

# Car-free plans on display

ISLANDERS are being urged to have their say on plans to pedestrianise key areas of central Newport.

For a month from Monday, the IW Council will be placing displays in venues throughout the town, giving details of four options schemes under consideration for making parts of the High Street traffic-free.

**By CP staff reporter**

All are aimed at creating a healthier, safer and more welcoming town centre environment, in which pedestrians have priority and public transport is better accommodated.

The options — produced as a result of an extensive pedestrianisation study by transport consultants Mott MacDonald — differ in the extent of the High Street becoming traffic-free and proposed

changes to disperse vehicles through other parts of Newport's road network.

Before any decisions are made, the council wants to test public opinion.

Leaflets detailing each option will be available at every display, plus all Island libraries, tourist information centres in Newport, Ryde, Sandown and Yarmouth, Halfords store in Newport and at

the town's bus station.

In addition, 10,000 leaflets are being distributed directly to homes in Newport and Carisbrooke next week.

The leaflets detail each option and include a questionnaire, enabling members of the public to express their preferences and views.

At the end of the consultation, responses will be scrutinised by the environment and transport select committee, whose recom-

mendations will be considered by the council's executive committee.

The displays can be seen at the following venues:

- Week beginning February 11 — Boots and B&Q; week beginning February 18 — Lord Louis Library and British Home Stores; week beginning February 25 — Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer;

week beginning March 4 — Safeway and Woolworths.

In addition, displays can be viewed from Monday until March 8 at the customer service centre at County Hall, the council's Seaclose Offices, Jubilee Stores on The Quay and at Southern Vectis Travel Office at Newport bus station.

**Above is an artist's impression on how Newport's upper High Street would look if the area was closed off to traffic and pedestrianised.**

**Details of the scheme are being displayed at venues around the town.**



COUNTY PRESS 8/2/02

# Residents fear cars choking side streets

8/3/2002

**THE SCHEME** to pedestrianise Newport's High Street will make it a more pleasant place to shop, but the environmental cost of the scheme for local residents will be too high.

That was the unanimous message to come from a public meeting on Saturday which attracted residents from Drill Hall Road, Caesars Road, Hearn Street, Mill Street and surrounding areas.

Each of the four schemes being put forward by the IW Council involves a new road between the Unigate dairy in Mill Street and Foxes Road near Sainsbury's.

It is this aspect which has met with overwhelming objections from residents who say their small streets are not fit for the huge increase in

By Suzanne Pert

traffic this will bring to the area.

They accuse the council of putting forward a scheme on the cheap without building a proper ring road around Newport and instead making residents of the narrow Victorian streets pay the penalty.

The meeting was called by campaigners George Wilks and Andy and Gill Fortune, who all live in Caesars Road. It was chaired by local councillor Tony Tiltman.

Many of those attending had only received leaflets that morning, yet the closing date for the consultation is March 18.

Clr Tiltman said: "The council had 15,000 printed and gave it to the people who distribute the *Property Weekly*, but most of those affected in inner Newport have only just

received them after the council did a re-print.

"In the light of this the date for consultation has been extended to March 31," said Cllr Tiltman.

One resident said a pedestrian scheme had been tried out some 16 years ago on Sundays when all the traffic was diverted down Mill Street, which caused chaos.

Mr Wilks said not only were there a lot of young children in the area, many of whom walked to school, but there was also accommodation for the elderly at either end of Crocker Street.

Many of the houses fronted directly on to the street, making residents vulnerable to noise and pollution and there were also fears over the stability of the roads.

Brian McHugh, of Caesars Road, said there was a 6ft 6ins width restriction on his section of the road.

"If that was necessary why can it now be removed for heavy goods to come down that bit of road?" he asked.

There were also parking worries particularly in Drill Hall Road where residents said Extreme Play caused extra congestion.

Former Drill Hall Road resident Pat Harris claimed he was told by highways in the past on more than one occasion that the route put forward was not suitable for HGVs to negotiate the double bend.

Geoff Lumley, Labour Party secretary, warned that people power was needed to make the council listen.

"You need to have a big lobby at County Hall. Island First do not like being confronted by angry people. They might be very worried to see a few hundred people in that council chamber," he said.

● See Letters, page 21.

COUNTY PRESS 8/3/2002

## Leaflet double-up angers councillor

**THE IW Council** has been accused of bungling the public consultation exercise over plans to pedestrianise upper Newport High Street.

Clr Barbara Foster is angry leaflets were not initially distributed to her ward, Carisbrooke West, with the *Property Weekly*.

Then she was left irritated that after she had a large number of the leaflets reprinted and volunteers from Carisbrooke Forum made door-to-door deliveries of homes missed out, the pamphlets were subsequently delivered with copies of the free newspaper.

"It just seems the right hand does not know what the left is doing.

"It is unnecessary duplica-

tion and a waste of money," said Cllr Foster.

Chris Wells, local transport planner, admitted areas of distribution had been omitted because of a mix-up between County Hall and the contractor ordered to deliver the leaflets.

Once that had been pointed out, the leaflets were delivered to those homes.

Mr Wells said that in the meantime, Cllr Foster had requested leaflets to deliver herself.

"It seems there was a small amount of duplication but we would rather that than have people left out altogether," Mr Wells said.

COUNTY PRESS

15/3/2002



# Pedestrian plans not a 'done deal'

From Cllr Ernie Fox (IW Council), 8 Northwood Drive, Ryde:

MIKE Cunningham's selective memory (CP, letters, Mar 1) seems to have allowed him to forget it was on his watch as the former portfolio holder for transport that the pedestrian proposals for Newport were last formally presented to the IW Council in the form of a detailed and comprehensive but confusing report.

With effort he may recall that as chairman of the then environment and transport select committee, I led the discussion which resulted in officers being asked to bring forward a document that could present the proposals so that they could be reasonably understood by the general public, who need to be fully consulted on these complex matters.

That is the process now underway. It would be helpful if Mike could, for once, set politics aside then allow and contribute to similar free discussion and consultation.

There are major issues and effects to consider and I welcome any constructive comments that Mike can make but it is both ignorant and arrogant for him to suggest that the Island First Group is, in anyway, likely to nod this or any other scheme through on a nod.

With regard to the negative comments from Cllr Cunningham and our MPs on the difficulties we face in spending the greatly increased capital funding for roads, these are almost entirely due to the years of neglect and underfunding by the present and past governments. This led to the

decimation of the nation's civil engineering industry and skills required by that industry.

The greatly increased government grants now available offer the best opportunity for many years to implement desperately needed highway improvements and this council is developing new and innovative ways to ensure that the additional grant support is fully taken up.

Watch this space!

From Graham F. Wrangles, Lydden House, 44a Castle Road, Carisbrooke, Newport:

I WAS fascinated to read correspondence from Cllr Mike Cunningham in (CP, March 1). As a resident of Castle Road, Newport, I have yet to receive a notification leaflet, mentioned in his letter, of any intended traffic plans.

From the only person that I've met who has received the intended plans I learnt that pedestrianisation was already agreed, prior to giving ratepayers the choice. There appears to have been no offer to those who do not wish it 'to come to pass'. It shall be done, it's just which way you prefer and believe me that sounds a fair accolade prior to the obvious non distribution of the explanatory leaflet.

If the council is unable to successfully deliver a leaflet to each household, what chance of success in a major road re-organisation?

Don't blame Martin Potter of Property Weekly, if he can't deliver, try other methods. We are talking about Newport, not London.

From Eric Rolf, 36 Lark Rise, Newport:

BEFORE pedestrianisation of any shopping area in Newport, clearly what must be in place is a viable ring road system, an obvious requirement to anyone with any sense.

Unfortunately this is something which Newport does not have. To impose such an ill-thought-out shambles is just plain madness.

Surely £1.1 million would be far better spent on repairing and upgrading the shocking and dangerous state of the existing pavements and side roads in the town.

As for "up to 45 per cent of Newport households not being car owners" (from the pedestrianisation propaganda leaflet), this is yet another dubious statistic. I suspect the actual figure is more likely to be around ten per cent or less.

Let's hope this is not another 'done deal' nodded through behind closed doors at County Hall with scant regard for the true interests of the people of Newport.

Perhaps some kind of active demonstrations against this crackpot idea are called for?

## One residential area would be big loser in Newport plan

From George Wilks, 14 Caesars Road, Newport: PUTTING which people first? Certainly not the large number of people who live in central Newport! The council's leaflet presents four options for pedestrianisation, all of which are variations on one idea, and all four contain the proposal to create a new traffic system with numerous right-angle bends, and a link between Mill Street and Foxes Road near Sainsbury's.

As a result there will be a massive increase in traffic, pollution and noise in a residential area that is home to many of Newport's children and elderly, leaving the High Street, which contains very few residents, empty. It will also destroy a much used walking and cycling link to the supermarket, town, college, hospital etc.

About 100 local residents took the trouble to come to a public meeting in Newport last Saturday with local councillor, Tony Tiltman, to express their strong feelings about this issue — that a through route through this area is unacceptable.

About half of those present at the meeting indicated some support for the idea of pedestrianisation, provided that it was not at the expense of local residents.

In the short time since the announcement of the council's proposals, several other options have been suggested: for instance limiting the pedestrianisation of the High Street to the part between St James's Square and Holywood Street. Another option might be to widen the pavements in the High Street but keep it as a through route, pedestrianising some of the smaller streets nearby.

Newport already has a north-south bypass. We say that a viable east-west route away from residential areas (and some strong public transport initiatives) must be put in place before a High Street pedestrianisation scheme can work for the benefit of both those who live and those who shop in the town. The leaflet says that there will be 'winners and losers' from pedestrianisation. Only too true of the present proposals! A good scheme would take a more caring view of the wellbeing of the town's residents.

From Mrs J. Kirkby, 27 Holywood Street, Newport: I, like many others, did not

receive a copy of the leaflet, re Pedestrianisation in Newport, but I did pick up a copy in Newport Library, duly answered the four very constricting questions, with a resounding no to all four, and included some relevant comments with it.

Mike Cunningham and I are of the same opinion and fear that Shirley Smart and Ernie Fox will push through this unwanted policy, regardless of public opinion.

It would be most interesting to know how much has already been spent in thrusting this unreasonable idea upon us.

Pedestrianisation has already heaped traffic congestion on Coppins Bridge and it is rather odd that if it was supposed to be the answer to Newport's traffic problems, did the leaflet suggest its avoidance!

By the way, if the west side of St Thomas's Square was depedestrianised it would save an enormous amount of traffic using Coppins Bridge.

I note that the council has £13 million to spend on our roads (and pavements, I hope) and trust it will be wisely spent on good and lasting re-surfacing and not patching and filling in, bearing in mind that our rural roads need attention as well as the main ones.

COUNTY PRESS  
15/3/2002

From David Holmes, St Winifred's, Cliff Road, Tolland Bay:

SUFFERING road cones! I wonder, is the IW Council highways department, which proposes to spend £13 million on Island roads in the next 12 months, related to the IW Council highways department which failed to spend half of last year's £7 million budget?

What good news for Newport residents that driving traffic from the almost totally non-residential High Street onto the quite almost totally residential back roads, will cost only a paltry £1.1 million of their taxes!

Even better news from a council that can barely provide enough money for nursing home beds for the elderly, is that (quite remarkably) they are able to find £13 million in total for Freshwater's Military Road, the Yarmouth to Newport road and other important works.

As for the timing of all these 'extensive roadworks' I suggest that if you really believe IW Council when they tell you they will cause 'little disruption' you presumably also remain totally convinced by the tooth fairy.

COUNTY PRESS  
12/4/02

## Council told to think again on Pyle Street

THE CLEAR message to the IW Council from a boisterous meeting of Pyle Street residents was that the experts should go back to the drawing board over plans to pedestrianise part of Newport High Street.

The majority present felt such plans were premature, without the infrastructure needed to support it — in particular a ring road around Newport to relieve congestion and take through traffic.

Wednesday's meeting was called by the council to ask residents, primarily those living in Pyle Street, for their views on the latest option for pedestrianisation which involves making Pyle Street one way for its entire length and re-routing High Street traffic down it.

The suggestion is that it is effective from 10am to 6pm for a trial period of a year at a cost of £700,000.

Highways experts admit this will bring an 18-fold increase in traffic flows to the street during the morning peak period, but say it will not be anything like as high as the peak rates in other areas of the Island and the mainland.

But the residents who attended an often lively meeting left councillors in no doubt of their concerns.

- These included:
- The effect of the extra traffic on their homes in the heart of a conservation area, many of which are listed.
  - The environmental impact with noise, pollution and dirt.

- Safety aspects, especially with the very narrow pavements presenting dangers to children, the disabled and pedestrians alike.
- Loss of on-street car parking and the difficulties for businesses in getting deliveries.

This scheme, Option E, was put forward by the council after four other options suggested by international consultants, were rejected by residents in other parts of town and scrapped by councillors.

Ian Willoughby, of the Medina Dental Laboratory, described Option E as a Blue Peter solution.

"It's the one you had under the table that you prepared earlier. It just will not work unless you spend money on out-of-town parking, park and ride and prevent traffic coming through Newport. This is a medieval street which was designed for horses and carts," said Mr Willoughby.

Steve Matthews, head of highways, said it was drawn up to try to reduce to a minimum any detrimental effects caused by pedestrianisation.

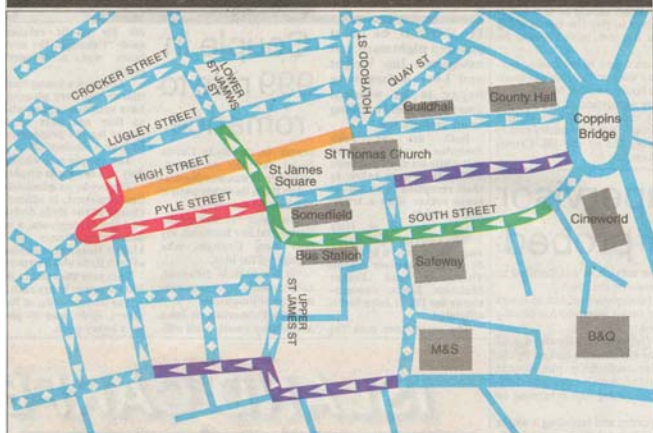
He said new signs would be introduced to take traffic round the town, edge of town car parking was being examined, including the use of the council car parks.

"We are not trying to do it on the cheap but we have not worked out the detail of this scheme until it is agreed, otherwise the work would be a waste of money," he said.

With two churches already in Pyle Street and another due to be built there, Fr Bruce Barnes said the scheme would cause enormous difficulties for funeral corteges getting to Carisbrooke Cemetery.

COUNTY PRESS 28/6/2002

## HOW PEDESTRIANISATION PLAN WILL HIT NEWPORT TRAFFIC



### Key to map's colour coding

- Two-way system
- One-way direction
- Proposed pedestrianised area
- Reversed traffic flow
- Bus contra-flow. Arrows indicate one-way flow for all other vehicles
- New one-way direction

21/5/02

## Residents fear for children's safety

Continued from page 1.

PYLE Street residents Alison and Dick Doran, who support pedestrianisation, feared for the safety of their three young children as their front door is right beside the road which would have hugely increased traffic flows, including delivery lorries.

"Already getting out of Lower Pyle Street onto Coppins Bridge is a complete nightmare and this will make it worse. We are worried about our children's safety and damage to our house from heavy traffic," she said.

Chemist Jim Sidy was concerned about access to his own business and to Boots, both of which would be in the traffic-free area.

"Patients will also have problems getting to GP surgeries in Pyle Street and West Street, particularly the elderly," he said. However, Kevin Smith, chief executive of the IW Chamber of Commerce, welcomed

the scheme, especially as the majority of those who responded to a council questionnaire were in favour.

"For too long Newport has suffered from a lack of signage, to the detriment of visitors and Island people.

"Newport Business Association is in favour in principle, provided there is proper re-routing of traffic. We would echo that and would like to see a cocktail of measures to provide a safe environment for residents and shoppers along with adequate parking," said Mr Smith.

Mr Matthews said many of the issues, including access for articulated lorries, would be looked at when a detailed plan was drawn up but it would be premature and costly to tackle all issues at this stage when the scheme might not even go ahead.

In any event, there would be a further period of public consultation when the traffic orders were advertised.

The council agreed in principle to pedestrianise Newport back in July 2000.

COUNTY PRESS 31/5/02

## Officers' bid to pedestrianise is no walkover

COUNTY PRESS 17/5/02

LARGE sections of the Newport community will be angered whichever way councillors vote on controversial proposals to pedestrianise much of the town's High Street.

On May 29, members of the IW Council's environment and transport select committee will decide on pedestrianisation plans.

The council's own survey found 63.2 per cent of people in favour. However, Cllr Mike Cunningham, member for Newport South, said 96 per cent of people who responded to a poll he organised were against the proposals.

Cllr Cunningham accused the council of concentrating its own consultation process — that included the distribution of 20,000 leaflets — on the positive aspects of pedestrianisation.

Pedestrianising the High Street between Mill Street and Holyrood Street was the most popular option.

The select committee is being urged by officers to approve that scheme, modified to overcome objections. One proposed revision is

the abandonment of the proposed link between Mill Street and Foxes Road that runs along the Sainsbury site and the other is the improvement of traffic flow along a narrow section of Trafalgar Road.

The council's executive will have the final say.

Local transport planner Chris Wells said: "If the executive does agree some form of pedestrianisation, the proposed traffic changes will be advertised very quickly afterwards and on-site work would proceed as soon as practicable, bearing in mind that £1 million has been set aside for Newport centre improvements during the current financial year."

But Cllr Cunningham is determined to fight on.

He said: "Three public meetings organised by the Labour Party, the council and the headteacher of Nine Acres Primary School all reached the resounding conclusion that they do not want it to happen."

Cllr Cunningham also claimed his canvassing reflected a more accurate expression of the true opinions of Newport people.

## Planners back new car park for Newport

SHOPPERS should find it easier to park in Newport following a decision by IW planners to allow a 100-space car park to be created on Hurst's gas bottle yard in Sea Street.

The short-stay car park will include spaces for the disabled and the access to and from it is to be widened and improved.

The decision should go some way to compensating for the loss of almost 80 spaces through the introduction of pedestrianisation in the town, although a consultants' report shows that between 1998 and 2000 there was a reduction in spaces from 1,461 to 1,225, which have not been restored.

The site, which is owned by W. Hurst and Son, will be used by its customers as well as people visiting other shops in the town and the nearby Quay Arts Centre.

Members of the development control committee meeting on Tuesday were urged by Hurst's to allow the scheme, particularly in view of the recent permission given for a huge B&Q warehouse development with a large car park outside town on the IW College site.

A report to members said: "Hurst's hope the council will not jeopardise the viability of a local retailing business now employing over 100 Island people at the expense of a major national retailer."

The site was deemed unsuitable for buildings as it is in a flood plain with the Lukely Brook running through it.

A bridge will be built over this to take both vehicles and pedestrians across the brook and the parking area will extend around the back of the Railway Medina pub.

Newport councillor Mike Cunningham described the car park as an excellent scheme, with a lot of local support.

COUNTY PRESS 9/8/02.



Pyle Street residents Dick Doran, his wife, Allison, and children, Katie, 11, Paddy, ten, Sandy, five. 0602-006673

# Residents' anger at pedestrian plan

RESIDENTS and businesses in Pyle Street, Newport, have come out against the latest pedestrianisation scheme for the town, which will bring 730 cars an hour down the upper part of the narrow street at peak times.

They fear the proposed 12-month trial will go ahead regardless of their fears, leaving them wedged between the heavy traffic on one side of their homes and the proposed South Street shopping and car park development.

The revised scheme was drawn up after residents in other areas objected to four options put forward by the council.

These were scrapped and the new proposal involves taking all High Street traffic down Pyle Street during the day, which would be made one-way.

Highways experts predict the new scheme, outlined in last week's *County Press*, will ease congestion at Coppins Bridge. But residents seem unlikely to see the benefits.

"It's the safety and noise factor. We get boy racers now in the

evening," said Dick Doran, a computer worker who lives with his health visitor wife, Alison, and their three children Katie, 11, Paddy, ten, and Sandy, five, at Orme House.

"The children's bedrooms are just a yard from the street. We can put up with being in the centre of town but we don't want heavy traffic day and night."

Another resident, teacher Mike Torreggiani, said: "Lorries make the house shake now, so I don't know what it will be like when all the traffic comes down here."

Mandy Pragnell, who lives with her husband and children in the home she was brought up in, said: "We are going to be sandwiched between two lots of car fumes."

She said her son, Charlie, seven, had twice almost been hit on the pavement by people driving from the fire station car park.

John Fry, managing director of builders Geoffrey Osborne said it was difficult enough now coming out of Pyle Street and traffic often tailed back down the road.

Paul Clark, acting superintendent of the IW police, said:

"There will be consultation and the issues of concern to the police, such as access for emergency vehicles into Pyle Street and Coppins Bridge, will be prime matters."

Ann Shackleton, a mother of five young children, said she and her disabled husband, Jon, would have thought twice about moving into their South Wight Housing Association home had they known of the scheme.

"My husband has to use a wheelchair and with five children this will make it much more difficult for us," she said.

COUNTY PRESS  
(FRONT PAGE)  
7/6/2002

## 12-month trial recommended for Newport scheme

# Traffic-free plan gets thumbs up

A NEW scheme to pedestrianise Newport, bringing a massive 18-fold increase in traffic to Pyle Street, is being recommended to the IW Council for approval for a 12-month trial period.

Under the revised scheme, likely to cost around £700,000 — which was drawn up after widespread opposition from residents to previous options — almost all the traffic which previously used the High Street will be re-directed down Pyle Street, taking peak flows in the morning from 20 vehicles an hour to 350.

The Mill Street/Foxes Road link road, which had sparked a storm of protest at a series of public meetings in Newport, has been scrapped in the new scheme, which transport experts are confident will, combined with a new, more vehicle-sensitive traffic lights system, ease congestion at Coppins Bridge.

Predictions are that it will reduce traffic on other res-

By Suzanne Port

idental roads which would have seen increases under the previous schemes, such as Crocker Street, Mill Street, Caesars Road and Trafalgar Road.

However it was acknowledged at a packed meeting of the environment and transport select committee on Wednesday by head of highways Steve Matthews, that the brunt of the impact would be on Pyle Street, the entire length of which would be one-way.

Select committee members agreed that limited consultation could take place on the new scheme involving residents of Pyle Street, Trafalgar Road and Crocker Street, where residents remain concerned they will face increased traffic despite assurances to the contrary.

The scheme now being recommended to the executive for approval includes advanced route signing around the town for through traffic, improved signs to car parks and widening of pavements in Trafalgar Road which will be one way west-bound.

The main thrust of the scheme is to:

- Ban traffic from the High Street between Mill Street and Holyrood Street, probably between 10am and 6pm.
- Partial reversal of traffic flow in Mill Street to reduce eastbound 'rat run' through Crocker Street.
- Make Pyle Street one way for its whole length to take traffic which would have

used the High Street.

● Alternative car parking possibly on site of Hurst's bottle store for 100 cars, plus use of part of County Hall car park by public to compensate for loss of spaces elsewhere.

● Better access for buses agreed with Southern Vectis, including bus contra-flow from Coppins Bridge to bus station through to Hunnyhill.

● Coach drop off and collection point possibly in Sea Street for five or six vehicles.

● Deliveries to shops before 10am and after 6pm.

Mr Matthews said much of the work would benefit traffic management in and around Newport and even if the pedestrianisation scheme was scrapped after the 12-month trial period, many of the improvements, such as better signs, would remain.

A large number of residents asked questions, some of which related to the earlier schemes.

One, Stuart Clements, said the new scheme may solve problems for some areas but would bring increased through traffic to Whitepit Lane, Carisbrooke and Gurnville.

Geoff Lumley asked about the reliability of traffic flow predictions and Roger Merryweather, a representative of the giant Arcadia retailer which owns Dorothy Perkins, Top Shop and Burtons, was concerned about parking for shoppers.

● Cont. on page 5  
● See page 6 for map

COUNTY PRESS (FRONT PAGE)  
31/5/02

## Parking nightmare if traffic re-routed

From Mike Ripper.

**Voyager III, Odesca Marine, Little London, Newport:** IT WAS reported (CP, May 31) that under the scheme to pedestrianise Newport that almost all the traffic which previously used the High Street would be re-routed, which would bring about a massive 18-fold increase in the traffic in Pyle Street.

Inevitably this will result in a reduction of parking places in Pyle Street, which houses one of the most important medical practices in Newport at the Dower House and, lower down, the Community Dental Service.

Parking is difficult at the best of times, but for those of us who are either elderly or in need of medical or dental services it will become a nightmare.

To suggest that alternative parking would be possibly available at Hursts' bottle store and the existing County Hall car park is really not practical as it would be too far for many to walk to the surgeries.

I trust the planners will bear this in mind before they go firm on the existing scheme.

From S. J. Sawyer, 2 Maybrick Road, Ryde.

WHO is Steve Matthews, the IW Council head of highways, trying to fool?

At a meeting of the environment and transport select committee, highways indicated that there would be 350 vehicles per hour in Pyle Street at peak times and as low as 20 at others, if it is used as a by-pass for the Newport High Street pedestrianisation scheme.

In a report presented to the IW Council development control committee on October 16, 2001 and again on November 6 he stated that the traffic flow to and from a small industrial site, at the end of Sherbourne Avenue in Ryde, would be 300 vehicles an hour continuously throughout the working day.

So who is he trying to convince?

The residents of Sherbourne Avenue to accept houses and encourage the planning committee to make a decision in favour of the owners and developer of the site, for the purpose of housing, which the majority of residents do not want.

Or is he trying to placate the genuine fears of the residents of Pyle Street by seriously under-estimating the peak traffic flow.

So come on Steve, isn't it about time that you separated fact from fiction?

COUNTY  
PRESS  
14/6/02

## Traffic scheme 'on the cheap'

From Brian Lansley,

39 Avondale Road, Newport:

I HAVE travelled round Newport for 60 years on wheels and have watched the arrivals of the first one-way street, the first pedestrian crossing and the first traffic lights.

I have watched the worsening congestion, most of which has been caused by the sheer increasing volume of traffic, with some of it exacerbated by new traffic systems, notably some one-way streets and Coppins Bridge roundabout.

For more than 30 years I was proprietor and instructor of the Newport School of Motoring, founded by me in 1962. My knowledge of Newport has, therefore, been very detailed for many years. Now, in my present work, I organise deliveries throughout the Island, so I am still in touch daily, and understand all of Newport's problems and most of those in the other towns as well.

Pedestrianisation is a worthy aim but to be successful, safe and viable, it has to have two things — first a bypass, a wide, safe road and preferably without buildings.

Second, car parks with sufficient capacity to allow pedestrians to shop in the precinct and be able to carry their purchases to the car.

Newport has neither; the nearby car parks (all Newport car parks, in fact) are full by 10am daily and there is no safe bypass for Newport High Street.

The only car parks which are usually able to take extra cars are those of the supermarkets, but even these sometimes have queues.

A scheme far more imaginative than that of sending all traffic down Pyle Street from west to east is required.

I do not think there is a method which would work, without a bypass and without extra car parks.

The IW Council should formulate a long-term plan and not seek a botched temporary solution.

From J. H. V. Farthing,

19 Clarence Road, Newport:

SO the farce continues. I refer, of course, to the latest pedestrianisation proposal. Apparently highway experts claim that the scheme will reduce congestion at Coppins Bridge (CP, June 7); common sense suggests the opposite.

Coppins Bridge will have to take additional traffic from at least two sources — traffic coming from the Carisbrooke direction wishing to go south and local and town traffic from the north of the town wanting to get to the south side. Neither of these presently have to use Coppins Bridge. Some will

From Cllr Mike Cunningham

(IW Council), Peppercorns, Whitepit Lane, Newport: THERE is to be a fourth public meeting on the subject of Newport High Street pedestrianisation on Wednesday, June 26, starting at 6.30pm in the Parish Hall, Town Lane, Newport.

Its purpose is to help sort out the hurriedly resolved decision voted in by most of the IslandFirst Group and Labour member of the environment and transport select committee who, understandably, did not favour any of the four road route options put out for consultation.

Residents, particularly of the south side of Newport, are invited to express their views on substantial changes in traffic flows affecting their homes.

These include the dreadfully narrow Trafalgar Road, part of which suggests a one-way improvement system, Pyle Street, and the implications for West and East Streets feeding into Chapel Street with also a 50 per cent hike in Medina Avenue traffic flowing south.

probably try Whitepit Lane from Carisbrooke but that has its own problems.

I would like to remind councillors and the public in general of two items of history which affect these proposals.

About 25 years ago it was planned to widen Shide Road and Whitepit Lane and turn that route into the town's southern ring road.

This would have been a start to providing the town with an outer perimeter of roads which would have allowed more pedestrian precincts. Shide Road was eventually narrowed!

About 15 years ago the highways department hired a large vehicle to drive around the town one Sunday in a practical trial to ascertain which corners and routes were sensibly negotiable by such vehicles.

I understand that the outcome of the trial was, to the effect that, what we have may not be very good but we cannot change it without a lot of demolition.

Nothing has significantly changed since that time.

It will be interesting to see what changes are proposed to allow large vehicles to exit Pyle Street onto the Coppins Bridge complex without totally blocking off the South Street traffic when stopped by a red light.

A programming change will be insufficient. I see a couple of additional sets of traffic lights looming. Or will it be demolition?

COUNTY PRESS  
21/6/02

From Mrs J. Kirkby,

27F Holyrood Street, Newport:

ARE our IW councillors and council officers so afraid of losing face that they feel bound to the pedestrianisation of part of Newport High Street, come what may?

What a foolish scheme, wasting £700,000 to push traffic from the High Street to Pyle Street. I really think it will cause chaos; now it is OK for pedestrians to cross Pyle Street, but not the High Street.

For goodness sake, Cllr Shirley Smart, council leader, councillors and officers admit you have made a mistake and be honest with the public, leave the whole sorry mess alone and spend the money on the many rural roads that are a peril to walkers.

Now from bad to good: I'd like to pay tribute to the street cleaner I saw in Holyrood Street early one morning, he did not let one scrap of paper or cigarette butt escape his brush and shovel — well done.

COUNTY  
PRESS  
7/6/02

7/6/02

COUNTY PRESS  
5/7/2002

# Blue Peter badge for Pyle St 'plan'

**From M. Torreggiani, 21 Pyle Street, Newport:**  
AN OPEN letter to Cllr Fox. THERE are a number of questions, which I feel, should be answered by Cllr Fox concerning the proposed pedestrianisation of Newport High Street. The answers should be of concern to all Island residents.

Cllr Fox needs to explain why the survey carried out by Mott McDonald was not mentioned in the consultation document.

This document misled the public by showing beautiful impressions of a traffic-free High Street but did not mention the misery it would cause the surrounding residential streets.

Explanation is also needed as to why the option voted on by councillors on May 23 was not in the consultation document. This option was submitted by the highways department, who according to the Best Value inspection service, gave poor overall service with poor prospects for improvement. (2000/2001 review).

The council plan was quoted to be a Blue Peter alternative at the public meeting held on Wednesday, June 26.

We were told by Mr Matthews that this was not so and the plan had been thoroughly worked out. However, when questioned as to why council officials were seen measuring the width of Pyle Street

at various points on Friday, June 21, we were told that they needed to know, just in case they were asked at the meeting. Yet, I repeat, according to Mr Matthews, this is a thoroughly well worked out plan. Is this so, Cllr Fox?

To prevent heavy transport from West Wight coming through Newport town centre, Mr C. Wells, (officer in charge of pedestrianisation), told me that it was planned to direct such traffic through Betty Haunt Lane and then onto Forest Road. Is the council preparing to buy land to widen the proposed route, Cllr Fox, or is the lane going to be a one-way road?

As pedestrianisation is envisaged to last from 10am to 6pm, how is traffic flow from Mill Street to be controlled? During pedestrianisation, traffic emerging into the High Street will have to turn left but at other times right! How is confusion to be prevented Cllr Fox?

Cllr Fox, I ask you, what are the projected traffic flows for the future, in five years and ten years time? Are we just creating problems for the future? I would like to suggest that if the spending of £700,000 is the problem then the High Street be kept as it is, with further work done to make it more pedestrian friendly, the balance being used to make other major routes through Newport safer.

Cllr Fox, many residents of central Newport await your reply.

## Keep to UDP policies please

**From: Philip Cave, Tri-First Discount Store, Pyle Street, Newport.**

I RESPECTFULLY remind all IW councillors of the millions of pounds that was spent on the IW unitary development plan 1996-2011 and to keep policy to this plan.

The plan is quite clear on this matter when it mentions the 22 conservation areas on the Island. One of the areas is Pyle Street in Newport.

I would like to quote from the plan: "The primary object in designating a conservation area is to protect the character of that area."

- To promote, protect and enhance the historic built environment and its setting;
- To ensure the appropriate detailing and use of traditional buildings and materials;
- To ensure uses of historic buildings are appropriate;
- To consider future conservation area designation.

If any councillor that reads this letter and can explain to me and all the other residents of Pyle Street and the Island that sending 18 times more traffic down Pyle Street is in keeping with the unitary plan please don't hesitate to contact me and explain.

Pyle Street is in a conservation area deemed to be worth protecting.

Please don't waste the millions spent and please be honest and keep to your own policies when deciding this issue.

COUNTY PRESS  
21/6/02

**From Sam Turner, 29 Jeals Lane, Sandown:**  
I AM really concerned about the manipulation of public feeling regarding pedestrianisation of Newport High Street.

Over and over again the vast weight of local public opinion has been against the proposal — yet the IW Council continues to tell us that the public are for it.

Where does the council get the figures for its claim of 63 per cent support? I hope it is not from internet polls, the most suspect and worthless form of polling.

IW Radio recently informed me by fax that its website poll had also produced a positive feeling for pedestrianisation but I was told that it wasn't just Islanders who were voting, it was nationwide, possibly worldwide.

I was told results were based on 250 responses. Why have mainlanders and others been allowed to vote on such a contentious local Island issue and is the IW Council quoting from similar internet polls?

To IW Radio, IW Council and any other officialdom I would urge don't ever quote from internet polling where random public voting is part of the process.

At best such internet voting is fun for webbies, but worthless, unverifiable and without trust for the rest of us in the real world.

## Hands up if you fall for this bit of spin

**From Philip Cave Tri-First discount store, Pyle Street, Newport:**  
CAN I make some observations and hope that any councillors who read them will see a bit of very much-needed common sense.

■ Pyle Street is a dangerous road for pedestrians on the corner with St James's Square.

■ The increase of vehicle exhaust will be intolerable compared with the High Street as the road and pavements in parts are much narrower.

■ Some of the buildings are listed and the extra heavy traffic would be a big strain on them.

■ Stephen Matthews, head of highways, has assured me that the loading and unloading bay outside of Gays, Murray Liags and Tri-First will not be changed so how, when big lorries are unloading and there is a queue to get into Summerfield's car park, will the traffic flow be continuous?

■ How, when there are now three lanes that are clogged with traffic at the bottom of the High Street at peak times, will Pyle Street take this?

■ The council gave planning permission for tables in St Thomas's Square so to now send 18 times more traffic with the exhaust fumes is utter folly and a danger to the health of people eating and drinking.

■ Pyle Street is a residential road as well as a business road and to put 18 times more traffic on it and past a busy doctor's surgery is a complete nonsense.

■ The Catholic church has to have ample room outside for cars and hearse at funerals. This will also be the same problem for the planned Congregational church next door.

This exercise has cost at least £20,000 and now the council want to spend another £700,000 of our money on a scheme that is trying to make a silk purse from a pig's ear.

I am convinced that some councillors don't seem to live in the real world. On the day the council sent this silly scheme to the next stage, one of our councillors suggested that, if the pedestrian scheme was passed, shoppers from Portsmouth, Southampton and other south coast towns would make special trips to Newport to shop.

Hands up who believes that!

**Cllr Tony Tiltman (IW councillor for Newport North), 29 Victoria Road, Newport:**

CAN I correct the information given to your readers by Cllr Mike Cunningham (CP letters, June 21). I did not vote with the IslandFirst group at the recent environment and transport select committee in favour of the latest Newport pedestrianisation proposal.

I abstained because, whilst I am much happier with this latest proposal than the original ones, I first want to see measures taken to alleviate the potential effects on Pyle Street residents.

The number of residents affected by the latest proposal are far less than were affected by the original proposals but it is still not totally right.

Perhaps if Cllr Cunningham had not appointed the outside consultants to look into pedestrianisation in the first place, when he was the council transport spokesperson, he would not now feel the need to spread misinformation?

**From Ron Morris, 2 Bayview Road, Gurnard:**

TO STATE the obvious, much of Newport's traffic problems would be solved if through traffic did not need to use Newport's roads. A road tunnel with an entrance along the Mall emerging via a hammerhead — one exit at St George's Way and the other along Fairlee Road — would relieve most of Newport's roads of their present congestion.

There is nothing revolutionary about tunnels, central London's main roads without their underpasses and overpasses would be hopelessly choked up as will the roads in Newport be very soon.

COUNTY PRESS  
28/6/2002

## too narrow for traffic

**From Martin Lewis, 17 Shippards Road, Brighton:**

I CANNOT believe that the IW Council thinks that its new road scheme for Newport will work.

Any shopper from West Wight will now need to use Pyle Street and Coppins Bridge to get to a supermarket, whereas before they could use Trafalgar Road for Safeway or Crocker Street for Sainsbury's.

Also has the council not noticed that with three lanes at the bottom of the High Street the tailbacks still go up to the Vine pub and beyond at busy times? How far back will they reach when they have to cross St James's Street, put up with the queue at Somefield car park and have only a narrow exit at the bottom?

Newport will become a no-go area and could end up as a minor town.

From what I can see the only people to gain from this plan is the council employees themselves.

When they finish work they can leave their own car park (lucky them), drive up Quay Street and down the unpedestrianised part of the High Street and go, no queue in sight. Coincidence, or what?

## Hidden agenda in Pyle St scheme?

**From M. Torreggiani, 21 Pyle Street, Newport:**  
Cllr Fox is disingenuous in his reply to my open letter in (CP, July 5).

He states that the answers to my questions can be found in the consultation document produced by the IW Council. How can this be so when 'Option E' is a fifth plan while only four proposed plans were consulted upon? Answers are required to the concerns laid out in my letter and Cllr Fox has not been forthcoming.

Cllr Fox states that residents should have faith in his desire to do what is right for the community. How can this happen when he is not prepared to listen to genuine concerns and answer relevant questions?

Residents have asked for more detailed answers but council officials either can't, won't or are unwilling to divulge anything, stating that they will do so once agreement to proceed with 'Option E' is made. Surely this is not consultation.

The only conclusion I can reach is that perhaps there is a hidden agenda for the redevelopment of other parts of central Newport, eg Newport Bus Station, which requires this revision of traffic flow, and that vested interests in County Hall are the driving force for this change.

COUNTY PRESS  
19/7/02

## 'Not me guv excuses from councillors

COUNTY PRESS  
26/7/02

From David Holmes,  
St Winifreds, Cliff Road, Totland Bay:  
BOTH flattered and amused am I, finding myself accused of constant carping by Cllr Ernie Fox, IW Council portfolio holder for transport (CP letters July 19).

Our LibDem — IFy — councillors clearly get rattled when members of the public draw attention to their ongoing failure.

In this case their failure to complete the Newport to Ryde resurfacing project anywhere near their own (revised) timetable.

However Ernie admits in his letter that, yes, it was late and, no, they didn't manage to align the manhole covers when they flattened the blacktop.

More worryingly perhaps our Ern admits in his rebuttal of my 'constant carping' that until work virtually started, they hadn't noticed that another £750,000 of pavement and kerb works were required — £750,000, you could put on a rock concert for that kind of taxpayers' cash.

Reading between the lines of Ernie's adopted 'New Labour style' 'service delivery' jargon, he tells us it's all down to highways staff being overworked.

He helpfully advises that I could have avoided his mid-summer jams by not driving twist Ryde and Newport. Perhaps highways staff themselves took his advice and haven't been to Ryde in recent months. This might explain why they failed to notice the chaos on Ryde Esplanade.

It's now mid-July and IW Council has (quite incredibly) resorted to asking the contractor to throw the towel in. Pity poor highways!

Overworked officers may be but they still insist on devastating Newport with a clearly vital one-way system.

How on earth will they find the time for this obviously very popular but high cost experiment?

Many people I hear, both inside and outside County Hall are predicting some tough criticism from the government audit team.

Time will tell.

But I notice several prominent LibDem executive members seem to be getting in their 'not me guv' excuses early.

Admitting past failures but naturally denying any responsibility.

# Newport traffic decision in best interest of Island

From Cllr Ernie Fox (IW Council executive member for transport.), 8 Northwood Drive, Ryde:

GIVEN M. Torreggiani's understandable close interest in the proposals to pedestrianise Newport High Street

(CP letters, July 5) it seems extremely unlikely that he has not yet seen the centre pages of the consultation document, given very considerable publicity and subject of several very lively public meetings.

Several of his questions in his open letter to me are already

addressed within this document and most others have already been subject to comment and observations.

Some are subject to continuing observation and survey by both officers and our consultants so that I, as the executive member for transport, can be sure that the recommendation I finally make to the executive on this matter is sound and sustainable.

To date consideration of the options to pedestrianise part of the High Street have led to the select committee for the environment and transport recommending that, subject to further consultation with the residents and the businesses directly affected, traffic would be directed west to east through Pyle Street and a part of Trafalgar Road would be made one way west.

We are still very firmly in the consultation process and all concerns raised during the entire consultation process are being further considered and will be discussed at yet another public meeting to target some of those concerns but also to specifically address comments from residents and businesses in Trafalgar Road and Crocker Street.

The best answers or advice I can give to Mr Torreggiani or to others is to have faith that we share a desire to see that whatever we do (or do not do) is shown to be in the best interests of the Island.

From Cllr Mike Cunningham (IW Council), Peppercorns, Whitepit Lane, Newport:

ONCE more the IW Council has been told by Newport residents, businesses and now the clergy to rethink its pedestrian policy on closing off traffic from the High Street.

Those attending the Pyle Street public meeting say all it would do is send diverted traffic on a tortuous route past homes and annoy the same pedestrians filtering across the length of Pyle Street on their way to or from the High Street. Such a volume of displaced traffic has then to emerge 100 metres south on Coppins roundabout where it is suggested this notorious gyratory will work easier than it does.

Your report (CP, June 28) of the fourth such public meeting reflected well the mood and much of the antipathy towards the Pyle Street alternative.

Surely with so many unanswered questions put by a very astute audience at that packed meeting, the case is made for dropping this proposed scheme. Such available funds should instead be used on general pedestrian improvements for all shoppers and visitors and throughout the town.

We need instead to concentrate more on making the whole of the High Street easier to cross, make part of Trafalgar Road one-way, and

introduce traffic calming and 20mph zones to both these main areas as was successfully demonstrated by Brading High Street improvements last year.

Finally, as to an accusation that I appointed Mott MacDonald to carry out a traffic survey, made by my council colleague Tony Tiltman who I supported in getting the ridiculous Caesars Road/Drill Hall Road route option rejected, it is not true.

That decision was made by the old-style transportation committee, well before I was invited to take the portfolio for transport on the Executive which at that time had to be politically proportional.

If Tony Tiltman is looking for someone to blame then he needs reminding it is deputy Prime Minister John Prescott MP who introduced the Ten-Year Transport Plan calling for traffic ban measures in large cities and towns. I am sure he would agree that Newport, as a small market town, barely fits that description.

The nub of this fiasco is that earlier public consultation failed miserably to inform the public of the consequence of that expensive Mott MacDonald report. The meeting the other did just that.

## Crackpot ideas for capital

From Harry Kyle, 35 Inglewood Park, St Lawrence:

I HAVE been following the correspondence on the proposal to pedestrianise Newport High Street with increasing disbelief.

Despite what is obviously total public opposition, our incompetent, useless council continues to pursue this unnecessary, unwanted, impractical and expensive idea.

We all know that pedestrianisation is dependent on two requirements; an adequate ring road or bypass and good access to premises for the unloading of goods, neither of which is available at Newport.

Thus the proposal to spend £700,000 on such a scheme is a sure sign that the IW Council has lost its grip on reality, especially as it is currently proposing to cut a number of desperately needed services in order to save money.

If this sort of situation is the result of that unholy coalition called IslandFirst, then the sooner we are shot of it the better.

The Independents were elected to be just that, not the lapdogs of the inept, inadequate, profligate, disaster-prone LibDems.

If our Independent councillors really are sincere in their assurances that they are participating in IslandFirst for the good of the community, then they need to demonstrate that these are not merely empty words, but a commitment to prevent their LibDem partners from indulging in crackpot ideas like the Newport scheme and make them concentrate on the issues that are of prime importance. Or is that too much to ask?

COUNTY PRESS 12/7/2002

## Non-starter

From Mrs J. Kirkby,

27F Holyrood Street,

Newport: 2/8/02

SURELY it now must be absolutely clear to IW councillors that pedestrianisation of Newport High Street is a non-starter.

On Tuesday, July 23, a market day, with just part of the High Street closed, caused chaos. Buses were delayed and traffic crawled into and out of town.

I personally waited nearly an hour for an arranged pick-up. No wonder local people have stopped coming into the town on Tuesdays and some of our smaller traders are feeling the pinch.

The Tuesday market should be taken out of town forthwith (if we have to have one at all) and all idea of pedestrianisation consigned to the dustbin.

Speaking of which, we have plenty of bins throughout our towns, yet young and old alike ignore them and dump rubbish anywhere — is there no civic pride left?

COUNTY  
PRESS  
2/8/02