

## Notes of BWA meeting 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Present: Alan Morris, Jon Usher, Philip Davies, councillor Anthony Negus, Sue Willingham, Diane Jones, Gavin Spittlehouse, Beth Williamson, Janice Rossiter, Susan Carter, Steve Ewens, Suzanne Audrey, Roger Gimson, councillor Celia Phipps, Ben Barker, Jenny Smith  
Apologies: Jonathan Flower, Len Wyatt

### 1 Idling action and School Streets

Lauren Curl from the Council's Sustainable Transport team explained the Idling Action campaign - a programme of events, action days and advertisements to tackle unnecessary vehicle idling across the city.

Initially this is a **pilot project** till the end of March 2020, after which date funding has not been confirmed. However in that time it is hoped to facilitate activity by community groups which can continue beyond March, even if the pilot project is not extended. The more successful this is, with strong community support, the more likely it is that the project will be extended

The activities will be backed by **cross-Bristol publicity**, but its release has been held up awaiting approval from BCC Corporate Communications department. The publicity material will include: online material on the [cleanairforbristol.org](http://cleanairforbristol.org) website, social media, press release, radio adverts, billboards, leaflets. See the slide presentation for a sample myth-busting leaflet.

**Community groups** will be approached through as many networks/channels as possible. The offer will be to train a group of volunteers (minimum 4) on how to run a community action day. In some cases, there will be council officer involvement in community action days.

The campaign will be targeted at particular **destinations** (eg schools, transport hubs, hospitals, shopping centres) and **groups** (eg bus drivers, taxi drivers).

**Air Quality Action Days** will be run at schools, with activities at the school gate. This will be linked with active travel promotion, eg a Travelwest roadshow, 'Park and Stride' schemes, a walking map around the school. See slide presentation for more detail. Three schools have been selected for the initial pilot: Cathedral Primary, Parson Street Primary, Summerhill Academy. These are schools with a significant air quality problem, which are already engaged in active travel programmes, and are situated on busy roads that are not amenable to a School Streets approach. It is appropriate to target action at schools because children's lungs are particularly vulnerable to air pollution.

The initiative is in response to the Anti- Vehicle Idling Zones motion passed by Full Council in December 2018.

The scheme is based on [idlingaction.london](http://idlingaction.london), which has been running since 2016. Monitoring has shown that in some cases local NO<sub>2</sub> pollution has been reduced by up to 30%.

The main purpose of the meeting was for Lauren to gauge the level of support for the proposals and ideas for other targeted actions. The following comments/suggestions were made:

- Travelwest communications material tend to be focused on cycling, not walking. Living Streets has toolkits for promoting walking

- using cars to take children to school is a safety issue as well as a pollution issue
- other places where children are: nurseries and parks
- the Clean Air Zone will displace air pollution elsewhere
- a recycling centre is proposed on Hartcliffe Way near Parsons Street school, which may increase traffic volumes past the school
- the approach of selecting schools based on which schools respond was challenged. It was felt that the air pollution issue is so serious that school heads should be *required* to engage.
- one person reported trying to approach parents in cars outside schools and receiving an unsympathetic response. Someone else commented that if parents are targeted as being the problem, they will react negatively. Better to adopt a systems approach, and talk to people where they are on familiar territory in a relaxed situation, eg at a football match.
- enforcement is necessary as a back-up for encouragement. Lauren: the Council has powers but they are difficult to apply.

Post-meeting response from Lauren

Further investigation into the best way to implement enforcement of no-idling is under way. The investigation is of both financial feasibility and the impact it would have on air quality. The Council has not yet exercised its powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for engine idling. The reason that very few fines have ever been issued anywhere is that an FPN is seen as the last resort. The DfT guidance states that fines should be a last resort and can only be issued by an on-site person who has observed the behaviour and requested them to turn off their engine; the fine is for refusing to do so ... and so most drivers either turn their engines off on request or drive away.

Currently, Civil Enforcement Officers (parking wardens) do move people off the School Keep Clear zigzags, when idling and parked illegally. But Parking Services do not have the power to issue FPNs as these are issued under *criminal* legislation. A Traffic Management Order makes idling a *civil* offence, and thus is enforceable by use of a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN), issued by Civil Enforcement Officers. The cost of enforcement is unlikely to be self-financing.

In any case, modal shift (walk, cycling & public transport) will make the biggest difference to air quality, and so messaging to help raise awareness that using the car pollutes (contributing to health issues), and importantly inviting people to be part of the solution, will be the focus of this behaviour change campaign.

- delivery vehicles are a particular offender. They need to know they might be fined if they leave their vehicle idling.
- buses tend to leave their engines idling unless they are stopped for more than 2 minutes. That's too long.
- taxis are a particular offender. Lauren: already in contact with a taxi drivers' representative and a taxi drivers' Whatsapp group, but getting the message to Uber drivers is more difficult.
- taxis on the Temple Meads ramp immediately outside the main entrance are a big problem that needs addressing.
- planting outside schools can help alleviate air pollution. But you have to be careful how to do it: you can make the problem worse if you trap in the pollution. There is guidance in TfL's Healthy Streets.
- volunteers need the support from general messaging to show that they are part of a bigger campaign endorsed by others. eg banners outside schools, official signage, hi-viz jackets. Some have done DIY signage.
- should the message be "why are you running your engine ?", not "please turn your engine off".
- it is hard to perpetuate a campaign with school parents as they move on as their children grow up and move to a different school. Lauren: Cathedral School have developed material for a new parent pack. School staff are also engaged by the school activities programme, and if sufficiently motivated can provide continuity.

The comments above will help Lauren write FAQs for the website.

Suggested mailing lists to spread the word are:

- BCC Neighbourhoods team (the list includes ex- Neighbourhood Partnership [groups](#))
- BCC Arts & Events (re parking at events)
- Bristol Libraries & Friends of groups
- sports associations
- disability sports groups
- climate action groups

Lauren already has on her list: [candobristol.co.uk](http://candobristol.co.uk), employer volunteer days, BRI and Southmead hospitals, BCC parking enforcement team.

Upcoming dates:

- 15<sup>th</sup> Jan, 6pm City Hall - Community Vehicle idling Action briefing for volunteer champions
- January (date tbc) - focus group for designing the communications programme

Volunteers can sign up at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BristolldlingAction>.

## 2 School Streets

Aimee-Claire Eyermann from the same team as Lauren, who is leading on School Streets, was unwell on the day and unable to present. In her place, Lauren gave a high-level briefing, with additions from Alan who had been briefed by Aimee-Claire in November.

School Streets schemes introduce no-car zones outside selected schools at pick-up and drop-off times. The purpose is to improve air quality and road safety, as well as improving the local environment directly outside of schools.

School Streets are not feasible if the school is on an A or B road, which unfortunately means that the schools that need School Streets the most will not get them. These schools are being offered other measures such as intensive air quality action work with Lauren.

The initial schools were selected on the basis of whether they are already engaged in active travel and road safety programmes that have demonstrated modal shift, they already have an air quality monitor in place, and whether any road casualties have occurred outside the school.

The two initial schools, which will start from February 2020, have been announced. The aim is for two more in September 2020, and three more in January 2021.

The first two schools are in cul-de-sacs. This may seem surprising, but it makes the physical set-up quick and simple (signs only), and allows the engagement and processes to be tested quickly, which may speed up the subsequent roll-out to other more complicated schools.

For these initial pilot schools, the process of setting up an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) has started, which will legally state that the roads directly outside of the pilot schools cannot be entered during School Streets operating hours, without a permit. The pilot will last for 18 months (as this is the length of an ETRO) and it will then be decided if the scheme should be made permanent.

The aim is to launch at the first 2 pilot schools on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020, and have an official media day to celebrate this 2-3 weeks afterwards.

The website is live here; <https://travelwest.info/schools/bristol/school-streets-bristol>, with sub-pages for the two pilot schools, and FAQs and more detailed info for each.

Comments:

- only London has camera-based enforcement powers, until the government enacts regulations to extend them elsewhere in the UK
- it is difficult to monitor changes in air pollution at schools. Monitoring has been done since January 2018 at all schools in the Air Quality Management Area and at other schools on busy roads. But the reported data is not by hour of the day, so does not show the air pollution at pick-up and drop-off times, only the average over the day.
- Jon: Sustrans is holding a national webinar on School Streets next week

3 Any other business

Bristol Bath Railway Path: Ted Fowler explained that it had been suggested that there should be some enforcement activity on excessive cycle speed on the railway path, which would complement the physical changes being made by the Sustrans project. But the question is how: Ted appealed to BWA members for any suggestions for how it could be made to work.