

East Street - has the work been a waste of money?

IT WAS interesting to see the article in the County Times on May 12 concerning the voluntary code of conduct that has been introduced by a number of Horsham's East Street traders in a bid to reduce traffic and improve safety.

It was also interesting to see comments from West Sussex County Council on how part-pedestrianisation has allegedly reduced a whole range of issues, which are detrimental to pedestrians.

I wonder when anyone from WSSC last walked up East Street during a normal working day.

The reality is that too many vehicles continue to



by
David Moore
chairman of the
Horsham Society

park in East Street and too many vehicles continue to use the street as a means of entry into Market Square and the Carfax throughout the day.

It's worth looking back to June 5, 2006 when a report was prepared by the director for environment and development and the head of highways and transport and submitted for consideration to North Horsham County

Local Committee.

This was a very well thought out report, which recognised the problems that a shared surface (pedestrian and vehicle) presented due to the constricted nature of the road, especially in the summer, which allowed air pollution to build up.

The conclusion reached was a fairly obvious one. The most sensible approach to follow would be to make East Street available only to pedestrians and emergency vehicles between from 10.00 to 16.00, which would also provide a more relaxed shopping environment.

So what's gone wrong? It all started off so well with no vehicular access between

10.30 and 16.00 from June 30, 2008 to October 2009 prior to the laying of the new road surface.

At a stroke, this eliminated the inconvenience to pedestrians from traffic.

This was replaced by the current system whereby only Blue Badge holders and delivery vehicles could enter the street at any time, while all other vehicles would be banned for 24 hours a day.

This was exactly the system in use in June 2006, which was criticised as being difficult to enforce, ie didn't work.

It also makes some of the comments on the WSSC website rather suspect. The claim that we objected to

the original restrictions, no vehicular access between 10.30 and 16.00, is stated as fact.

This isn't the case. If you asked the majority of pedestrians, who use East Street, what they would prefer, they would say no traffic between clearly defined times.

Even a large number of traders in East Street seem to support this proposal.

WSSC needs to face up to the problem that it has created and get back to basics. The only logical reason for spending more than £500,000 on the East Street project was to improve the shopping experience in the street.

This end result has not been achieved and WSSC needs to admit that it got it wrong and take the necessary steps to resolve the position. The few people, who object to the required changes, should not be allowed to hold the town to ransom.

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone, who shares these concerns. For more information, visit our website www.horshamsociety.org or telephone 01403 263870.