



Transition Bath

Analysis of trader responses to the survey entitled 'Chelsea Rd: promoting & enhancing Walking Access'

Aims of the walking access study

Transition Bath believes that walking and cycling access to all local shopping and service areas should be encouraged and improved. Many people both within Bath and visiting Bath regularly need to shop and access services without a car, and we believe many others would choose to do so if it were safe, pleasant and convenient. Transition Bath believes that local high streets are an important heart for the local community and it is important to encourage them to thrive, as they benefit the local economy, health and social identity.

The Transport & Built Environment group has produced a map that show that many people in Bath live within 10 minutes' walk of a neighbourhood hub (with shops, cafés and other amenities), highlighting the resources that are available to residents and customers within easy walking and cycling distance. However it is also clear that many people choose not to do make use of these, and furthermore that one of the reasons for this is the lack of safe walking and cycling access.

We wanted to look at a particular neighbourhood hub and so, inspired by a member of the group living just off Chelsea Road, thought this might provide an excellent example of a neighbourhood hub where improvements might be made. Chelsea Road is a local high street serving a dense residential community. Nearly a quarter of households within walking distance have no car.

How the access proposals were developed

To understand the area around Chelsea Road, in 2011 we surveyed all the households living north of the river within a 10-minute walk of Chelsea Road to find out their shopping habits and their views on how to improve the high street. We got a great level of response with 33% of households completing the questionnaire.

We also talked to as many of the traders in and around Chelsea Road as possible, and got 24 of the 35 traders (67%) to give us their perceptions of customer access. As with the householder questionnaire, this is a high response, and probably reflects the importance attached to these issues.

We got their perceptions in 3 main categories;

- Where customers live: 58% said that "most" or "all" of their customers were local residents, and 17% said that more of their trade was from outside the local area. One trader considered that passing trade accounted for some of their customers, and each of the other categories comprised few or none of their customers, which was somewhat surprising.
- Where the target market lives: 33% felt that as a target market, local residents were more important than all the other categories, 8% said that non-locals making special trips were more important, 50% considered that various categories were equally important, and 8% did not answer this question.
- How customers get there: 38% thought that "most" of their customers walked, 50% felt some did, and 13% considered a few came on foot. 33% stated that most of their customers arrived by car, and the remaining 67% said some come this way. Only one trader felt that most of their customers arrived by cycle, 38% considered some did, and 58% said a few customers cycled. 13% felt that no customers came by bus or other modes, 42% said a few did, 42% thought some did and one did not answer this section.

We followed the householder and trader surveys up with public meetings in 2012, to discuss the particular issues and challenges of this area. Based on the questionnaire responses and the comments and ideas expressed in the meetings, the report 'Making Chelsea Road Local Centre Thrive' was launched in January 2013. This is available on our website, www.transitionbath.org/chelsea-road-project/.

We then created a small and diverse working group, and this met in spring and summer 2013, formulating optional schemes for consideration by local people. These were combined to form the survey questionnaire entitled 'Chelsea Rd: promoting & enhancing Walking Access', included as Appendix 1.

On the 2nd October 2013 from 7am to 7pm, B&NES carried out a traffic survey for Chelsea Road (summarised in Appendix 2), and found that only 418 (14.3%, or approximately 1 in 7) of a total 2924 vehicles using Chelsea Road that day stopped, and 156 (5.3%) were parked there. This includes delivery vehicles, cars, lorries, vans and bicycles. The number of these which represented people doing shopping or working in Chelsea Road was not recorded.

Details of the access proposals

The key proposals included are:

- creating two new crossings over Newbridge Hill, positioned either side of the end of Chelsea Road, to provide safe access;
- moving the crossing over Newbridge Road at the bottom of Chelsea Road nearer to the Post Office and narrowing the road at this point, to make it easier to cross;
- providing a new bus stop on Newbridge Road just to the east of Station Road, for buses coming from the city centre;
- opening up walking and cycling routes through the cemetery, to provide shorter, safer access;
- removal of through traffic without reducing parking, by closing the central section of Chelsea Road, and making this central section available for public and community uses, with trees, seating and cycle racks.

Results of the householder survey, undertaken previously

Residents in the project area have already been surveyed for their reactions to the proposed schemes. The questionnaire was delivered to 2,300 households in July - August 2014. 638 were returned (again, a decent response rate of 28%), with a third of those responding (nearly 9% of all households in the area) leaving additional comments.

Some of the proposals in the survey had widespread support in all four areas:

- Over 75% of respondents agreed with the idea of having two new crossings over Newbridge Hill at the north end of Chelsea Road (although 12 people (1.9%) felt that only one was needed);
- 73% approved of opening up walking and cycling routes through the cemetery, with a further 18 respondents (2.8%) approving of walking only (although 3.3% felt this was disrespectful); and
- 63.3% supported the scheme for a new bus stop on Newbridge Road.

However, other elements do not:

- Only 36.2% of householders supported narrowing Newbridge Road at the crossing point;
- Only 41.9% approved of the closure of the central section of Chelsea Road; while
- 66 people (10.3%) felt this would cause worse problems on other roads, and
- 14 respondents (2.2%) stated that this would only work if there were a left turn option or roundabout between Newbridge Road and Newbridge Hill.

Two further proposals have just over 50% approval amongst householders, meaning opinion is divided over them:

- 54.2% agreed with moving the crossing over Newbridge Road nearer to the Post Office; and
- 51.4% supported the idea of making the central section of Chelsea Road available for community uses, although
- 6 respondents (0.9%) were unsure community uses would entail.

We also got a large number of additional comments: in total nearly a third of respondents (203 households, 8.8% of all those in the survey area) made comments, covering a wide range of topics including those mentioned above. Some others to highlight are:

- 36 householders (5.6%) considered that the proposals could have safety implications;
- 19 respondents (3.0%) felt that there could be funding and value for money concerns;
- 19 people (3.0%) suggested a variety of alternative traffic calming measures;
- 15 respondents (2.4%) would prefer Chelsea Road to be one way; and
- 9 people (1.4%) felt that Chelsea Road should only be closed occasionally for special events.

Results of the trader survey

Traders were surveyed using the same questionnaire as householders (Appendix 1), and were also asked for alternative suggestions on how to improve access. 23 of the 35 traders responded (66% response rate). Another considered the survey 'not relevant to them'. The replies to the specific questions are shown in table 1.

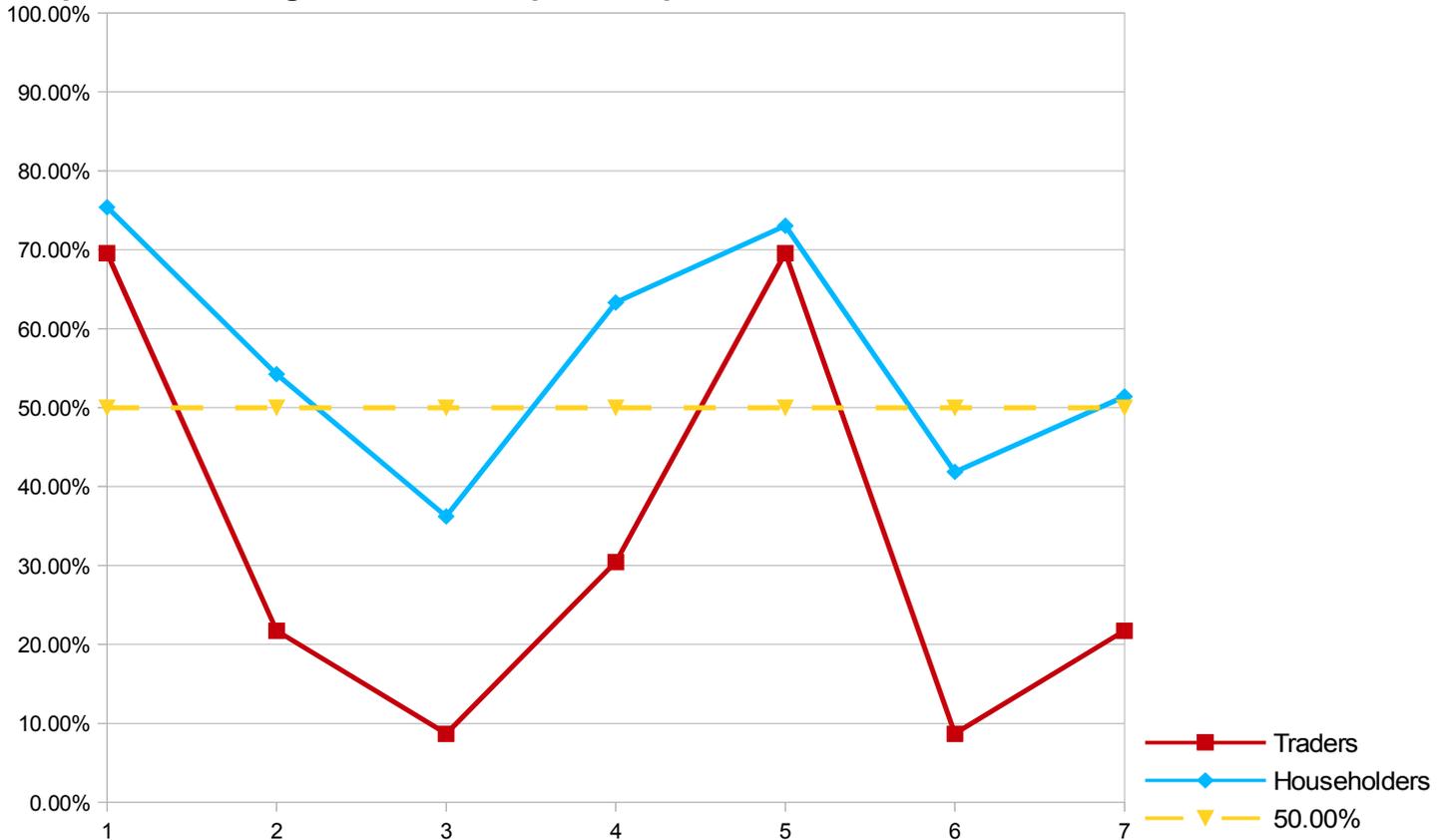
Table 1: Replies to the seven specific questions

Question	Yes (number & %)	No (number & %)	Maybe / no answer (number & %)
1. Do you agree with creating two new crossings over Newbridge Hill?	16 69.57%	5 21.74%	2 8.70%
2. Do you agree with moving the crossing over Newbridge Road nearer to the Post Office?	5 21.74%	17 73.91%	1 4.35%
3. Do you agree with narrowing Newbridge Road at this crossing point?	2 8.70%	20 86.96%	1 4.35%
4. Do you agree with providing a new bus stop on Newbridge Road to the east of Station Road?	7 30.43%	12 52.17%	4 17.39%
5. Do you agree with opening up walking and cycling routes through the cemetery?	16 69.57%	5 21.74%	2 8.70%
6. Do you agree with closing Chelsea Road to through traffic?	2 8.70%	20 86.96%	1 4.35%
7. Do you agree with making the central section of Chelsea Road available for community uses?	5 21.74%	17 73.91%	1 4.35%

The traders gave strong support to the proposals for providing two new crossings over Newbridge Road (question 1) and for walking and cycling routes through the cemetery (question 5), with both receiving nearly 70% affirmative replies. This is similar to the figure for householders (graph 1), but slightly lower.

All the remaining 5 proposals got favourable responses from less than a third of traders. Graph 1 shows that this contrasts markedly with the responses from local householders, who show support for a new bus stop on Newbridge Road (question 4), and are evenly split in views over both moving the crossing on Newbridge Road (question 2) and making Chelsea Road available for community uses (question 7).

Graph 1: Percentage affirmative replies to questions from traders and householders



This difference in opinion between traders and local householders is interesting, but the cause of it is unclear. Either or both of the following possibilities may provide the explanation:

1. The disparity may reflect the current customer base of the businesses - in the previous survey only 58% of the traders considered local residents to compose 'most' or 'all' of their customers, and 17% said that more of their trade was from outside the local area.
2. The need for deliveries and staff transport may make motor vehicle access more important for traders than it is for residents.

Alternative traffic solutions

Nine traders (39%) made a total of 15 suggestions. There were five ideas raised by more than one trader: improved parking; one way traffic; turning from Newbridge Road onto Newbridge Hill; a zebra crossing (over Chelsea Road itself); and speed bumps. Two traders had other solutions.

The full verbatim text of all the alternative suggestions received is below, grouped into themes:

Improved parking

- Better / more parking.
- Residents parking.
- Side ways parking. Decrease pavement width.
- Need to sort out hospital parking so that staff don't park all day around Chelsea Rd, Foxcombe, Warwick etc.

One way

- Make Chelsea Road one way, downhill.
- Chelsea Road should be made a one way road.
- One way traffic.

Turning from Newbridge Road onto Newbridge Hill

- Roundabout at Weston pub.
- Make it possible to turn left from Newbridge Road onto Newbridge Hill.

Zebra crossing

- A table with zebra.
- Zebra crossing on Chelsea Road.

Speed bumps

- A speed ramp on the road.
- Install sleeping policemen humps to control vehicle speeds.

Other ideas

- We could do with traffic calming on Chelsea Road.
- A full and total ban on vehicles over 1.5 tonnes to eliminate the traffic chaos and parking crises caused by large lorries delivering to Spar and other shops in this residential area.

Summary of comments

Nine traders (39%) made additional statements on the questionnaire. They largely provided reasons why the traders were opposed to one or more of the specific proposals. The full text of all the comments is in Appendix 3.

Most related to a single specific question:

Question 1 - the two new crossings over Newbridge Hill: one trader felt this would improve safety, but another thought both proposed crossings were too close to the existing roundabout.

Question 2 - moving the crossing over Newbridge Road nearer to the Post Office: one trader said this would make pulling out of Chelsea Road and Station Road difficult, while another considered it would cause congestion, back up traffic and make more vehicles use Chelsea Road. A third said that moving the crossing could cause accidents, while a fourth stated that the crossing was fine in its current location.

Question 3 - narrowing Newbridge Road at this crossing point: one trader thought this was not needed and would force traffic up Chelsea Road.

Question 4 - providing a new bus stop to the east of Station Road: one trader felt this would be useful as a drop-off / pick-up point to and from the Park and Ride service. A second queried whether it was necessary.

Question 5 - opening up walking and cycling routes through the cemetery: two traders indicated that although they objected to many of the other elements, they saw no reason to oppose this proposal.

Question 6 - closing Chelsea Road to through traffic: four traders felt this would exacerbate existing parking and congestion issues and would have a negative impact on the businesses. Two considered that deliveries would be a particular problem. One additionally said that turning traffic

could be dangerous, and another thought this could adversely affect property prices. One other trader queried why this scheme was proposed.

Question 7 - making the central section of Chelsea Road available for community uses: one trader said this sounded great but the road needed to be kept open. Another questioned what "community use" meant - they considered it vague and were concerned that the survey results were being manipulated. A third felt this proposal was unjustified.

Other comments: Only two traders made general observations. One said that sometimes you need to keep things the way they are, and any changes may make things worse. The second asked for more publicity for the public meetings, as they did not know when these happened (we informed all traders and local householders by posting leaflets through the doors).

Conclusions

The traders in and around Chelsea Road strongly supported two of the proposals:

1. creating two new crossings over Newbridge Hill and
2. opening up walking and cycling routes through the cemetery.

Both of these were approved of by 70% of the traders, and these schemes also had strong support from the householders surveyed previously.

All five of the remaining proposals had agreement from less than a third of traders, lower than was given by householders to even the least popular element of the schemes. This may or may not reflect either the importance of customers from outside the immediate area, or the effect of issues with deliveries and staff access.

Nine traders had alternative solutions, with the most common ideas being improved parking or one way traffic. Other suggestions were that traffic needed to be able to turn left from Newbridge Road onto Newbridge Hill, a zebra crossing over Chelsea Road, and speed bumps.

Though it is outside the scope of our design proposals, we agree with the two traders (and fourteen householders in the previous survey) who suggested making it possible to turn at the junction of Newbridge Road and Newbridge Hill, perhaps with a roundabout. This would alleviate the need for Chelsea Road to be used as a cut through between those two roads.

Almost all the comments received consisted of reasons why the traders opposed one or more of the proposed schemes, although one trader did request more publicity around the public meetings (we informed all traders via leaflets through their doors).

As a result of this project we anticipate at the very least that traders in tandem with local people can explore in greater depth some of the findings of both the trader and householder surveys and consider being involved in developing firm proposals to enhance walking access to and within Chelsea Road.

It is hoped traders and residents with their local ward councillors can seize the opportunity to help Chelsea Road become one of Bath's most vibrant neighbourhood hubs.

Analysis and report by Isobel Russell; survey and supporting work by Dick Daniel, Peter Metcalfe, Isobel Russell, Mark Russell, Roger Houghton, Gill Risbridger & Chris Heward.

To see all the stages of this project and access the reports produced, please see the website www.transitionbath.org/chelsea-road-project/.

Appendix 1: The survey entitled 'Chelsea Road: promoting and enhancing walking access'

Transition Bath Transport and Built Environment Group are doing a project to promote and enhance walking (and cycling or bus travel) to the Chelsea Road shops and services. We hope that this will benefit both the local shops and the local community. Chelsea Road is an important local shopping area, but currently used as a "rat run".

We did a survey of local households and traders, and produced a report called "Making Chelsea Road Local Centre Thrive" available at www.transitionbath.org/chelsea-rd. We then hosted a series of meetings for local residents and traders, followed by a small working group to which both residents and traders were invited. This working group came up with three traffic schemes, and decided on a preferred option, as shown in the map overleaf.

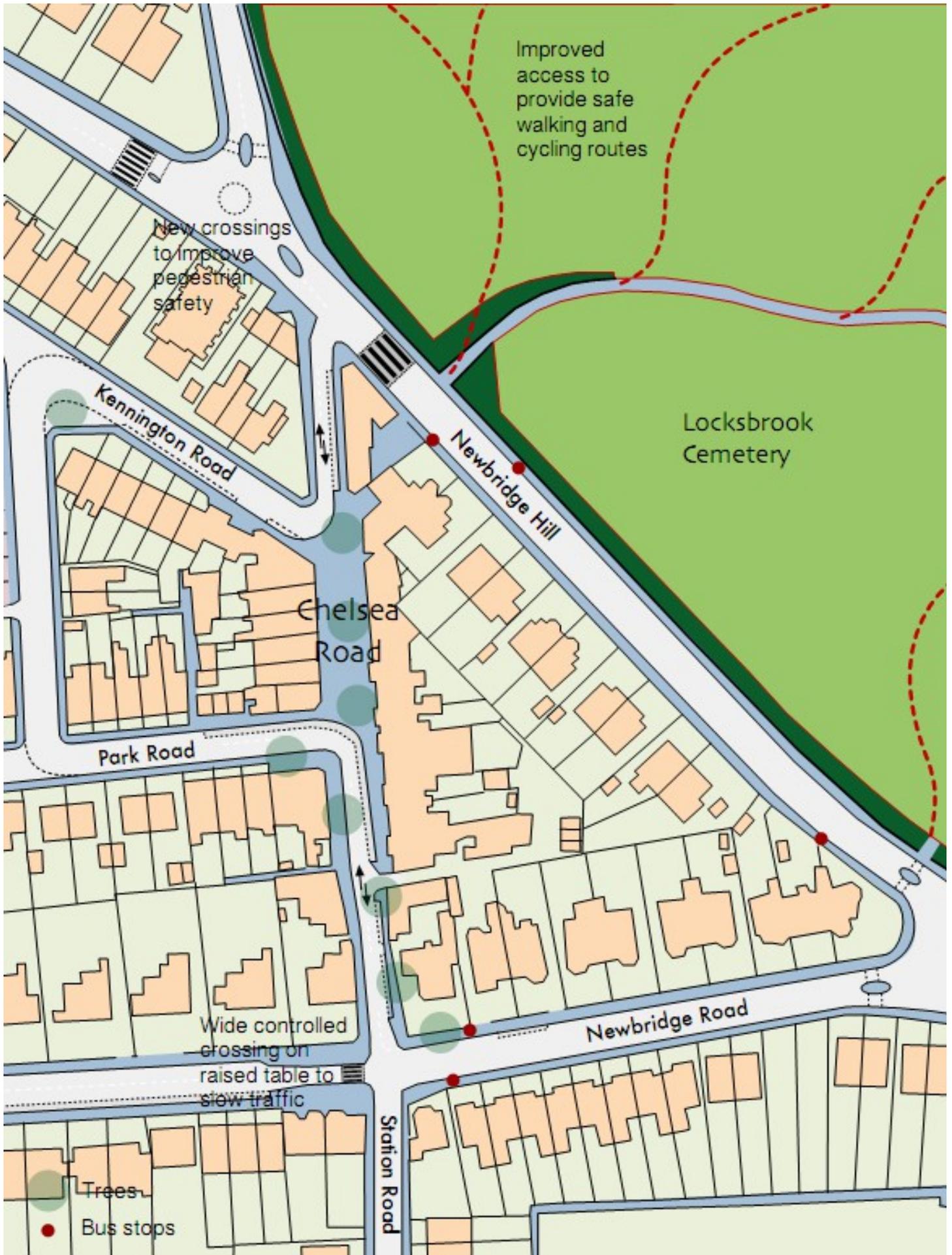
The key features of this proposed scheme, as shown on the map overleaf, are:

1. creating two new crossings over Newbridge Hill, positioned either side of the end of Chelsea Road, to provide safe access;
2. moving the crossing over Newbridge Road at the bottom of Chelsea Road nearer to the Post Office and narrowing the road at this point, to make it easier to cross;
3. providing a new bus stop on Newbridge Road just to the east of Station Road, for buses coming from the city centre;
4. opening up walking and cycling routes through the cemetery, to provide shorter, safer access;
5. removal of through traffic without reducing parking, by closing the central section of Chelsea Road, and making this central section available for public and community uses, with trees, seating and cycle racks.

We would like you to fill in the following questions, and it will be collected on _____.

- Do you agree with creating two new crossings over Newbridge Hill?
Yes..... No.....
- Do you agree with moving the crossing over Newbridge Road nearer to the Post Office?
Yes..... No.....
- Do you agree with narrowing Newbridge Road at this crossing point?
Yes..... No.....
- Do you agree with providing a new bus stop on Newbridge Road to the east of Station Road?
Yes..... No.....
- Do you agree with opening up walking and cycling routes through the cemetery?
Yes..... No.....
- Do you agree with closing Chelsea Road to through traffic?
Yes..... No.....
- Do you agree with making the central section of Chelsea Road available for community uses?
Yes..... No.....

Many thanks for completing this questionnaire.



Appendix 2: Summary of Chelsea Road Traffic CountUndertaken by Bath and North East Somerset Council on 2nd October 2013 from 7am – 7pm

	Cars	Vans	Lorries	Motorcycles	Bicycles	Total
Vehicles entering Chelsea Road from the South	1341	291	22	3	80	1737
Vehicles entering Chelsea Road from the North	919	177	28	5	58	1187
Totals	2260	468	50	8	138	2924

Number of vehicles parked in road = 156

Number of vehicles stopping in road = 418

Appendix 3: Full verbatim text of all comments

In many cases, the proposal referred to was denoted by the position of the comment on the page. This is denoted by text in square brackets [] .

[Question] 1) Agree with the two new crossings on Newbridge Hill as it will allow people to cross more safely.

[Question] 2) Moving the crossing closer to Station Road will cause considerably more congestion near the crossing. It will also cause traffic to back-up on Newbridge Road and force more traffic to use Chelsea Road as a cut through, thus making the traffic congestion issues on Chelsea Road worse, not better.

[Question] 3) Not necessary, again traffic will be forced up Chelsea Road.

[Question] 6) Absolutely not

a. From the retailers perspective

- i. This will reduce parking, making it difficult for people to visit the shops. As the majority of my customers arrive by car this would have a major impact on my business, possibly reducing it to the point where it would not be commercially viable.
- ii. Deliveries to all the shops will be even more difficult than at present and will necessitate carrying stock long distances. The congestion caused by delivery vehicles parking at either end of the road will cause even more congestion.
- iii. Many elderly people visit the shops, many are disabled and rely on parking being available close to the shops. Reducing parking and access to the shops will seriously decrease their quality of life.

b. From the residents perspective

- iv. The impact on parking and traffic use on Park Road and Kennington Road will be horrendous for the residents. They will have a significantly greater number of vehicles of all types using the road, with a marked increase in the numbers of commercial vehicles e.g. vans and trucks.
- v. If the parking along these roads is reduced, the residents will be completely unable to park outside their own homes. The competition for roadside parking in this area is bad enough already.
- vi. The area at the north end, between Kennington Road and Park Road will be used as a turning circle for all types of vehicles, and will be dangerous.
- vii. Closing the road may on paper appear to have merit as far as the local community is concerned. However, the shops are the hub of that community. If the traders are forced to close through a significant decline in revenues, which is the most likely consequence of the road closing, there will be no community and the area will become tatty. Nobody wants to visit a street of boarded shops.

[Question] 7) You are asking a question which is both open ended and unclear. What exactly does "community use" mean? Is this question only relevant if the central section of Chelsea Road is closed? This is vague to say the least, please be specific. I do have a serious objection to pressure groups asking questions of this type and manipulating the results.

More publicity for when these meetings take place would be appreciated. Did not know they took place.

(1) If closing road, losing park space on Chelsea Rd and around the back roads.

(2) Not sure if it's going to lose business? People may not come to Chelsea Rd, not enough parking.

(3) Talking to residents around the back they don't want traffic to go round there, lorries vans, cars.

(4) House values may drop? Road is going to be too busy.

(5) Sometimes you need to keep things the way they are trying to change things may make things worse. Talking to people around the area, people don't want this to happen.

Newbridge Rd crossing

(6) Leave traffic lights where they are. Moving forward toward Chelsea Rd, could cause accidents. They moved crossing years ago they were too close to the junction.

(7) Newbridge Hill

Don't mind new zebra crossing at Newbridge Hill or walk path through the cemetery.

[Question 4] It would be good to drop people & pick up to and from Park and ride to Chelsea Rd.

[Question 7] Sounds great but we need to keep road open.

[Question 6] How would we get deliveries / collections if road is shut? How would donors / customers park? Our donations + customer levels would drop if road blocked off.

Now if you will all remove those rose coloured glasses and come back to reality, firstly like it or not Chelsea Road is the only thoroughfare to link Newbridge Road to Newbridge Hill, it is not a rat run. Think of the alternatives, Old Newbridge Hill - Apsley Road - Rosslyn Road all non-starters. And as for closing part of Chelsea Road, words fail me! Who is going to tell the residents of Kennington - Foxcombe & Park roads they are going to lose half their parking spaces to enable the delivery trucks for the local shops to get through (that is if there's any shops left) because of lack of customer parking spaces. Finally I walk to most places around Bath (by choice, not pressure) I have found most crossing points adequate and where they are not controlled or where there is not a crossing point I use something called commonsense I look both ways and when the road is clear I cross it seems to work, I'm still here after 60 years. Perhaps Transition Bath would be better suited educating children how to avoid the dangers in life rather than cover them up with fancy schemes that will never see the light of day. I must be honest I don't have an alternative plan all I can tell you is that pedestrianising areas only forces our car-driving customers to other areas or out of town where parking is easy, free and no restrictions so please be careful what you wish for or you might not have any shops to WALK to. These are my thoughts and do not necessarily represent any other shops or trades in Chelsea Road.

[Question 2] Makes pulling out of Chelsea/Station Rd. difficult.

[Questions 6 & 7] No! No! Why!

[Question 1] Both too close to existing roundabout. [Question 2] It's fine where it is. [Question 4] If it's needed? [Question 5] Why not.