

Councillor Mike Rigby
Lead Member for Transport and Digital
Somerset County Council
County Hall
Taunton
Somerset TA1 4DY

21 November 2022

25th Anniversary of Bruton's 7.5 Tonne Weight Limit

Dear Mike,

[Library Junction Small Improvements Scheme](#)

Many thanks for your supportive response, at the end of June, via my fellow Councillor James Hood, to Bruton Town Council's feedback on the Small Improvements Scheme proposals for Bruton's Library Junction. I am pleased to report that our October Full Council endorsed its Approval for the revised proposals, resulting from your helpful intervention, and we have communicated this to Stuart Fountain in SCC's Infrastructure Programmes Group.

Council appreciated the efforts that Stuart and his team have made to accommodate our feedback, especially the preservation of Bruton's heritage metal kerb edging. Whilst the approved proposals do not include everything that the Town Council's Consultants, *Streets Reimagined*, had proposed, we are thankful that the approved scheme will not preclude further improvements to Bruton's pedestrian safety in the future. We look forward to the completion of this Small Improvement Scheme in the New Year.

[Bruton's 7.5 tonne Weight Restriction Order](#)

It has been noticed by an observant Resident that 12 December marks the 25th Anniversary of Bruton's 7.5 tonne Weight Restriction Order (attached). Our 2017 *Bruton Town Plan* survey identified HGVs as a major community concern for pedestrian safety, alongside pavements, speed, and (lack of) enforcement. Collectively, controlling traffic and safer pavements/walking routes were the top two (free text) responses to the question "*If you could improve just one thing about living in Bruton what would it be?*", with the former representing more-than-double the responses of the latter, and three times the next highest concern (parking).

Bruton Town Council has tried, and failed, to encourage the Police to enforce our 7.5 tonne limit. Local Police report that they lack the resources, claiming (which we dispute) that they would need to follow a lorry from entry to exit of the restricted area to be able to prove a breach. I am attaching Councillor Hood's August 2019 Letter to Sue Mountstevens, then Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner, and the reply, later that month, from Transport Minister for Roads and Security, Baroness Vere of Norbiton, stating *"It remains a matter for the Police and Crime Commissioner, Avon and Somerset Police and Local Authorities to agree how resources are allocated"*.

Wiltshire Council has added enforcement of Weight Restrictions to its Trading Standards contract, [stating on its website](#) *"If a Lorrywatch scheme is in place, Trading Standards may (in some circumstances) be able to impose fines on drivers that are breaching weight limits"*. October Full Council (unanimously) instructed me *"to write to the SCC portfolio holder and ask that the weight limit be added to Trading Standards"* – which I hereby do.

Whole-Bruton Parking Review

As noted above, parking was third on Residents' *"living in Bruton"* priorities for improvement. Bruton Town Council has had an ongoing dialogue with SCC's Parking Services team since early 2020 over carrying out a whole-town Parking Review for Bruton. Most recently, Councillor Hood wrote to Steve Deakin of SCC Parking Services in March this year, receiving no response as yet. Can we please request that you encourage SCC Parking Services to prioritise Bruton for a whole-town Parking Review.

Overbright Street Lights

Bruton Town Council has also had a long dialogue with County Highways' Lighting Team, in this instance back to late 2016, concerning overbright street lights being imposed upon Bruton's Conservation Area.

Cranborne Chase AONB, which extends to include Alfred's Tower, atop Pen Ridge overlooking Bruton, has now qualified as an *International Dark Skies Reserve*. The AONB's [Good Practice Note](#) on Good External Lighting states...

"A 'warm white' light in the region of 3000 degrees Kelvin is currently regarded as the most user-friendly light, moving away from the orange tinge of traditional tungsten lights but not having the problems of blue/white lights of the so-called 'daylight' bulbs..."

Lighting schemes should not be based entirely around the cost savings of conversion to LED. Consideration should be given to the benefits of using the more appropriate light spectrum of the warm white lights in the 3000 degree Kelvin bracket.”

We commend Rikki Slocombe of SCC's Corporate Property Group for his diligent work to soften the impacts of new LED street lighting alongside Bruton's Enterprise Centre, upon Residents of the Burrowfield Area of our Frome Road. In October, Rikki announced the welcome approval to install programmed lighting controls, to dim the lighting by 50% between the hours of midnight and 5:30 pm. This does represent progress over our previous fruitless 2016-17 efforts to reduce the impacts higher up on Cuckoo Hill. Sadly, the Residents now report “*no discernible difference*”.

Our March Full Council heard and discussed Residents' concerns, including that confused birds were singing all night in the hedgerows. Resolutions included that if no improvement can be demonstrated, the Town Council's Planning and Consultation Response Committee should consider requesting that the A359 is designated a B road (which could also conceivably assist the Sat-nav driven component of our HGV challenges above). At this stage, can we please request that the colour-temperature of Bruton's LED streetlights be reduced to the recommended 3,000 Kelvin, and consideration is given to complete dimming between midnight and 5:30 am.

Yours sincerely



Ewan Jones
Chair of Bruton Town Council, and Mayor of Bruton