

Ten in Ten

The 10 things that the Valley Parishes Alliance (VPA) would like to see in the next 10 years.

(for Transition Larkhall on 3 March 2018)

I am Steve Mackerness, a resident of Bathford, and a founder member of the Valley Parishes Alliance – an alliance of seven rural Parish Councils in the Avon and Limpley Stoke valley (B&NES and Wiltshire) to the east of Bath.

In discussing transport issues, for now let's discount building tunnels; running trams through narrow streets; introducing a congestion charge; dedicated busways; or cable cars.

What problems do we have? Two (mainly), viz. Congestion and Pollution. Too many vehicles – and too many of the 'wrong' type of vehicle. How can we reduce traffic volumes and clean up our air? We must recognise that: Bath traffic is predominantly 'local'; diesel cars contribute about the same proportion of NO₂ as do HGVs (on the London Rd and Bathwick St); and that healthy air quality is **actually within reach!**

Consider the following 10 in 10 (10 measures deliverable within 10 years):

1. Get through traffic away from the city, by promoting further improvements to the A350 from Warminster to Junction 17 of the M4. This would encourage through traffic (particularly HGVs) to choose a more easterly route rather than passing through the city.
2. Support the proposed M4 Junction 18A with a link to the Bristol ring road. This would further reduce through traffic.
3. Once A350 improvements are delivered, revisit the concept of banning HGVs from Cleveland Bridge. This would have immediate beneficial effects on both east-west, and north-south through HGV traffic.
4. Introduce a Clean Air Zone in the centre of the city (as has been proposed in Leeds, Birmingham, Nottingham, Derby and Southampton).
5. Tackle the school run – an issue which has an extremely significant effect on rush hour traffic - mainly in the morning. It requires a serious dialogue with B&NES, First Bus, and schools. Measures could include: staggering start times; running small contracted minibus services; joining forces with nearby schools; introducing lower fares for pupils; encouraging cycling with more dedicated cycle routes.
6. Support and expand improvements to public transport such as the use of Euro VI-standard engines in First's bus fleet (First is planning to cover 30% of the fleet shortly).
7. Review coach parking strategies, by making use of existing P&Rs.
8. Review options to remove traffic signals – which are known to impact negatively on traffic flow - wherever feasible.
9. Promote faster take-up of low-or-zero-emission transport by providing charging points in the city centre.
10. Ban older diesel vehicles in the city centre (as Stuttgart and Düsseldorf in Germany have already done).

The important principle must be pragmatism: what is practicable, and will it work?

BUT solutions must respect the special nature of Bath and its setting. Bath and its environs are indivisible. Anything that damages the one will surely greatly diminish the other. **Our vision is the protection of the unique status of both our World Heritage City AND its landscape setting.**

Thank you

I have brought some handouts further summarising: the VPA position; the facts concerning air quality in eastern Bath; and why an A36/A46 link road is not justified. Please feel free to take one.