

**Axbridge Community Partnership**  
**The Streets of Axbridge Trial**

**This document sets out the details of proposals for The Streets of Axbridge Trial as agreed by core representatives of Axbridge Community Partnership (ACP).**

**7<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

# Axbridge Community Partnership

## The Streets of Axbridge Trial

### What is The Trial?

Changes to some parking spaces in The Square to become temporarily car free for a 12 month Trial and 6 months consultation and review period. The Trial is part of a wider enhancement project to improve the streets of Axbridge.

### Why is The Trial needed?

- To take the first step towards making Axbridge a more pedestrian friendly place.
- To provide a focus for residents, business owners and visitors to have a say and debate and discuss the relationship between vehicles and people throughout all of the streets of Axbridge.
- To create a more people friendly area in The Square for visitors and local people young and old.

### How will it benefit Axbridge?

- It will improve the appearance of Axbridge Square.
- It will improve safety for pedestrians and vehicles sharing the space.
- It will provide temporary open spaces in The Square for residents and visitors to enjoy.
- It will help hi-light the heritage of Axbridge and stimulating business activity.
- It will stimulate conversation and ensure that any permanent changes in Axbridge are subsequently made with the full involvement of residents' views and opinions.

### What do people think about The Trial?

There are lots of questions that people have. This includes:

*What about the loss of car parking spaces? Who will this affect? Who parks in the square? Is it short term visitors? Is it residents and business owners? Will the loss of four spaces in these locations have a significant effect? Will the effect be positive or negative?*

See **Appendix 6** for some examples of statements from local people.

### Who is proposing The Trial and how has this point been reached?

The Trial is part of a wider Streets of Axbridge Enhancement Project that is being developed by Axbridge Community Partnership (ACP). ACP was established in 2011 and consists of:

**core partners:** Axbridge Chamber of Commerce, Axbridge Town Council, Axbridge Town Trust, Axbridge Action Group, Sedgemoor District Council, and Somerset County Council - working with:

**associate partners:** Axbridge Church of England Church, Sustainable Axbridge, Axbridge Academy First School and Axbridge Sports and Social Club.

The core partner organisations have all agreed a 'Community Zone Statement' (See **Appendix 1**) as the first step towards developing The Streets of Axbridge Enhancement Project. The Community Zone aims to slow the traffic through Axbridge

and make Axbridge a more pedestrian friendly Community Zone. As part of this development ACP lead the improvements that were made to the road between Axbridge Square and Axbridge Town Car Park in 2012.

In 2008 Axbridge Action Group worked in partnership with other organisations to commission a 'Axbridge Streets and Parking Options Appraisal'. The Appraisal was completed by Haire Landscape Consultants and came up with a number of suggestions on how to improve the Streets of Axbridge (The Haire Report).  
***(See 'Streets and Parking Improvement Plan for Axbridge – 2008' by Haire Landscape Consultants on Axbridge Town Council website)***

The Haire Report came about as a direct result of Axbridge residents input to the Parish Plan in 2006 where eight out of ten respondents to the Parish Plan questionnaire said that speeding traffic was one of their issues of greatest concern. People of Axbridge wanted more pedestrian friendly streets with a particular focus on The Square. Generally people did not seek to exclude cars but wanted more spaces where the design of the streets allowed better and safer pedestrian access.  
***(See the 'Axbridge Parish Plan 2006' on Axbridge Town Council website)***

## **The Project Proposal**

This Project Proposal Document outlines the background to the Trial and it's context. It provides specifications of what the Trial will entail – including estimates of costs, plans for consultation and communication and proposed mechanisms for organisation, monitoring and evaluation. See **Appendices** for plans, specification and costings.

Various constructive initial meetings with Somerset County Council Highways Department officers and discussions throughout Axbridge have already taken place and we have in principle support for our proposals.

## **Communication and Consultation**

Crucial to the ongoing plans is an active process of communication, engagement and consultation with people who live in, work in and visit Axbridge before, during and after the Trial.

Methods to acquire this feedback will include:-

- An information leaflet about The Project demonstrating its goals and objectives and providing links to acquire further information and provide feedback.
- A 'Streets of Axbridge' space on the Axbridge Town Council Website containing all relevant background information and a facility for people to post comments and queries.
- A display board in The Square explaining about the Trial alongside other information about the Streets of Axbridge Enhancement Project.
- A series of public consultation events for people to ask questions and post their comments and ideas.
- A media strategy which will include Press Releases, Space on Axbridge Town Council Website and a Leaflet Campaign.

## **Project governance and evaluation**

Overall management of the project will rest with ACP. Day to day operational arrangements will be undertaken by a Core Project Team who will be appointed and report to ACP. It is proposed that the Town Council will place the contract orders and act as recipient for funds.

The Project Team will be responsible for organising consultation events and providing updated communications. They will also devise and implement a range of monitoring activities to ascertain the impact of The Trial. This will mainly be done through observation of the use of the space and acquiring feedback from people using the space. In addition the Project Team will undertake research into similar street spaces in the UK and beyond in order to provide scope for comparing and contrasting and to elicit ideas for application in the streets of Axbridge.

Towards the end of the Trial period the Project Team with the wider ACP will be responsible for writing a report. This will include feedback from:

- Observations
- People at consultation events and street questionnaires
- Findings from research of other street sites in UK and beyond.

The report will then make recommendations for the future role out of the Streets of Axbridge Enhancement Project for the whole of Axbridge.

Questions that this may address are:

- Continuation, or not, of the enhancements within The Trial areas in The Square.
- Considering other options for enhancing The Square. For example looking at the proposals within the Haire Report.
- Wider next step developments of the Streets of Axbridge Enhancement Project. This could include:
  - 'Gateways' into the Town (as proposed in The Haire Report),
  - street enhancements on Houlgate Way,
  - enhanced footpath to Cross,
  - etc, etc.

## **Appendix 1**

# **THE COMMUNITY ZONE STATEMENT**

As agreed by the core partners of Axbridge Community Partnership.

## **THE STREETS OF AXBRIDGE PROJECT**

An improvement plan for streets and car parking in Axbridge

## **OUR MISSION**

***“To improve Axbridge by making its streets more pedestrian friendly and slowing the transit of vehicles through it”.***

## **THE AXBRIDGE COMMUNITY ZONE**

Which encompasses the town of Axbridge

The objectives underlying the Streets of Axbridge Plan are represented in statements for the Axbridge Community Zone.

The Axbridge Community Zone is an area where there is:

- public spaces between buildings that are designed to allow people and vehicles to share them on equal terms;
- maintenance of a low risk of accident and injury on roads by ensuring vehicle speeds are limited to 20 mph or less by design;
- the creation of a visually attractive environment with a distinctive sense of place and identity;
- streets, lanes and the Square designed to ensure that the quality of life of people using the spaces takes precedence over ease of vehicle movement;
- well connected network of public spaces which will encourage walking and cycling and reduced social isolation, by making it easier for elderly people, young children and those with mobility problems to use the streets.
- public spaces that are designed and equipped to support community activities and can include communal areas that support community activity in areas that cars would otherwise dominate.

(Based on guidance from - Creating Healthy Environments, Practical Tools for Increasing Walking in the Built Environment, Local Design Guides: Living Streets 2009 – see [www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk) )

The proposal is to develop the Streets of Axbridge Project by conducting a series of street trials. This will initially be based on suggestions put forwards in The Haire Report, which was the outcome of extensive community questioning, and as a result of the Axbridge Parish Plan. The goal is to see a bundle of changes to the streets put in place as a temporary measure, in order to see how the overall ideas would affect and influence the streets in accordance with our mission and objectives.

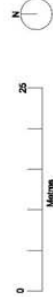
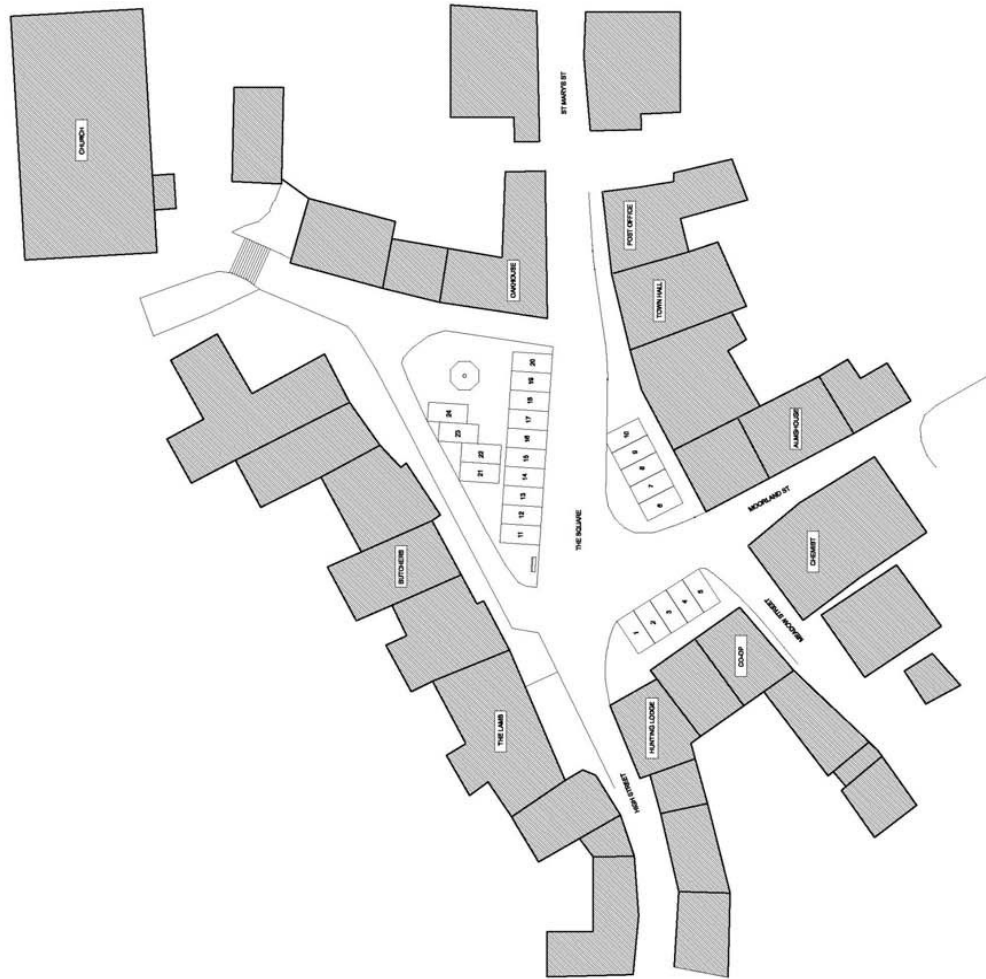
The goal is also to use the trials as a part of a process of engagement and consultation with the Axbridge community on what specific environmental changes they would like to see developed. The long term plan aims to develop all of Axbridge into The Axbridge Community Zone with a network of connections to other community spaces such as Cross and Cheddar using the same principles.

# Appendix 2

## THE TOWN SQUARE - CURRENT

Drawing of the square as it is currently.

All dimensions are to be checked on site prior to the commencement of work and any discrepancies are to be reported to the architect.  
This drawing is the copyright of the architect and may not be reproduced without permission.



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client: Abridge Community Partnership

project: The Street's of Abridge  
Town Square Trial

title: Abridge Town Square Masterplan - As existing

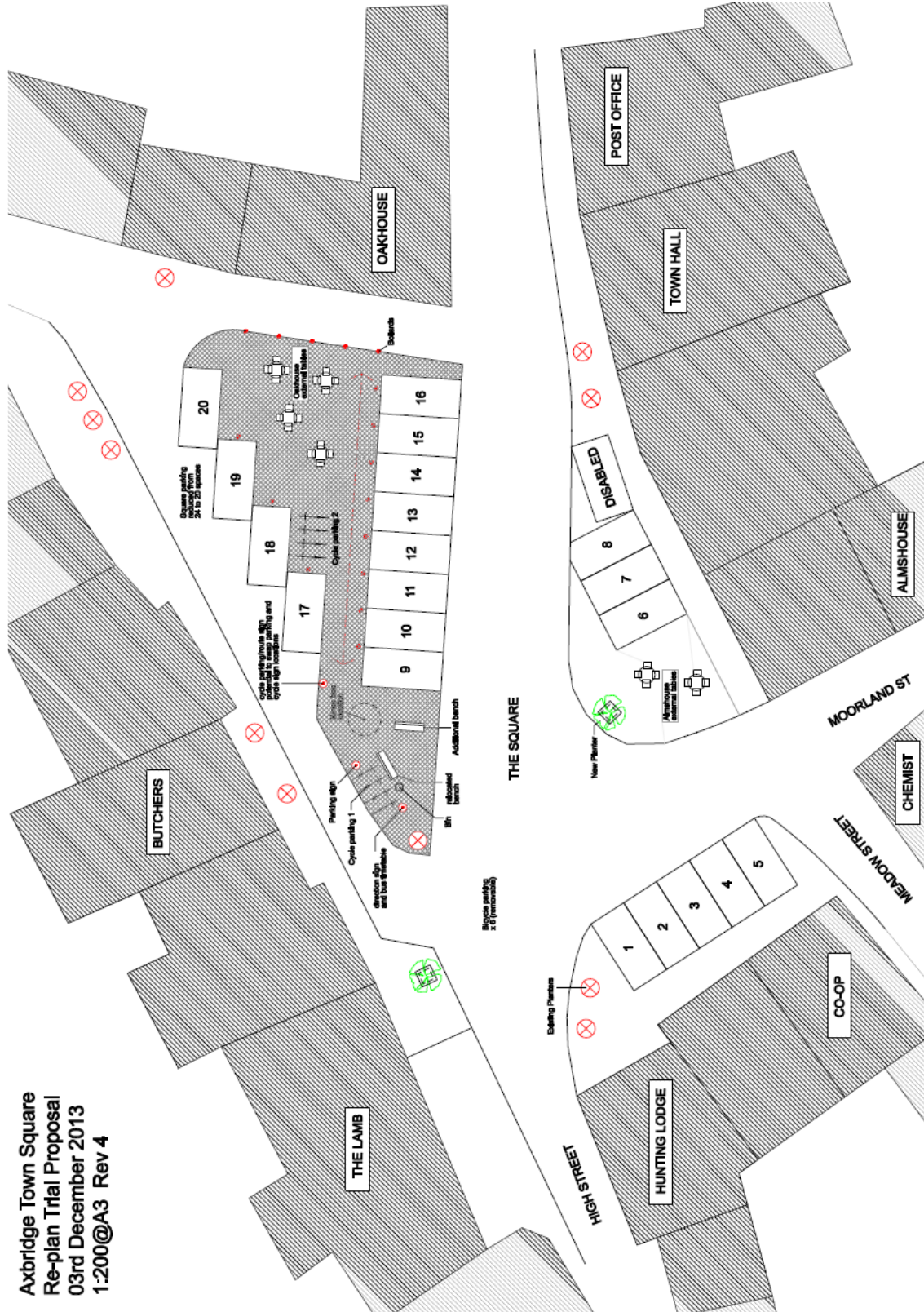
scale: 1:500@A3	date: May 2012	sheet no:	0
stage: Feasibility		SCA-ATS-001	

Appendix 3

# THE TOWN SQUARE TRIAL - PROPOSED

Drawing of the square as is proposed for The Trial.

Drawings have been kindly prepared by Simon Corbett Architect and Tom Littlewood to a design prepared by Axbridge Community Partnership.

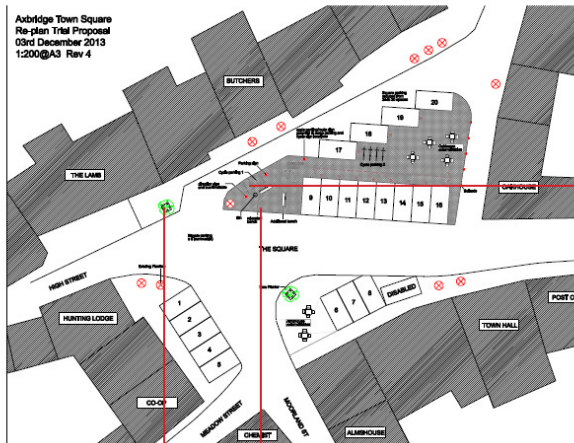


Axbridge Town Square  
Re-plan Trial Proposal  
03rd December 2013  
1:200@A3 Rev 4

## Appendix 4 THE TOWN SQUARE TRIAL

### Specification

Any changes implemented will— at least initially - only be for a trial period. Any changes made need to be able to be easily converted back again after The Trial. Any items purchased need a purpose following the Trial that benefits Axbridge. Any street furnishings or other changes incorporated can be easily moved to allow for the area to be flexibly available for the various usages of The Square i.e. The Fair.

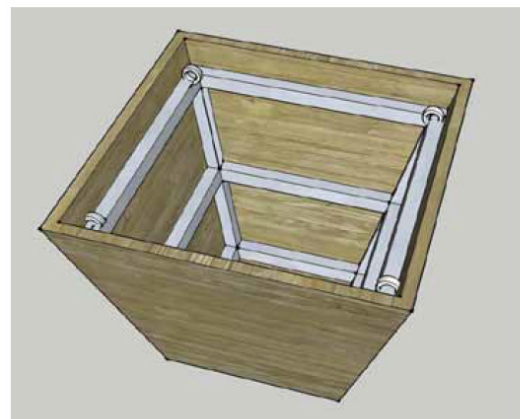


Standard Sheffield cycle stand. s/s  
(as current : removable not as  
shown here)

Heavy timber seat. as Wealden  
Fine Furniture. teak



Two 1000 x 1000mm square top  
steel framed oak planters. 700mm  
high planted with large shrubs.



**Axbridge Town Square Enhancement: stage I**  
Product Specification and outline costs.

Date: December 2013  
Version: 08



**Appendix 5**  
**COSTINGS**

**Outline costs:**

6no. Sheffield cycle rack (painted mild steel)	£1,500
2no. good quality hardwood timber bench, fixed	£1,000
2no. 1000 x 1000x 700m steel frame oak planters	£1,200
Signage as required	£200
Bollard removal and re use (5no.)	£300
Engagement	£200
Contingency	£500
Total cost - Supply and fix using local labour	<b>£4,900 ex vat.</b>
<b>Additional possible cost</b>	
Burn off 4no. car park bays and remark	£800
Total inclusive of additional possible costs	<b>£5,700 ex vat</b>

**Appendix 6**  
**WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK?**  
**May 2012**

*"I love to go up to the Square and see people and feel a part of the community. However, I cannot cross the road without someone to help me because the cars go to fast"*

*Elderly Axbridge resident (92 years old)*

*"Axbridge needs to do something to enhance the look of the Square. We need to review how it can best be used for the benefit of the residents, businesses and visitors".*

*Phil Reaney, Axbridge Butchers.*

*"I wish to express our full support for your proposals. With constantly increasing use of The Strawberry Line, it would be a great shame not to make cyclists and walkers as welcome as possible in the heart of the town. The existing businesses in The Square will certainly benefit. We strongly approve of the trial run approach to the proposals. People are naturally cautious about changes, even potentially beneficial ones. But the trial approach will give everyone a chance to experience actual improvements and make a realistic judgment of how to continue and fine tune them".*

*David Parkin Sustainable Axbridge Network and Sustrans*

*"Why can't you adopt something more radical? It would be great to get rid of cars from the square and re-think the space completely".*

*Axbridge resident*

*"We feel that Axbridge is a little gem of a town and has a lot to offer not only for it's residents and local businesses but also visitors. We are pleased to see that ideas being suggested to further improve and enhance the town are being fully explored and opened up for discussion".*

*Nicky & John, The Almshouse Tea Shop*

*"I have seen a similar square in France that is used much more beneficially for the local businesses and residents, with less parking, a fountain feature, and some planting. It would be great to enhance Axbridge Square."*

*Alan Currie, The Lamb Inn.*