructed pavements. Parking on the pavements can lead to severe damage to the slabs, resulting in additional maintenance work and potential disruption to Thornbury High Street.

The newly laid pavements have been carefully designed and constructed and the slabs used were chosen to withstand regular foot traffic and provide a smooth and aesthetically pleasing surface for all users.

Parking vehicles on the pavement places excessive weight and pressure on the slabs, causing them to crack, break, or sink. Please use the designated parking areas and loading bays.

## **Temporary crossing points on the High Street**

During the construction work on the High Street we have erected temporary barriers and fencing. We have been in conversation with the local community, businesses and our Equality and Accessibility group to address any concerns when they have been raised with us. Following feedback, we have installed additional access points with ramps to allow people to park in Blue Badge bays and access the pavement more easily. We will not be installing any additional crossing points.

## **I'm a business or a resident on the High Street, how do I receive deliveries during construction?**

During construction access for deliveries will not be permitted overnight. The council will typically work on site Monday to Friday, however occasional Saturday working will be required. The construction team will work twilight shifts, this is 6pm – 2am this working arrangement will minimise the impact on businesses and residents.

## **Can business remove the barriers for access?**

The temporary barriers along the High Street are for the safety of all network users and construction workers involved in the ongoing works. Please do not remove or move the barriers during the works to ensure the safety and smooth progress of the project.

## **I run a business on the High Street, will you pay compensation for any loss of earnings during the work?**

The general rule is that there is no automatic or statutory provision for compensation to be payable by the highway authority if a business is affected by roadworks.

However, there is potential relief from business rates available if business premises are affected by severe local disruption.

The Government's website contains information regarding claiming for a business rates reduction in the form of hardship relief:

[www.gov.uk/apply-for-business-rate-relief/hardship-relief](http://www.gov.uk/apply-for-business-rate-relief/hardship-relief)

Our website also contains information on how to apply for hardship relief:

[www.southglos.gov.uk/business/business-rates/businessrates-reductions/financial-hardship-relief](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/business/business-rates/businessrates-reductions/financial-hardship-relief)

If you think you may be eligible you should arrange your own representation for further advice on how and when to make a claim.

## **How will Emergency Services access my property during construction?**

The emergency services are notified about temporary traffic regulation orders (TTROs) and in most circumstances will follow the diversion routes.

If there is an emergency within the works, the construction team will work with the emergency services to allow safe access.

## **What controls are in place for works undertaken late into the evenings, how is the noise being minimised?**

We have written to residents to explain when the works are being carried out and why. We need machines to operate in order to eliminate as much manual handling as possible, controls for this include avoiding excessive idling.

The reversing beepers on vehicles operate on white directional noise and unfortunately, we can't turn these off particularly during night works where the level of risk is increased.

We need to cut the paving slabs at night to ensure we can get footways back open the next working day.

The cutting operation is bunkered against a large wall to contain the noise, which is additionally insulated with noise insulating blankets along the three sides that face the urban areas.

### **Is there a noise management plan are noise levels being monitored and recorded?**

Regular noise monitoring is undertaken and a supervisor is available throughout the night shift to ensure that the working times are adhered to and that the appropriate noise mitigation measures are put in place, maintained and adhered to.

### **Can I have an event on the High Street during construction?**

It will not be possible to have events on the High Street during construction. Events encourage people to gather and the number of attendees at a public event is often unknown or uncontrolled. The construction site, on the High Street, will be secured and safe, however space will be limited.

We are committed to supporting events in Thornbury during the construction work on the High Street. If you are interested in holding an event, please contact the High Streets team [highstreets@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:highstreets@southglos.gov.uk)

### **How does construction impact on Thornbury in Bloom?**

The council are committed to supporting Thornbury in Bloom during construction and have engaged with the voluntary group to discuss and agree options for the 2023 display.

### **How does construction impact on the Christmas Lights?**

The council will support the Christmas lights during construction and will engage with the voluntary group to discuss and agree options for the 2023 display.

### **How will I access meetings in the Town Hall?**

Access on foot will not be affected during construction.

### **How has the council engaged with the public?**

As part of the Thornbury Investment Project the council has undertaken a wide range of public facing engagement and ongoing communication. This has enabled the council to make balanced, informed decisions and recommendations to develop a final High Street plan that meet the needs of the community.

At key stages throughout the evolution of the scheme the public have been invited to look at and explore the plans and vision for the High Street.

### **How does the council work with stakeholders?**

The project team have regular communication and attend meetings with key stakeholders in the town, including:

- Thornbury Town Council
- The Chamber of Commerce
- The Town Centre Partnership
- St Mary Centre
- Local police
- Local and neighbouring councillors

This has been an opportunity for us to provide updates and for questions and discussions about the project.

### **How did the council work with equalities groups?**

The project team established a Thornbury Accessibility and Equality working group in July 2021. The group is made up of local people with disabilities and representatives from community groups who work with people with disabilities. The group meet regularly, to help shape the plans, to ensure that the future High Street is accessible for all.

The group have agreed a range of actions that ensure the High Street is accessible to all to include the return of bus provision on the High Street, enforceable blue badge parking bays, level access and improved crossing points.

### **How does the council support businesses on the High Street?**

The council have provided a range of business grants and support through the work of the Regeneration Team and wider Economic Development team, that aim to boost the local economy, increase footfall and support businesses to thrive and flourish beyond the pandemic.

The project team has worked with local businesses and organisations to support events and markets and promote them within Thornbury and more widely to raise the profile of the town and its High Street.

### **How do you engage with the newly formed Residents Association (TTaDRA)?**

We have engaged with The Residents Association through face-to-face engagement sessions, digital communication, informal requests, and Freedom of Information requests. The council are committed to responding to new routes of enquiry that seek to resolve and address concerns or provide clarification of information.

The Council met face to face with the Residents Association on the 17 March 2022 to share the latest information about the project. The council are happy to include the Residents Association in their regular stakeholder updates.

### **How has the council supported the Christmas Lights Committee?**

The council has worked closely with the Christmas Lights committee, meeting in July 2022 to discuss ways we could support the lights and switch on event, during the interim scheme 2022, and to understand how the lights would be supported as the council design and deliver the permanent scheme.

In 2022, the council provided free of charge support for the 2022 flick on event, installing an external electrical socket and host/member of staff to assist with taking down the lights display. The project team acted as first point of contact for the event. The council promoted the event through its social media channels and have offered to support the recruitment of new volunteers.

The design of the permanent scheme will allow the Christmas Lights Committee switch on event to accommodate the stalls and fairground rides as in previous years.

### **Did the council engage with the Chamber of Commerce?**

Yes, the council has provided regular updates to the Chamber of Commerce throughout the scheme. The Chamber of Commerce are a key stakeholder representing the views of a wide range of businesses on the High Street. The Chamber of Commerce have also been awarded funding to support the delivery of their valuable service to the High Street and have been involved in events that support the local economy and increase footfall.

### **Did the project team work with internal stakeholders?**

Yes, throughout each stage of the project the delivery team worked with a range of colleagues, teams and departments to ensure that the project delivered a wide range of shared benefits and added value. The internal team came together for a design workshop January 2022 to ensure that the project team made balanced, informed decisions.

The internal stakeholder team includes:

- Conservation – to ensure that the design reflected the traditional market town.
- Green Infrastructure – to deliver creative opportunities to improve air quality, access to sustainable travel, provide shade to mitigate the impact of global warming, allow wildlife to thrive and to support positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Civil enforcement – to monitor and enforce the Traffic Regulation Orders
- Licencing – providing support for events and outdoor hospitality.
- Street Cleansing – to improve the efficiency of the collection services and cleaning for the High Street.
- Streetcare – to ensure that the high-quality design and construction programme delivers a scheme that is fit for the future and incorporated in future routine maintenance programmes.
- Public Transport – to support with the design of bus infrastructure and liaise with public transport providers to facilitate the return of services to the High Street.
- Equalities – to ensure that the scheme improves access for people with disabilities.
- Legal – support in the Traffic Regulation Orders and Temporary Road Closures for events.
- Communications – to share news about the project, promote events on the High Street and, to ensure that stakeholders receive relevant and timely information on the project.

### **How have you supported community events during the interim scheme?**

We are working with businesses and community groups to support events in Thornbury.

We work with Green Top Events, to support the monthly market which has temporarily relocated to the St Mary Street car park during the construction period on the High Street.

We supported local businesses and The Chamber of Commerce with the Queen's Jubilee event, a local charity with the Fun Palaces event, we worked with local businesses with the Summer Stories in the Square and treasure hunt. We worked with and supported the Thornbury Christmas Lights Association and local businesses with our High Street Christmas Spirit campaign promoting events on the High Street.



### **What next with regards to engagement and consultation?**

The council have completed all consultation and engagement. The feedback has helped to shape the final plan.

The council is now entering the delivery phase of the programme and construction, as a result there are no further opportunities to consider any further changes.

### **Where should questions about the Thornbury High Street project be addressed to?**

South Gloucestershire Council is the primary authority responsible for overseeing and managing the Thornbury High Street Project, including the construction works.

Any inquiries, concerns, or matters related to the construction works should be directed to South Gloucestershire Council, not Thornbury Town Council. South Gloucestershire Council is the designated point of contact for matters pertaining to the project's development, progress, and any issues that may arise.

To ensure a streamlined communication process and effective management of the Thornbury High Street Project, it is advised that any queries or concerns specifically related to the construction works should be directed to [highstreets@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:highstreets@southglos.gov.uk)