# PENARTH TOWN CENTRE, COVID 19 AND SAFE SPACE

In the first lockdown we saw changes to the high street to make it COVID safe, cones to restrict traffic and make more pavement space for pedestrians, and a one way system. More recently we've seen the installation of a number of parklets which enable people to enjoy a coffee or lunch in a safer outdoor environment. And we know that more businesses would like parklets if they were made available by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

We've also had a comprehensive review of the town centre and a series of proposals (with evident public support) suggested by Penarth Town Council, GPG and Penarth Civic Society, setting out how a safe zone would work, where there could be more parking, how buses move and making sure there's space for deliveries.

And yet, now into the second year of COVID, the town remains the same. With the exception of the parklets, whose value is yet to be realised because we entered a third lockdown just as they were built and about to come into use, The Vale of Glamorgan has yet to act. Even though they have funds available from the Welsh Government to support a post COVID recovery in towns around the Vale. Even though Cllr Neil Moore has declared climate emergency.

**Supporting businesses**
We know that the current restrictions are having a huge detrimental impact on businesses in Penarth. We welcome the arrival of the shopappy scheme. Our calls to make Penarth more pedestrian friendly are rooted in evidence that indicates that changes to the look and feel of the town centre to make it more pedestrian-friendly do improve footfalls and increase turnover for local businesses. Creating safe spaces in Penarth will benefit residents, visitors and local businesses. Overleaf you will find links to the evidence, where you will be able to see for yourselves that it's a win, win situation that many other town centres across the UK who have already restricted traffic flow, are finding in these difficult times.

**Our ask**
A town centre that's open for people to shop, socialise, walk and cycle
A town centre that's safe, prioritising space for social distancing
A town centre that's healthy with clean air and space for nature

**Ask 1 - what we'd like to see in the long term**
Safe zones - room for social distancing, genuinely delivered in a meaningful way, creating a continental civic square feeling on Windsor Road and Lower Glebe Street. Creating a traffic free zone, other than for early morning deliveries and disabled parking.

**Ask 2 - how we might begin to get there**
What if we began with a pilot, opening the high street to walkers and shoppers for a limited time each week, say a Saturday morning to boost trade through a market and for cafes to have seats outside.

**Ask 3 - how you can help**
Join our group. All you have to do is sign up by completing the attached short form to show your support, or you can email us penarthunlocked@gmail.com. We have regular online meetings which you're most welcome to attend. Follow us on Twitter @penarthunlocked

**The Evidence**
Evidence to show that towns that are choosing to become more pedestrian-friendly are better for business, locals and visitors.

1. The Pedestrian Pound report presents the business case and economic benefit for better streets and places, focusing on how creating such places will help attract more footfall to our high streets. It provides case studies of high street regeneration from around the world, including Church Street Ebbw Vale, and Swansea. One example given is of investment in Piccadilly, Stoke-on-Trent that led to 30% more footfall in the area. Such improvements that increase footfall can be seen to directly lead to increased retail sales. See a summary of the business case findings here, this article also links to the full report https://www.highstreetstaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=233fa1b5-2c21-4d32-881e-31b3fb862e22

2. The Penarth Town Council Survey demonstrates the evidence of public support for the safe area plans. Evidence shows shopkeepers often overestimate the use of the car by up to 100%. The majority of customers walk into town. The survey conducted in Penarth also showed less car journeys than expected. Research also shows that pedestrians visit more shops and stay longer in town.
https://www.penarthtowncouncil.gov.uk/news/survey-results/

3. The Sustrans report shows evidence of the benefit to well-being and health, stating that 'making space on our streets is key to achieving cleaner air and a lower carbon footprint whilst building healthier, safer and more resilient communities. During covid-19 and beyond. Outdoor spaces free from traffic are vital to maintaining good mental and physical health. Research shows that those who regularly walk and cycle have a significantly lower risk of feeling stressed, anxious and depressed.'
https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/get-active/2020/in-your-community/busting-the-myths-around-low-traffic-neighbourhoods

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Name:

Business:

I support the making of a more pedestrian-friendly high street in Penarth, including
- ▢ Creating a safe zone on Windsor Road and Lower Glebe Street (Ask 1)
- ▢ A pilot to open the high street for shoppers & walkers (Ask 2)
- ▢ Join our group and/or come to a meeting online (Ask 3)