

NEWS

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A NEW SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE COULD SAVE CLIFTON VILLAGE TRADERS' BUSINESSES AS RESIDENTS' PARKING SCHEME PLANS BEGIN TO BITE

Traders in Bristol's Clifton Village are seeking an entrepreneur who can come up with a bespoke transport system to help prevent its shops, cafes and restaurants becoming isolated when the proposed residents' parking scheme (RPS) is introduced.

Among the areas of Bristol being targeted by the RPS enthusiasts, the 'square mile' of Clifton Village is unique as it is a residential area in which hundreds of people with cars are living above shops whose staff and customers wish to park in the area at the same time.

Last year more than 300 members of Clifton Village Traders Association joined forces to achieve Business Improvement District (BID) status whereby local organisations can raise funds locally which are spent locally on improving their own trading environment. The scheme allows for additional services to those provided by Bristol City Council.

The chairman of BID Clifton Village, local estate agent Andrew Morgan, revealed today that the group is developing plans to create greater awareness of the village – locally in Bristol and further afield – to encourage more people to visit it and spend money in the course of shopping, eating out, enjoying leisure activities and sightseeing.

"Extensive parking restrictions could scupper our plans and local businesses will suffer," says Andrew. "I would go as far as to say that the RPS could destroy some of them.

"If we want shoppers and tourists to enjoy Clifton Village and its historic environs we need to make it easier, not harder, for them to visit. Currently the village is served by only one bus service – the 8/9 linking Christchurch Green with Temple Meads railway station – and there is no space to create additional parking facilities. To do so on the Downs, or under them as has been suggested in the past, would be an act of environmental vandalism."

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Mr Morgan believes that the solution is a bespoke transport system which will reduce traffic congestion and parking problems, enabling more areas of the 'cafe society' village to be enhanced with pedestrianised areas like those in Boyces Avenue.

He said: "BID Clifton Village is inviting entrepreneurs to come up with proposals for a self-financing Clifton Shuttle bus service linking the heart of the village with other parts of Bristol, its transport hubs and park-and-ride services. Not only would that make access easier for the shoppers and tourists who are essential to the survival of the many small businesses in the village but it would also resolve the parking problems experienced by the hundreds of people who visit it to work each day.

The BID Clifton Village designated area – bound by the Downs to the north, Pembroke Road to the east, Hotwells to the south and the Avon Gorge to the west – is home to several major employers. Bristol Zoo, Clifton College and Clifton High School together employ an estimated 1,000 people and very many more work in the mansions lining The Promenade, most of which have limited off-street parking.

One firm, which employs more than 120 people in its offices, has just seven car parking spaces.

Nuffield Health's re-developed Chesterfield Hospital, opening soon in Clifton Hill, will have 100 staff but no space for them to park their cars.

"A recent straw poll of visitors to Clifton Village underlines the urgent need for a new transport link," says Andrew. "Several people said they would come again if it's easy to get here, but one lady spoke for many when she said 'if the parking becomes like Bath, we won't bother.'"

- Anyone interested in discussing ideas for a Clifton Shuttle should call Andrew Morgan on 0117 9736565 or email him at andrew@hollismorgan.co.uk

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For more information call Andrew Morgan on 0117 9736565