



## BUSGATE: Councillors sift through three-week trial data



**Closed:** The bollards stop general traffic (above)  
**Open:** Local drivers quickly took advantage (below)



FOR SEVERAL years there has been much debate about the timing of the permanent opening of the bus gate between Yew Tree Drive (YTD) and Botley Road to all traffic.

The Fareham Borough local plan policy is clear – opening to general traffic will not be permitted until Whiteley Way is completed through to the A3051 north of Curbridge.

The local plan is currently being reviewed and updated.

In July 2012, the gate was opened to all traffic for three weeks due to National Grid works.

At our request the County Council took the opportunity of this lengthy opening to survey the impacts of the gate being open.

Traffic counts in the area were also undertaken in May when the bus gate was closed.

### Facts, not speculation

We are providing the results without any recommendation about what, if anything, should change as

a result but as a genuine desire to communicate the facts of a trial opening, to replace speculation about what an opening could mean in terms of traffic flows.

Automatic Traffic Counters were put at the seven main locations most likely to be affected by the bus gate opening:

- Yew Tree Drive bus gate
- Botley Road, north of the gate (south of Swanwick Lane)
- Botley Road, south of the gate Swanwick Lane
- Yew Tree Drive, near the school crossing patrol
- Leafy Lane, east of Whitley Way;
- Whiteley Way, north of M27 J9 (a permanent counter site).

The average 12-hour two-way flows over the 17-day period when the gate was open were 2,800 vehicles per day (vpd).

However, as an estimate of expected usage the average of the last two days observed flows of 3,500 vpd is used, with the rationale that awareness of the route increased steadily throughout the opening, although signs were positioned on many roads advising of the opening throughout the 17-day period.

Flows were 490 vehicles per hour (vph), excluding buses, in the am peak (8am – 9am), with 260 vph eastbound and 230 vph westbound.

### Increased use forecast

In the pm peak hour (5pm – 6pm) the flows were lower at 450 vph, with 190 vph eastbound and 280 westbound.

Forecast use of the gate could be expected to increase further than the 3,500 vpd recorded due to factors highlighted above.

Continued on Page 2

*'We are communicating the facts of the trial opening to replace speculation'*

The main changes to daily two-way flows between May and July were:

- YTD Bus Gate: +3300
- Botley Road, North: +1600 (+18%)
- Botley Road, South: +1700 (+20%)
- Swanwick Lane: +300 (+7%)
- YTD East: +400 (+5%)
- Leafy Lane: no change
- Whiteley Way: -2500 (-11%)

Whiteley Way North of M27 J9 benefited with a reduction in flow by 2500 which is 11% of the daily flow. Leafy Lane was unchanged. Yew Tree Drive increased by 400 vpd at its eastern end, which equates to plus 5%.

Of the 3300 vpd additional travelling through the gate onto Botley Road, 48% travelled north and 52% south; of the 48% travelling north, 9% travelled on Swanwick Lane leaving 39% northwards towards Botley.

Both north and south went up by similar volumes of about 1600-1700 vpd equating to an 18-20% increase. Swanwick Lane increased by 300 vpd, some 7%.

### Well used

There was an increase in flow along Yew Tree Drive suggesting the gate was being well used by local residents and most of the additional through traffic (travelling between Whiteley Way and Botley Road) was almost compensated for.

It is likely that there were savings in vehicle miles with more direct routes available to local residents.

The data will now be considered in detail by the local planning authority (Fareham Borough Council) and the local highway authority (Hampshire County Council).

We believe it is also important that in any review of the local plan account needs to be taken of the pos-

sible effect of the opening of the new Whiteley shopping centre and of the development of some 3,000 houses north of Whiteley, albeit that development will in any event lead to the completion of Whiteley Way and the opening of Yew Tree Drive to all traffic.

Meanwhile, we would like to know the views of local residents from BurrIDGE, Park Gate, Swanwick and Whiteley on this new information.

### Questions for the public

If there was any suggestion of opening the Yew Tree Drive/Botley Road link permanently before the completion of Whiteley Way, should there be:

- 1 Traffic calming, a HGV ban and 20mph speed limit on Yew Tree Drive?**
- 2 Traffic calming on Swanwick Lane and the HGV ban rigorously enforced?**
- 3 Further measures taken on Botley Road (A3051) such as permanent flashing speed limit signs?**
- 4 Longer trial opening to cover the period when the new shopping centre opens to be certain of the effects it has prior to any decision on a permanent opening?**
- 5 Better pedestrian crossing facilities on affected roads?**

Councillor Seán Woodward said: "I proposed the provision of the facility (roundabout, road link, etc.) as part of a planning condition by Persimmon Homes so that it would all be provided at no cost to the public.

"This was because when the day came to open the link to all traffic I did not want the highway authority to be scratching around for the best

part of £1m to do the job.

Previously it was an unmade track with a kerb to bump down.

"It is accepted that in times of potential or actual traffic problems involving Whiteley roads it can be opened for a temporary period and it has been opened at my request when there have been weather problems and road closures on several occasions.

"If the link had not been put in all of the foregoing would be impractical if not impossible."

It will open to all traffic once Whiteley Way is completed to the A3051 Botley Road north of Curbridge, but that is entirely in the hands of Winchester City Council and the north of Whiteley developers.

It is certainly a few years away as there is currently not even a tested local plan policy let alone a planning consent for the expansion of Whiteley.

### Strong views

Councillor Woodward continued: "Changes to local plans are not made on the back of petitions and protests, whether for or against, and there are equally strong views in both camps, in Whiteley, BurrIDGE, Park Gate and Swanwick.

"The current plan policy is not set in tablets of stone, however it has stood the test of local plan inquiries for a quarter of a century.

"Any decision to vary that policy will primarily take account of highway safety matters, not personal convenience.

"Ultimately the decision on whether the link should be opened prematurely and permanently is one for Fareham Borough Council as the local planning authority and Hampshire County Council as the highway authority.

"That decision would be informed by actual data and predictions around the likely effects of the opening of the new Whiteley Shopping Centre, which was recently permitted by Winchester City Council, next summer."

## WE WANT YOUR VIEWS

Please write to County Councillor Seán Woodward at 8 Persian Drive, Whiteley, Fareham PO15 7BJ or e-mail him on [sean.woodward@hants.gov.uk](mailto:sean.woodward@hants.gov.uk)