

Traffic Consultation on Proposed Town Traffic Management Plan

This is the response of the Bishop's Castle Community Partnership to the Proposed Traffic Management Plan Consultation. It answers each of the questions posed in the Town Council's Consultation process in the following 4 sections.

1. Understanding the need for a one-way system

The work undertaken by the Community Partnership when producing the original Community Town Plan (CTP) in 2016 and work done subsequently in 2019/20 on the Bishop's Castle Character Assessment for the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan, identified core elements that are at the heart of the town's traffic issues.

To do nothing to alleviate the problems is *not* an option as the traffic/parking/pedestrian conflicts already have consequences which will only increase over time. The situation is complex and cannot totally be resolved. The task is to make changes that will alleviate the worst problems with the least disruption overall. It requires the proposal to simultaneously accommodate seven 21st century demands on the historic, narrow town centre streets:

- Local residents' car access to and from their properties
- Car access by visitors and hinterland users of the town centre shops and services
- Commercial vehicle access (normally transit vans) to residential properties for home deliveries both in the town centre and to the west/south west of it.
- Commercial vehicle access to commercial premises in the town centre (both transit vans and small and large lorries)
- Pedestrian access/use of town centre streets, by both local and visitors.
- Vehicles parked on street by both residents and visiting users of the town centre.
- The fact that virtually all traffic from the hinterland coming to any part of the town arrives either from: Montgomery Road/Bull Lane/Station Street; A488/School House Lane; or A488/Brampton Road. This includes both small domestic and large commercial vehicles.

The work on the CTP suggested that a one-way system on the High Street ***could form part of*** a solution to the traffic problems by easing congestion and aiding access. A survey of occupants of the front street was undertaken and there was a 50% split between those for and against a one-way system. Whilst the work undertaken on the Character Assessment continues to provide evidence to support the potential of a one-way system, **it also evidences that, it needs to be supplemented by additional actions if we are to address the traffic/parking/ pedestrian conflict in our town centre streets that is created by the demands listed above.**

2. Support for the proposed one-way system

Bishop's Castle Community Partnership (BCCP):

- Supports the one-way system down High Street and part of Church Street, (see section ii below) for the benefits it will bring to the main street as well as eliminating the flow of traffic up Bull Street that currently emanates from traffic travelling north up High Street.

- Agrees there is a need to retain Bull Street as a vehicular, one-way route north BUT for limited access only.

The Partnership believes however that, in order to: enable the main street one-way system; protect Bull Street; and minimise traffic load on both Salop Street and High Street, both of which will be taking the majority of traffic accessing the town centre, the following traffic proposals must also be in place.

- The primary access to the High Street/(part) Church Street one-way system is Salop Street BUT it remains a two-way flow to enable heavy vehicles travelling north up Union Street and those servicing the Castle Hotel and Market Square, to avoid *having to use* High Street when exiting the town (see section i).
- Welsh Street is a one-way system in a westerly direction to avoid all Welsh Street traffic *having to* using Bull Street (light vehicles only), Salop Street or High Street (all heavy vehicles plus light vehicles) to exit the town (see section iv).
- All of Market Square remains two-way traffic to enable north facing traffic on Union Street to exit the town either by Bull Street (light vehicles only), Salop Street or High Street (all heavy vehicles plus light vehicles) (see section iv).
- New Street is one way in a westerly direction to minimise adverse effects on residents and enable the Church Street section of the one-way system to be accessed directly from Station Street, thereby relieving pressure on Salop Street. Otherwise, it appears there is little to be gained from making it one-way in the opposite direction. (see section iii)

Regarding the traffic flow options for Welsh Street, proposed both below and in the Town Traffic Management Plan, it must be accepted that none will address the street's core problem that is the traffic/pedestrian/parking conflict. The same applies to Salop Street. In addition, therefore **consideration must be given to a plan to completely resurface the street floorscape** to better accommodate the competing needs of pedestrians, parking and traffic movement (see sections i and iv).

Regarding the Town Traffic Management Plan proposal for a Welsh Street one-way system in an easterly direction, this would inevitably increase the traffic, both residential and light commercial along Bull Street. It would also require all heavy vehicles (above 2T weight) that come from Welsh Street, Union Street, Market Square west and Castle Street to make a right turn at the restricted Market Square/High Street junction and travel down the one-way system, putting unnecessary pressure on traffic flow when there are both parked vehicles and delivery vehicles stationary on the carriageway (see sections ii and iv).

Details of the benefits/impacts of the proposals listed above are contained in section 3- i to iv below.

3. Specific comments on the proposals and alternative ideas

i. Salop Street traffic flow

Salop Street will inevitably see an increase in traffic if a one-way system is introduced on the main street as the majority of traffic wishing to access the one-way system will use Station

Street rather than Union Street, even when coming from Brampton Road. This will include heavy commercial vehicles.

Salop Street has very significant pedestrian/vehicle conflict caused by constant pavement parking. This is recognised in the Town Council's introduction to the Proposed Traffic Management Plan. The street is full of buildings classified as heritage assets and the pavement parking has already led to damage to at least one building, the Grade II listed Three Tuns Inn (see the extracts from the Character Assessment Survey on the following 3 pages).

The extracts show the carriageway width is insufficient to accommodate both large vehicles and parked cars without risk to the premises that abut the narrow pavements. This is the case *even when vehicles park on the pavement*. Neither is there room for pedestrians to move in safety.

To avoid further damage to the heritage assets in this part of the Conservation Area and to make it safe for pedestrians to walk along Salop Street, **it is also necessary to physically restrict on street parking along the western end of Salop Street**. These must be of a standard to reflect the Conservation Area status.

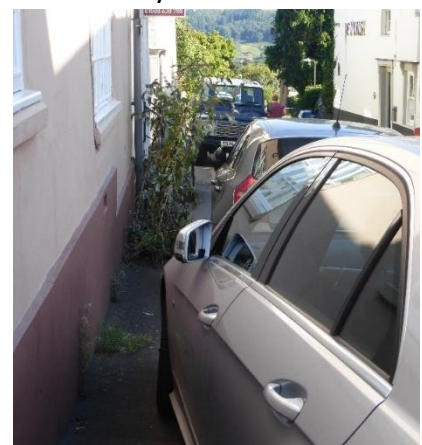
These actions to improve safety, enable traffic movement and protect the heritage assets, would be required regardless of whether traffic was one or two-way. The traffic flow choice relates solely to the impact that a Salop Street one-way system would have on Bull Street and High Street. Should a one-way system be in place, all heavy goods vehicles servicing the Three Tuns pub and brewery, the Castle Hotel, and the other commercial and residential properties in Market Square would need to exit via the one-way system down High Street. Further traffic travelling in an easterly direction from Welsh Street, Castle Street and Union Street, would add to this load on either High Street or Bull Street, dependent on vehicle weight.

With the proviso that a comprehensive traffic flow plan is prepared and implemented, to include restricted passing places for moving vehicles, restricted parking and a delineated pedestrian/vehicle route, Salop Street could remain two-way and alleviate the pressures on High Street and Bull Street. Should a one-way system in a westerly direction be also applied to Welsh Street, the majority of traffic using Salop Street would also be in a westerly direction and contra flow traffic would be kept to a minimum. Traffic on Salop Street should therefore remain two-way.

Extracts from the Bishop's Castle Character Assessment – Zone 2 survey



One pedestrian is forced to cross the road and another, further down the street, must walk in the road as there is no pavement on the opposite side.





This is the narrowest part of the street with no pavement at all on the opposite side of the carriageway and no room to walk on this side either without dodging the hedgerow.



2 vehicles block the front door access and the side gate access to number 5, a Grade II Listed Building

Parked cars also provide problems for moving traffic which results in damage to properties, including Listed Buildings.

This is evidenced by the damage to the fascia and the name plate of the Three Tuns Inn, a Grade II Listed building. The name plate was fixed to the wall of the pub in light relief, at second storey level. The first four letters of the name have been wrenched off the wall by a passing vehicle.



At this point the carriageway is not wide enough to contain both parked and passing vehicles even when such vehicles are not particularly large. Although the Land Rover is parked on the pavement in this image, damage to the Three Tuns property is a considerable risk should a large lorry, agricultural or other service vehicle try to pass.



Parked vehicles on the northern side of the carriageway impact on the view; the conservation of 3 Grade II Listed buildings; the experience of pedestrians and of visitors to the commercial premises; and on the life of residents of the street.



View east with local resident 'taking a breather'.



View west with visitors walking along the carriageway.

ii. High Street/Church Street one-way system

The proposed one-way system will alleviate the congestion and access problems currently experienced along its entire length although, with continuous parking on the west side of the carriageway on High Street it will still be necessary for delivery vehicles to park on the pavement on the east side in order to leave a vehicle width available on the carriageway to accommodate moving traffic.

Problems with parked vehicles on both sides of the road as well as large moving traffic. This will be minimised if all traffic moves in the same direction.



Whilst pavement parking on the east side is not desirable, pedestrians are still able to travel safely as there is a continuous pavement on the west side of the carriageway.

The flow of traffic in one direction only can also facilitate a small increase in on street parking space on High Street as the two passing places will no longer be required. In reality, it will be



a minor increase as the passing places are currently frequently used by parked vehicles, adding to the congestion and difficulties caused particularly when traffic is approaching a nearby parked delivery vehicle from both directions.

Traffic in both directions and the passing place is occupied by a parked car.

The advantages of the one-way system include: the elimination of incidents where moving traffic must mount the pavement to enable a vehicle coming in the opposite direction to pass; and, unless large vehicles are either parked or moving or both, the continuous free flow of traffic even when all parking places are occupied on the west side and delivery vehicles are pavement parked on the east side of the carriageway.



An additional positive outcome could be displacement of on street parking at the Church Street end by increased use of the Auction Yard parking facility, particularly by those who travel from the Brampton Road end of town and want to access premises on the Church Street one-way section. This would ease constrictions at the south end of the main street.

iii. New Street one way system

New Street is a narrow street with no pavements and limited opportunity for traffic traveling in opposite directions to pass. It is also a pedestrian route for those wishing to visit the Enterprise House facility. Despite the constrictions of space and the two-way traffic, vehicles are regularly parked alongside the Congregational Chapel, abutting Station Street. The inclusion of a one-way traffic system on New Street could therefore be of benefit to both traffic and pedestrian users but the question of direction is at issue.

The one-way system in the Proposed Traffic Management Plan is in an easterly direction. It enables users of the High Street one-way section to exit towards Station Street. The vehicles parked on street at the junction with Station Street would present less of a problem than with a two-way traffic flow. However, the direction of traffic is disadvantageous to residents of properties at the Station Street junction who have off-street parking spaces at right angles to the property frontage. They would need to access their space via Salop Street and High Street.

On the other hand, if the proposed direction was westerly, users of the High Street one-way section would still be able to exit at this point via Harley Jenkins Street to Union Street which is less heavily trafficked than Station Street. In addition, the properties at the Station Street junction could access their parking spaces directly from Station Street and exit via Church Street.

An additional, significant advantage would be in reducing pressure on Salop Street by providing a second access to the main street one-way system for those wishing to access premises at the Church Street end.

iv. Welsh Street one-way system

As the Town Council consultation document recognises, the core Welsh Street problem is similar to Salop Street in that the width of the street in many parts is insufficient to take a parked vehicle as well as moving traffic. Consequently, residents must park on the pavement to leave sufficient space. This requires pedestrians to walk in the carriageway.

Work undertaken on both the CTP and the Character Assessment evidenced this:

Welsh Street outside Moat House.
Parked cars on left narrow the road.
The pavements are also narrow, often
requiring residents to walk on the
carriageway regardless of whether traffic
is passing or not.



A lorry enters Welsh Street from Castle Street, risking damage to the terraced properties, all of which are recorded as heritage assets.

Of itself, an exceptional circumstance perhaps but an illustration of the fact that Welsh Street takes through traffic as well as residents' access, both from Castle Street and directly as the road travels up through the Cabin, Banks Head and beyond.

The provision of a one-way system will not directly address this issue although, potentially it could make pedestrians feel safer as they only need to negotiate traffic in one direction. The current two-way traffic flow *enables* direct access to town centre streets for traffic coming from or going to the Montgomery Road via Castle Street and the Wintles periphery road and to and from the rural hinterland beyond the Cabin.

The chosen direction should minimise unnecessary pressure on town centre streets and the proposed one-way system down High Street.

The one-way system in the Proposed Traffic Management Plan:

- Continues to enable direct access through the town centre from hinterland locations.
- **Requires the only exit** from Welsh Street to be via Market Square east and then either through Bull Street (light vehicles only) or by turning right down High Street (all heavy vehicles plus light vehicles).
- **Requires all** north facing traffic on Union Street to also exit the town either via Bull Street (light vehicles only) or the one-way system down High Street (all heavy vehicles plus light vehicles).
- Will, therefore overall result in additional traffic load on both Bull Street and High Street, including heavy vehicles.

Whilst the proposed one-way traffic along Welsh Street and Market Square west *may* produce some improvement in traffic load overall, on these streets it will do little to address the situation illustrated in the first image above and pedestrians will still need to walk in the carriageway when a one-way system is operating. In addition, it will increase pressure on both High Street and Bull Street. From this respect it is difficult to identify the benefits of the proposed one-way system for Welsh Street/Market Square east.

Another possible drawback of the proposed one-way system for those Welsh Street residents who may have overnight parking elsewhere in the town, is the level of inconvenience that may be created in accessing their property by car.

The potential impact on Bull Street must also not be underestimated. This too is a narrow street with virtually no pavement. There is a 2-tonne limit on vehicles that can use the carriageway. This limit allows only "car-derived vans", which are defined under the 1984 Road Traffic Regulation Act as "a goods vehicle which is constructed or adapted as a derivative of a passenger vehicle and which has a maximum laden, weight not exceeding 2 tonnes - ie similar to a Ford Fiesta van, Vauxhall Corsa or Renault Clio van." Thus, transit type vans or larger are not permitted legally.



Deliveries to premises on Bull Street already block the narrow carriageway as they offload. Proposals that could increase similar, heavy traffic trying to exit the town via Bull Street after delivering to residential and commercial premises elsewhere, must be kept to a minimum if the situation in Bull Street is to remain acceptable.

Bull Street is part of the route of the Shropshire Way bringing walkers as well as visitors staying at the Foxholes campsite through the town to where the footpath exits on Field Lane. Many walkers use the Bowling Green footpath that connects Castle Street with Bull Street. This has a blind exit at Bull Street where the potential for serious accidents is considerable as indicated by the images below.



The van is approaching the blind footpath exit from Castle Street. It is not permitted by the 2T road sign and is too large for the road width, necessitating use of the pavement.



Walkers in the vicinity of where the transit van is travelling, have just passed the blind footpath exit beside the red-brick house in the foreground.

Traffic servicing residential properties in all of the streets affected by the traffic proposals includes daily, medium and large transit vans bringing on-line deliveries; supermarket supplies; lorries supplying oil and other domestic heating fuels and emergency vehicles. At least some of these vehicles may be affected by the 2-tonne limit and to comply with the law would need to exit the town via the High Street should Salop Street be one-way only in a westerly direction.

In order to ease the Welsh Street problem and at the same time minimise the use of Bull Street, Salop Street and/or High Street as an exit from the town the Partnership proposes an alternative Welsh Street one-way system for consideration:

A one-way system, in a westerly direction along Welsh Street, from its junction with Market Square west and Union Street. It would require:

- Entry from Market Square east to Market Square west allowed.
- The whole of Market Square remains two-way.
- A right turn only allowed at the Wintles junction (i.e., no direct access to the Cabin and beyond).
- No need for the proposed 'no right turn' at the bottom of Castle Street.
- Entry into Union Street could either be allowed or prohibited (see benefits below).

This one-way system would enable both Market Square west and Welsh Street to be accessed either from Salop Street or Union Street and would minimise pressures on Bull Street, High Street and Salop Street.

The benefits are:

- Minimise the amount of through traffic along Salop Street, Market Square and Welsh Street as that destined for the Cabin and beyond would be prohibited. In addition, access to Castle Street and the Wintles periphery road by non-town centre users, would be much easier via Station Street, Bull Lane and Castle Green than through the town centre streets so this would act as a deterrent to use by through traffic.

- A no entry sign into Union Street could also remove the use of Salop Street and Market Square by those wishing to access the housing areas on the west of the town centre. However, if this is not perceived as a potential problem, open access to Union Street could remain.
- As a result of Market Square west retaining a two-way flow to allow north facing traffic on Union Street to access Market Square, traffic load on Market Square west *may* be marginally greater than that which would occur with the one-way system proposed in the consultation document.
- Egress from Union Street would also generate some traffic onto either Bull Street, Salop Street or High Street to exit the town.
- **This, however, would be *more than* compensated by the fact that no traffic** from either Welsh Street or Castle Street would be able to access Bull Street, Salop Street or High Street.

Another option could be to make Welsh Street a two-way cul-de-sac but positive impacts would be likely to be minimal. To implement this would require:

- A turning space to be provided in the vicinity of the Wintles junction.
- All traffic to and from the Cabin/Banks Head would thus be **required** to go via the Wintles periphery road.
- Allow access to/egress from Welsh Street both from and to Union Street and Market Square.
- Allow access to Welsh Street from Castle Street to enable south facing traffic on Castle Street to exit.
- Make a 'no right turn' at the bottom of Castle Street for those travelling west along Welsh Street. This would deter the use of Castle Street as a through route for traffic approaching from the east.

The effects of this option are:

- Eliminates through traffic to the surrounding hinterland including that from Union Street for those travelling north. This could to some extent reduce traffic load on Welsh Street.
- It provides 3 access routes (from Salop Street, Union Street and Castle Street) to both Welsh Street and Market Square and, similarly a choice of 5 egress routes (to Salop Street, Bull Street, High Street, Union Street and Castle Street). This spreads the load rather than concentrating **all** egress from Welsh Street on Bull Street and High Street as with the one-way system proposed in the consultation document. It would therefore have less negative impact on Bull Street and High Street.
- It would have a significant negative impact on Salop Street, as this would be the primary route out of the town for all heavy traffic from Welsh Street as well as south facing traffic from Castle Street and north facing traffic from Union Street.
- It would still enable the use of Castle Street as a through route by traffic travelling south to the south west of the town and would rely on road users obeying the 'no right turn' sign when travelling west along Welsh Street.
- Other than the reduction in through traffic, it would have little impact in terms of traffic load on Welsh Street and Market Square.

The amount of traffic using Welsh Street might also be further reduced by also making Castle Street a cul-de sac. Both streets would remain two-way. Possible space for turning on Castle Street could be in the area where Salop Street used to exit onto Castle Street.

Whilst any of these options could reduce or eliminate the flow of external traffic, not only on Welsh Street but also the other sensitive streets in this area of town, just as with the one-way system proposed in the consultation, it would not address the core traffic/parking /pedestrian conflict problem.

Serious consideration must also therefore be given to additional, accepted practices to ameliorate traffic/parking/pedestrian conflict, i.e., floorscape treatments that highlight the multiuse of the street and delineate appropriately prioritised pedestrian, parking and traffic routes.

v. Other elements of the Proposed Traffic Management Plan

The Community Partnership:

- Supports the proposed 20 mph speed limit throughout Bishop's Castle.
- Accepts that, in the absence of an on-site traffic warden, white and yellow lines not only do not achieve their aim but are unsightly. This was also evidenced in the surveys and reported in the Community Town Plan of 2016 and is further evidenced by the Partnership's Character Assessment surveys.
This is why it is essential that in locations such as Salop Street and Welsh Street, where necessary, a combination of permanent physical features to prevent parking and recognised, effective treatments to the floorscape are also introduced.
- Research undertaken for the 2016 CTP and the more recent Character Assessment surveys that are contained in the Town Council's Neighbourhood Development Plan, also identify other locations in the town that require some action. These include the staggered junction at Brampton Road/Church Street/Kerry Lane/ Church Lane and the junction at Kerry Lane, Woodbatch Road and Corporation Street. **The Partnership is happy to work with the Town Council to explore potential outcomes for all identified problem locations.**
- Suggests that, where there is a need to protect on street parking for residents a suitable 'residents parking only' system is devised for those who have no other protected parking space.
- Strongly believes that 'traffic' is only one element of the complex and interrelated traffic/parking/pedestrian issue in the town centre. Piecemeal change to just one aspect of this issue is therefore inadequate as an effective solution to the problem. The traffic proposals need to be developed as part of an holistic strategy that also encompasses on street parking and signposting of peripheral routes, such as the reinforcement of the through route from the Kerry Lane/Brampton Road/Church Street junction via Station Street to School House Lane and Bull Lane/Montgomery Road.

- An holistic strategy also needs to consider the heritage aspects of the Conservation Area streets as identified in the Community Partnership's Character Assessment and reflected in the Town Council's Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Town Council accepts the need to develop a master plan for the area of the Old Market Square including the confluence of streets immediately adjacent to it. The traffic proposals for both Salop Street and Bull Street must therefore be considered as part of this plan. Work is currently being undertaken to obtain grant funding for improvements to the Old Market Square area. This provides an opportunity to include potential adaptations along the Salop Street and Bull Street frontages that would facilitate and enable satisfactory traffic solutions; ensure a positive impact on this heritage asset; and contribute to the master plan for the Old Market Square.

4. Support for a public meeting

The Community Partnership supports the holding of a public meeting once the Town Council has formulated its views.

In discussion at the Community Partnership Meeting of the 6th May, Councillor Carroll explained that a review of the consultation responses would be undertaken following the closing date deadline of 14th May. Considering the extensive work that had already been undertaken by the Partnership in both the preparation of the original CLP and the more recently the Character Assessment, it was agreed that the Partnership should participate in the Town Council review. Councillor Carroll agreed to follow up the necessary arrangements.

FOOTNOTE

All images contained in this document were taken from the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area Character Assessment (CA). The CA contains 9 on street surveys which were carried out on weekdays (excluding Wednesdays). The CA currently constitutes Appendix 1 of the Town Council's Neighbourhood Development Plan and will be published shortly as a stand-alone document. The on-street surveys of particular reference to the Proposed Traffic Management Plan are numbers 2,3,4,5 and 6.