

Nick Jeanes
Team Leader, Traffic & Safety
B&NES Council

8 July 2010

Dear Nick,

PULTENEY BRIDGE/ARGYLE STREET, PROPOSED LOADING RESTRICTIONS
PULTENEY BRIDGE/ARGYLE STREET, PROHIBITION OF USE BY MOTOR
VEHICLES

Thank you for your letter of 11 June, consulting us formally about the closure of Pulteney Bridge and loading restrictions on the bridge and in Argyle Street.

When last consulted FoBRA expressed concern that the Council is pressing ahead with traffic schemes in a piecemeal fashion without looking at their overall impact on traffic movements in Bath. Someone should be considering the bigger picture, and this should obviously be the Council. There is still no sign that you are doing this. We are not against traffic improvements, but we do feel that the right schemes should be introduced in the right order in the interests of the city as a whole.

In the present case, you have still published no assessment of where the traffic diverted from Pulteney Bridge would go. Your plan showing 'alternative route' indicates that more traffic will circle the Guildhall and then go over North Parade Bridge. We assume that buses will be **required** to use this route, though this is not made clear in your paper. Taxis will presumably choose their own route, but again it seems likely that the majority will use North Parade Bridge. We think the Council should have produced figures showing the increased traffic likely to result on other routes.

There is a particular problem on North Parade Bridge:

- Large numbers of users of the Leisure Centre cross the bridge on foot. Many of these are mums with children in buggies;
- Large numbers of visitors use the bridge as a viewing point towards Pulteney Bridge and the Abbey. Photographers regularly set up their tripods on the pavement on the north side;
- The pavements on the north side are extremely narrow, especially where they pass the stone kiosks at the corners of the bridge. There is an additional hazard as pedestrians step out from the staircase up from the riverbank.
- As a result pedestrians frequently have to step into the roadway to pass buggies, photographers, other pedestrians etc.

This is a hazardous place even without any increase in the volume of traffic. Ten years ago a vehicle swerved to avoid a pedestrian in the roadway, knocked two other pedestrians clean through the bridge parapet into the river, one of whom drowned. Sixteen feet of stone parapet was demolished on to boats in the river below.

PROMOTING RESIDENTS' INTERESTS IN BATH

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If the Council is determined to go ahead with diverting traffic on to North Parade Bridge, we think it is essential for you to institute new measures to protect pedestrians there. We suggest:

- Widening the pavements to a reasonable width, especially on the north side;
- Imposing the lowest possible speed restriction over the bridge. In Germany, you see restriction to 'schritttempo' (walking pace) in difficult spots. If this is not possible, a limit of 15 or 20 mph should be imposed.
- Installing speed cushions or other physical means of slowing the traffic.

These measures should obviously be introduced before the traffic is increased, not left for consideration afterwards.

A smaller issue is the departure of taxis from the rank by the Abbey. If some of these are now to have to drive over North Parade Bridge, it would make sense if they could turn south of the Guildhall, to avoid travelling round the High Street, Bridge Street and Grand Parade. This would require the circulation in Orange Grove to be reviewed. This is the sort of point that would have been taken into account if you were looking at the bigger picture.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

**HENRY BROWN,
FoBRA Chairman**