

Making public places **safer**

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Making public places **safer**



Foreword

by **Dave Perry** – Chief executive, South Gloucestershire Council

We are still at a critical point in the COVID-19 pandemic and it is vital that everyone continues with social distancing, practicing good hand hygiene as well as self-isolation at home and getting tested if they have symptoms in order to manage the spread of the virus.

By following these guidelines we will be able to continue easing measures when safe to do so and reduce the potential need for further restrictions to be put back in place due to new outbreaks. A key element of this is the environmental measures we are putting in place at pace, working with local communities where we can, and we ask for your support in this.

As a council, we have been directed by government to introduce measures as quickly as possible which will help make social distancing in public places easier.

We have already introduced a number of simple measures such as clearing vegetation to maximise the width of cycling and pedestrian paths and social distancing markers on pavements outside schools. Some schemes will have a bigger impact such as pedestrianising town centres or creating pop-up cycle lanes in pinch point areas.

As well as helping to control the virus, these measures will also help 'lock in' some of the positive changes we have seen during this time such as an increase in cycling and fewer cars on the road. Our vision is to encourage more people to continue active and healthy lifestyles and help reduce congestion on the roads, improve air quality and reduce our carbon footprint.

It is also important that we support the local economy and help businesses to come through the pandemic.

The situation is evolving quickly and we are working hard to put these measures in place quickly but we still recognise the importance of engaging with communities and listening to your feedback.

Thank you for your support.

How we are making public spaces safe

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HIGH STREETS

Supporting our High Streets through recovery and bring back trade in a safe and secure environment



RETURN TO WORK

Supporting our businesses to get staff to and from work safely and sustainably by promoting key cycling and walking routes



SCHOOLS REOPENING

Supporting schools return by protecting students and parents and carers by providing safe access at and near school gates



PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Supporting our residents with access to public open space by providing safe environments to exercise and enjoy leisure time in our parks and open spaces



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Supporting our public transport partners by managing stops safely

 www.southglos.gov.uk/making-public-places-safer

High Streets

Our way of shopping has changed in light of the coronavirus pandemic and as lockdown restrictions are eased over the coming weeks, we want to make it as easy and as safe as possible for people to access their local High Street, kickstart the economy and support businesses.



We are looking at measures we can introduce to support more walking and cycling in and around our town centres and local communities, supporting local trade and business by enabling easy and safe access to shops and businesses.

Our High Streets will look and feel different as the lockdown is lifted over the weeks and months ahead. Shops, restaurants and cafes may need to trade outside immediately in front of their premises and have space for customers to queue outside if necessary. We will need to provide extra space for people to get around safely and be able to maintain social distancing, whether on foot or by bike. Where there is limited space available, so on-street road space for cars will need to reduce. However, we will continue to maintain our network of council car parks and their associated free parking.

We will monitor schemes in our High Streets and provide additional support and advice to businesses and work with them to make areas where changes have been introduced look and feel more welcoming and attractive.



High Streets

Thornbury High Street

We all need to adhere to social distancing guidelines to help keep everyone safe, reduce the spread of coronavirus and save lives.

To enable people to shop safely and access the services they need, we have been looking at some of our busiest areas including Thornbury High Street.

From Monday 8 June, the High Street between The Close and Castle Court is closed to all through traffic, effectively pedestrianising the town centre, to help boost the economy and allow people to shop safely as lockdown restrictions are eased.

It means some shops can trade from directly outside their premises and more people can queue outside shops two metres apart. The measures have been put in place ready for when non-essential shops are allowed to reopen on 15 June. We are also preparing for when cafes, pubs and restaurants may be allowed to reopen.

This measure has been agreed with local councillors and discussed with traders in the town on a trial basis to provide support for businesses to reopen with Covid-19 social distancing measures in place.





Traffic and some bus services will be diverted and signed on site. We are providing disabled parking bays in a decommissioned bus stop on the High Street.

The scheme in Thornbury will initially be installed under a Temporary Road Closure and will later be followed up by an Experimental Traffic Order which may run for 18 months before being made permanent. We will be monitoring the situation closely and liaising with councillors and business representatives in the town.

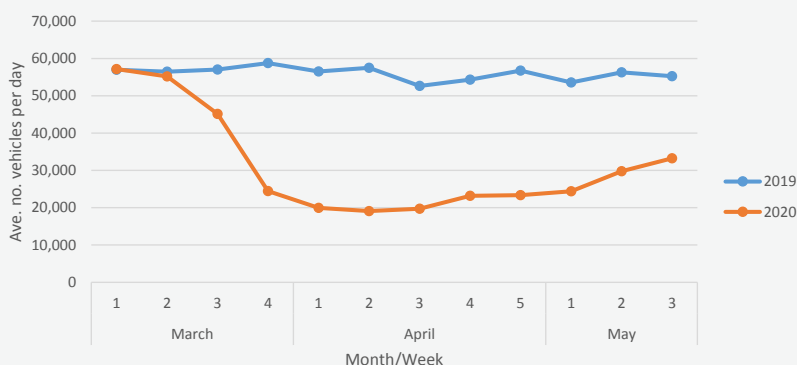
Our High Streets vary greatly in width, size and how busy they are so we are looking at each area individually and will consider different measures to suit the local area. As well as a full closure in Thornbury, other schemes may include one-way systems or shuttle traffic lights, the suspension of parking bays or creating additional footpath space.

Our engineers are assessing each town centre on its merits and we are liaising with local councillors, town and parish councils, businesses and the community before implementing a scheme.

Return to work

Our data shows total traffic levels on the highway network dropped to as low as 33% of what we would normally expect. At Hambrook, our counters show a significant reduction in traffic under lockdown restrictions and a steady increase since the end of April.

Comparison of number of vehicles using A4174 near Hambrook Junction 2019 – 2020

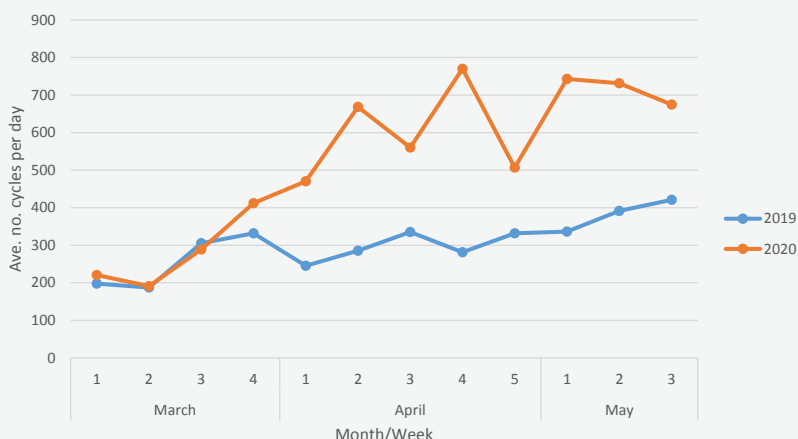


However, our data also shows that there has been a big increase in cyclists on the network, particularly of families cycling together.

The graph on the next page shows how average daily usage at a site on the Bristol to Bath railway path has increased significantly compared to the same period last year.

As we start to emerge from lockdown restrictions, we want to encourage people who have taken up cycling or been out walking more to continue doing so and use this as their regular way of getting to work.

Average daily usage at a site on the Bristol and Bath railway path 2019 – 2020



We also want to support families who have taken up cycling to have the confidence on our roads and cycle paths to carry on enjoying this exercise and being able to socially distance, especially as traffic levels start to increase.



We have already cleared overhangs and vegetation on some of our busiest cycle routes, including on the Bristol to Bath Railway Path and the ring road, to maximise the width of pathways. Access to some routes has also been improved and we have installed social distancing reminder signs and stencils on pavements.

We will continue to help people walk and cycle safely as we investigate pop-up cycle lanes in pinch point areas.

These measures will help reduce pollution and congestion on the roads and help us to also stay active and healthy.

As well as reduced congestion and pollution, quieter roads have given us the opportunity to bring forward a number of roadworks schemes which were planned for later in 2020 and complete some projects ahead of schedule.



GREAT STOKE

Our £2.9million investment to improve cycling and walking in Stoke Gifford is currently ahead of schedule and expected to be complete three months early.

We have now completed work on the Bradley Stoke Way arm of the roundabout and we have opened up the new shared use footway / cycleways to help with social distancing.

Due to the lower volumes of traffic currently on the roads we have been able to keep our temporary traffic management in place 24/7 instead of removing it each day which has enabled us to complete works quicker than originally planned.

- A4018 shared use pathway and new crossing to provide safer facilities for cyclists and pedestrians. Work started on 5 May, instead of January 2021, and is due for completion in the autumn.

Covid-19 traffic levels

RING ROAD – A4174 at MOD Filton



Total traffic
at **44%** of norm



Cars at 44%



HGVs at 93%



Buses at 41%

Bus usage in the West of England fell to just 10% compared to pre-Covid levels. The graph shows the levels of concessionary trips in the region over the past few months.

Concessionary Pass Usage



Schools reopening

To enable schools to reopen safely, we have introduced social distancing measures at school entrances and on nearby roads.

These include reminders of the two metre rule on signs and on pavements outside 29 primary schools which were prioritised because of their location in a busy area or because they have narrow access.

To provide more room for parents to take their children back to school safely, we have also suspended parking bays outside some of these schools.

By maintaining social distance, we are better equipped to control the virus and in doing so, save lives. We will consider further ways we can help and are looking at supporting secondary schools as they plan a phased return later this month.





Open spaces

During these difficult times, it has been important for us all to be able to exercise and enjoy the fresh air safely. We have kept all our parks and open spaces open since restrictions were put in place and now, as the guidelines change and people are out and about more, it is even more essential that these facilities remain safe spaces for us all to visit.

We have put in place signage and banners at all our busiest spaces with guidance on how to use the areas safely. Our teams on the ground have monitored the situation throughout the pandemic and have been essential in keeping our parks and open spaces safe for us all to use.



Markings in parks

As the government restrictions are lifted, we are helping to provide advice and support to our residents using our open spaces. This has included markings on the ground in popular picnic areas, social distancing reminder signs and stencils on the ground as well as measures such as locking open some gates to reduce human contact and help to reduce the spread of the virus.

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Making public places **safer**



Opening ball courts & skate parks

In line with government guidance, we have been able to reopen all the ball courts, tennis courts and skate parks we are responsible for. This has enabled people to play non-contact sports and exercise safely while maintaining healthy lives and seeing other people.



To do this, we have implemented some measures including one-way systems in and out of courts, or give way systems to allow for social distancing, and locked some gates open to reduce physical contact. In all cases, anyone wishing to use the facilities must bring their own equipment and not share with others and maintain social distancing from anyone outside of their household.



Public transport

As part of our commitment to help people return to work safely, we have introduced a number of social distancing measures at bus stops and public transport hubs. These include signage and markers on the pavement.

These measures are in place at key stops in Kingswood, Staple Hill, Downend, Emersons Green, Yate and Thornbury

During these unprecedented times we all need to keep our distance, think of others and play our part. For details of bus services operating as well as cycling routes visit

🌐 www.travelwest.info Bus timetables are available at
🌐 www.travelinesw.com or phone 📞 **0871 200 2233** (calls cost 12p per minute plus your phone company's access charge).





Access WEST support

Access WEST is a programme which works to

- support the local economy by supporting access to new and existing employment, education and training; and
- actively promote increased levels of physical activity through walking and cycling.

The programme is also used as a mechanism by which infrastructure improvements and other key messages from the council can be promoted. The project is being adapted in light of these new conditions

We will support our residents and employers with the following

- Employer grants to deliver initiatives to support walking and cycling and supporting the continuation of home working
- Loan bike schemes for key workers
- Support for information and guidance
- Subsidised bicycles and personalised travel planning to help people back to work
- Personalised travel planning advice.

Contact & support



South Gloucestershire freephone helpline
0800 953 7778



Email your questions to
CustomerCare@southglos.gov.uk



Coronavirus help and information hub
www.southglos.gov.uk/coronavirus



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t @sgloscouncil



Have your say
globe <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/space-to-move>

We have also adapted our Local Transport Priority List (Assess and Decide) process for considering requests from residents. We welcome any useful suggestions from the public.

If there are any interim measures we can implement to easily help people maintain social distancing we will put these in place as soon as possible.

Visit:

- globe www.southglos.gov.uk/local-transport-priority-list
- globe www.southglos.gov.uk/coronavirus
- globe www.southglos.gov.uk/making-public-places-safer