

## **'More pedestrians than cars' prompts call to close street to unnecessary traffic**

*A press release by the local group Campaign for Better Transport, Leicestershire and Rutland.*

Surveys recently done by the Leicester Panel of the Campaign for Better Transport in a popular city location have confirmed that there are more pedestrians using the place than cars.

The Leicester Panel of the Campaign for Better Transport has completed a series of evening surveys to count vehicles and pedestrians using the popular Braunstone Gate area of Leicester, just outside the city centre.

The Leicester Panel of the Campaign for Better Transport has previously put forward the idea to remove all unnecessary through traffic from the area during evenings so that the needs of pedestrians using the entertainment venues in the area would be better met. Their enjoyment would become safer without having to mix in with through traffic that does not need to use that particular route.

This was one of a number of transport improvements suggested by The Leicester Panel of the Campaign for Better Transport, for the City Council to implement in 2006, but there is nothing reported in the current Capital Programme to assist with the cost of the street works in Braunstone Gate.

### **THE LEICESTER PANEL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT SAID**

“Evening partial closure of Braunstone Gate is something the Leicester Panel of the Campaign for Better Transport has been pressing the Council to consider for quite a while. It is a good idea and most of the businesses in the area seem to be positive and want this to happen. The plans will not affect the Taxi and Private Hire Car operators there because they have been designed not to affect them and the Safer Routes Taxi rank would still be in the area.”

### **THE LEICESTER PANEL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT SAID**

“The Council was worried that the diversion of Upperton Road during rebuilding of the bridge there would make Braunstone Gate closure unacceptable. So surveys were done in three parts, while the old Upperton Road bridge was in place, then during the week that that route was completely closed and the temporary diversion was being built and then finally after the reopening of the temporary diversion.”

“The results were very interesting, because before the closure of Upperton Road, Braunstone Gate had a lot more pedestrians than cars in the evening, but during the complete closure of the bridge as through traffic went up in quantity in Braunstone Gate, the number of pedestrians dropped dramatically, as did patronage of the venues in the area. Then once the diverted Upperton

Road had re-opened, the pedestrian footfall in Braunstone Gate went back up again and the traffic returned to about normal levels despite the zigzag diversion in place on Upperton Road that was feared would push some extra traffic into Braunstone Gate permanently. It does not prove that increasing traffic means fewer people in the area, because there may be other factors at work, but certainly the council's contention that it cannot be closed now because of traffic need is not true." **SAID THE LEICESTER PANEL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT**

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"The Leicester Panel of the Campaign for Better Transport is familiar with the evening closure of Churchgate in the centre of Leicester, which is similar to what is being suggested for Braunstone Gate and thinks that the Churchgate closure is a positive move to get cars out of the centre to help enjoyment of the city and make it safer to walk around the Centre in the evening. The same move should be made in Braunstone Gate."

**THE LEICESTER PANEL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT SAID**

"There is in June 2008 to be a new Riverside Festival Music Fringe connected with the incredibly successful Leicester Riverside Festival organised by the Council and the Inland Waterways Association. This Fringe is going to add value to this existing successful event and draw people into Braunstone Gate for the evening, after the daytime Riverside events have finished. The wish is that it will be a family friendly event and it would be ideal if Braunstone Gate was there for people instead of cars. The cars mainly don't need to be there. There are other, better, faster through routes to take. Leicester City council could think about taking away this unnecessary through traffic for a few days to enable the Festival and Festival Fringe to flourish."

**THE LEICESTER PANEL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT SAID**

"Local businesses in the area are very obviously keen to get through traffic removed and there was, so the business proprietor's say, a plan actually drawn up about two years ago, so why can't this plan be taken forward?"

**THE LEICESTER PANEL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT SAID**

"Contact with the musicians who want to perform in the venues in Braunstone Gate as part of the Riverside Fringe shows enthusiasm for the closure project."