



THE TEDDINGTON SOCIETY

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The Editor,
Richmond & Twickenham Times

Sir,

TEDDINGTON'S UNWANTED £32,000 TRAFFIC SCHEME WILL CREATE NEW DANGERS FOR CYCLISTS

Thank you for publishing details in last week's Times of the Council's plans for radical and unwanted changes to our much loved and very efficient traffic scheme between Broad Street and the High Street. In stark contrast to detailed and very open and inclusive public consultation that took place in 2001/2, there has been a veil of secrecy - no publicity or consultation about the scheme, no posters on lampposts or on noticeboards, no letters to the 3500 households that were previously consulted, no four week exhibition in the library, nothing on the Council website, nothing in the Borough Forward Plan, and no consultations by Teddington's nine local Councillors.

As a result, 99% of Teddington's residents were completely unaware that a major and inadequately researched change to the layout had already been approved for installation, and no local resident – not even the Teddington Society with its 1000+ membership has been able to find out what has been going on behind the scenes. I asked whether Society representatives could attend a meeting between Cabinet Member for Transport Councillor Harrison, local Councillors and Officials as the Society has detailed records of the original design and other information, but this request was refused. Which was a pity, as I am the only person left from the very experienced but now retired Transport Engineer Colin Tether's 2001/2 Teddington Study Working Party that designed the present scheme, and the one who first proposed the staggered Zebra Crossing layout as a way to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety, and at the same time, reduce the very heavy traffic congestion and air pollution that blighted the lives of residents in all roads around and well beyond the junctions. It was with much relief to Colin and Working Party members that when the roads were reopened, and literally overnight, the traffic queues disappeared, pedestrians started using the Zebra Crossing as their first choice to get from A to B, and cyclists returned to the junction in droves from the 2001/2 starting point of about 120 cyclists per day to the present 1200 per day – and still increasing. Unfortunately the proposed scheme will bring many of these problems back.

I will not go into detail here about the Society's numerous concerns about the way this scheme has been handled and its newly created safety issues as these will be disclosed in our application for the whole design and planning process to be the subject of a Scrutiny Committee Review which will be submitted on Thursday. What I can say is that to herd cyclists, whether turning left or going straight ahead into one lane is a recipe for confusion and reintroduces the dangers of cyclists being trapped against kerbs that occurred almost daily before the two lane layout was introduced in March 2002. At particular risk will be the 111,000 cyclists who turn left into Waldegrave Road each year and by-pass the roundabout with a 100% safety record, in future they will be forced to enter the roundabout along with cyclists and cars going towards the High Street, so their very safe current route will become quite a risky and confusing route, with the real possibility of an accident.

I should like to conclude with a comment on the incorrect accident figures that have been circulated. It must be remembered that the High Street/Waldegrave Road mini-roundabout area is probably the busiest in the Borough, handling an estimated 35 million vehicles and 3 million cyclists in the period 2007 – 2011, so cannot be compared with a back street mini roundabout with little traffic, unfortunately this has been done and has mislead people. In the same period, there have been 13 minor accidents involving cyclists, 11 of which are near the exit of Waldegrave Road where it joins the roundabout. It will be no surprise to know that 80% of drivers causing these accidents do not live in Teddington, hence the Society's 2009 oft repeated request for the statutory "**Mini Roundabout GIVE WAY**" and "**Cycle Route Ahead**" signs to be put at the top of Waldegrave Road, and for the cycle lane to be re-painted red as per the original design. If these safety measures had been put in place in 2009, at least 5 or 6 accidents would not have happened, the 11 minor accidents would have become 6 or less, and this unwanted scheme which will have seriously adverse effects on the whole community would never have been proposed.

Yours etc,

Brian A Holder, Leader, Teddington Society Roads & Transport Group