



12TH December 2020

PRESS RELEASE: Mill Road Bridge Closure....Clock is ticking to open the Mill Road bridge!

- ☆ County Highways knows it has no choice but to reopen the bridge because it was done in an **illegal manner**. But it is delaying it for reasons only it knows.
- ☆ The damage to Traders along the street continues when Highways could remove the restrictions in as little as two days maximum.
- ☆ Severe inconvenience to elderly, disabled and residents continues with extended journey times and extra costs of transport.
- ☆ Congestion on alternative routes like Coldham's Lane, which is mostly residential, and Newmarket Road increases daily as everyone knows.
- ☆ Serious concerns have been raised regarding the county council decision to close the Mill road bridge; They include:

The county council had **no lawful authority** to implement the Mill Road closure through an experimental traffic regulation order because the order **violates section 9(1)** of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, which requires that an experimental order may only be made for a valid experimental purpose.

The statement of reasons published for the Mill Road bus gate order states the reason for the order, but nothing in the statement of reasons or the order itself includes any experimental purpose.

No data on social distancing was collected before the bridge closure, and no data on social distancing has been collected since the closure.

In addition, the council was required under Regulation 17(2)(a)(ii) of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 to publish a notice in a newspaper within 14 days of the order stating that members of the public had only 6 weeks from the date of the order to challenge the order in the High Court. This notice was never published despite the fact that it is a legal requirement for the making of the order.

If the Council wanted to implement a scheme to facilitate social distancing due to COVID-19, it should have used a temporary order.

If the Council wanted to implement the bus gate on a permanent basis, it should have used a permanent order.

But the Council's statement of reasons indicates that an experimental traffic regulation order could not lawfully be used to close the Mill Road bridge, and it is apparent that the county council did so to circumvent the procedural requirements that would be involved in issuing a temporary or permanent order.

☆ County Highways has pushed forward its pet agenda and used the Virus pandemic as an excuse to impose draconian restrictions without consultation at all. And it has done it quite blatantly without regard to all the rules.

'ENDS'

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