

Report by District Cllr Dr Siân Dawson Hadleigh North Ward - August 2020

High Street Barriers - As expected, the barriers have caused a great deal of controversy and caused havoc to the surrounding streets parking as well as substantially effecting our businesses. This scheme was ill thought through combined with hasty decision making. I am delighted the HTC are willing to engage with local businesses and take on board their concerns. Unfortunately, the COVID19 has brought many unexpected changes to our lifestyles and to the way business is conducted, I comment as follows:

1 Whilst allowing businesses to open up on the street tables and chairs for refreshments etc this has negated the reason for widening the paths. I believe with strict controls of masks etc do we really need 4m wide pavements? Simply the answer is NO.

2 It would be more appropriate to consider a pedestrian walkway one-way system either side of the High Street with crossings at any point. Blue arrow markings on the pavement can direct the flow. This has worked spectacularly well in many towns eg Southwold and is visually acceptable.

Recommendation – Remove all unsightly barriers, allow parking for residents, shoppers and deliveries at all times and retain one-way system.

Option 2 – In the event that the HTC are not minded to remove the barriers, I would recommend that we follow Sudbury's example of inserting potted black planters. The cost was £12,000 for 30 planters, approx. £400 per planter which were provided by Perrywood Garden Centre at Sudbury. The costs were split between Babergh and the HTC and I would be willing to purchase a planter as a donation towards costs from my Councillor locality budget.

High Streets across Babergh and Mid Suffolk could benefit from almost £19m of additional income over the next 6 months, if all adults spent an extra £5 by shopping local every week. I am actively encouraging and promoting this idea. With nearly £100,000 residents across Babergh, we are encouraging adults aged over 18 to spend an extra £5, which would equate to over £500,000 per week (£12m in Babergh). Hadleigh would benefit by £50,000pw being £1.2m generated over the next six months.

The figure has been announced during Shop Local Week (10-16 August) part of the government's 'Enjoy Summer Safely' campaign, which aims to celebrate the importance of local and independent stores and the benefits they bring to the whole community and local economy.

Throughout lockdown, Hadleigh shops have played a crucial role in supporting the local community to buy food and supplies in a safe and easy way without having to travel too far. Many businesses have diversified their offer to make shopping for essentials simple and supporting those who needed to shield. New services like deliveries, online ordering and even additional market days have provided a lifeline for many local residents.

With many lockdown measures starting to ease, Shop Local Week aims to encourage people to keep visiting to their local high street and not return to pre-covid habits of out of town and online shopping.

Please do contact me about your concerns, currently I am receiving many tree objections, so do keep them coming.

Cllr Dr Siân Dawson