

1 love millsom street

THE REVIEW

Winter 2020

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The intro

LOVE MILSOM STREET

Coinciding with International Car-Free Day and European Mobility Week, Milsom Street was closed to traffic over the weekend of the 21st and 22nd September 2019.

Titled 'Love Milsom Street' the event championed the existing businesses, retailers and restaurants of Milsom Street, Milsom Place and Green Street, who were given the opportunity to showcase themselves by spilling out of their premises and reclaiming the street. As a result Milsom Street was reimagined as a boulevard complete with street garden, alfresco dining and a pop up coffee shop.

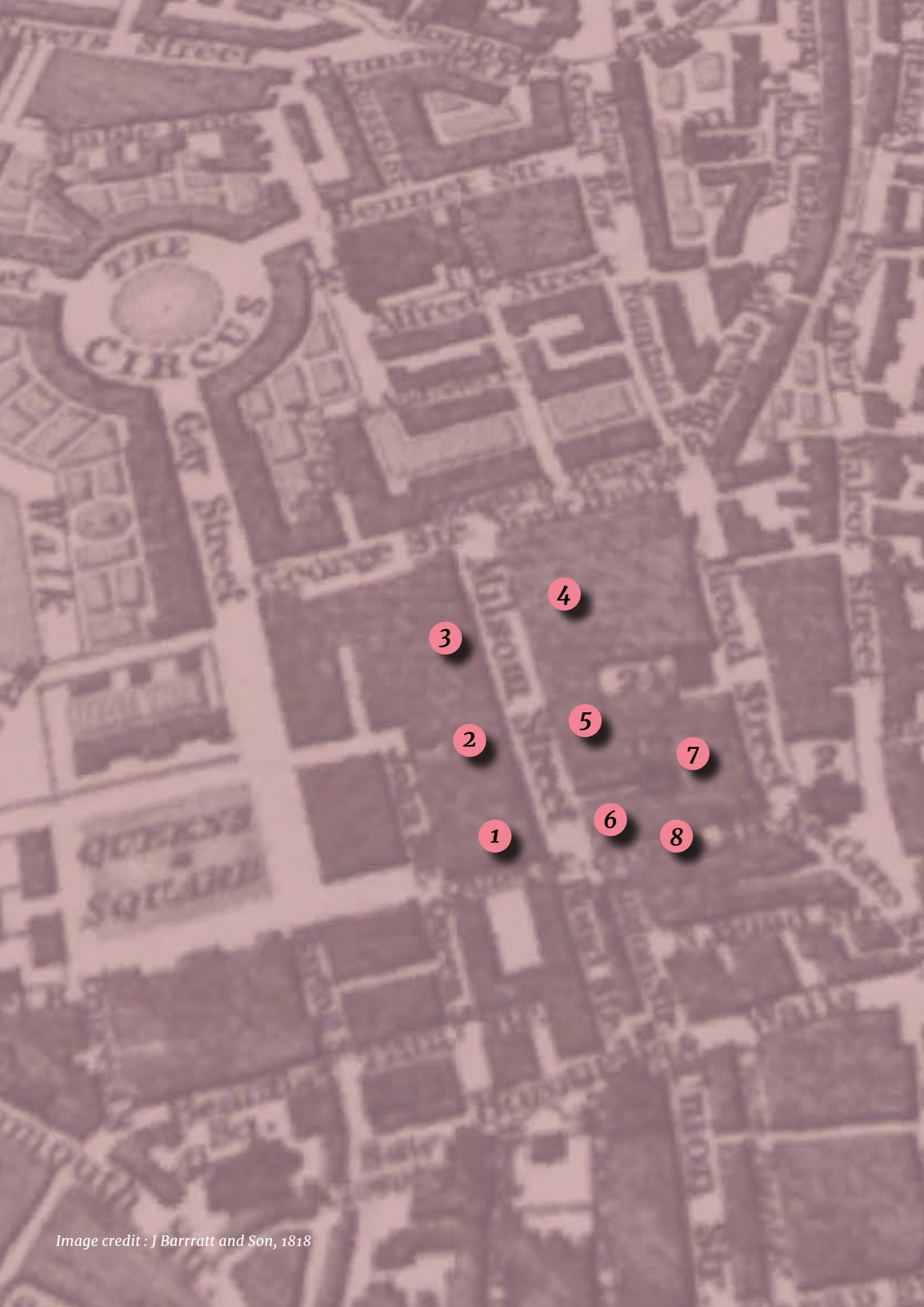
This report celebrates the successes of the event, identifies areas for improvement and makes recommendations for further investment in 2020 and beyond.





MILSOM
STREET

MILSOM STREET





1. Nos. 1–6 Milsom Street

*Kiehls (No.1), Finisterre (No.2), Maythers (No.3),
Waterstone (No.4 to 5), The Kooples (No.6)*

**2. Jolly's, House of Fraser
Nos. 7–14 Milsom Street**

3. Nos. 15–23 Milsom Street

*Cafe Rouge (No.15), Vinegar Hill (No.16), Gap Kids (No.17–18),
Bravissimo (No.19), India Jane (No.20), Sofa Workshop (No.21),
Moss Bros. (No.22), Miller & Carter (No.23)*

4. Nos. 24–36 Milsom Street

*Loch Fyne (No.24), Abbott Lyon (No.25), OKA (Nos. 26–27),
Portman (No. 28), T.M. Lewin (No.29), vacant (No.30),
Paperchase (No.31), vacant (formally Santorro, No.32),
Duo Boots (No. 33), Reiss (No. 34), Gabucci (No.42)*

**5. Somersetshire House
Nos. 36–42 Milsom Street**

*HAY (No.36–37), Mulberry (formally Brissi, No.38)
The Ivy Bath Brasserie (No.39), Milsom Place (No. 41)
Vancant (No.42)*

6. Nos. 43–47 Milsom Street

*Hobbs (No.43), vacant (formally HSBC, No.44–45),
Ted Baker (No. 46), The Botanist (No. 46), Lloyds Bank (No. 47)*

7 Milsom Place

*Anemone, Bandook, Biggie Best, Chanii B Shoes, Cote
Brasserie, Le Vignoble, Phase Eight, Quadri, Studio XXVI,
Yves Delorme*

8 Green Street

*French Connection (No.3), vacant (Nos.4–5),
Amathus (Nos. 6) SP Green Jewellers (No. 7), British
Heart Foundation (No.8), The Card Collection (No. 8A)
Bartlett & Son (Nos. 10–11), The Old Green Tree (No. 12),
Minerva Arts (No. 13), vacant (No.14), Loake (No.15),
Ace Optics (No.16), Fashion Fabrics (No.17), Shuropody (No.18),
Maze (No.19), Foot Balance (No. 20)*

"I saw the prettiest hat you can imagine, in a shop window in Milsom Street just now — very like yours, only with coquelicot ribbons instead of green; I quite longed for it."

Isabella Thorpe, Northanger Abbey

Background

In November 2018 the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) awarded funding to Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) as part of the Love Our High Streets campaign. The funding was split into three separate projects;

- Bath City Centre
- Local Centres
- Midsomer Norton

Bath City Centre

£155,000 in feasibility funding was secured for Bath City Centre to help strengthen Bath's central retail spine, improve movement, increase dwell time, and address the north/south imbalance that has occurred as a consequence of the significant investment in SouthGate and Brunel Square.

Through the delivery of temporary measures that reimagine the high street, the merits of different schemes such as pedestrianisation, markets and

installations will be tested. 'Love Milsom Street' was the first scheme delivered using the feasibility funding.

Why Milsom Street?

Milsom Street is one of Bath's most historic high streets and home to one of the oldest department stores in the UK. Despite this, the area has struggled over the last decade to maintain its competitive retail offering with the number of vacant units increasing and footfall decreasing.

Bath's Christmas Market was expanded to include Milsom Street for the first time in 2018. The Market saw the closure of Milsom Street for an 18 day period, increasing levels of footfall and bringing about many benefits for the retailers and restaurants located in the area.

'Love Milsom Street' sought to test the principle of closing the street and animating the space outside of the Christmas period, in line with the ambitions previously set out in the Public Realm and Movement Strategy (2010).

— the concept

THEORY AND DEVELOPMENT

It's has been well established that the traditional British high street can no longer compete with contemporary shopping habits brought about by the rise of online shopping. Today, high streets must transform themselves into destinations that boast convivial urban spaces which offer experiences that cannot be replicated online.





IN THEORY ...

As highlighted in the introduction, Milsom Street used to be Bath's premier shopping destination. Distinctive to the rest of the high street, it was also the centre of civic celebrations, such as jubilees and coronations. Today the areas draw is less significant, as it struggles to compete against online shopping, rising business rates and the new development at SouthGate.

But what does SouthGate, and other successful public spaces have that Milsom Street is missing? One thing lacking is an animated, high quality public realm.

Convivial urban spaces

Convivial can be defined as having a welcoming, social and lively character. As defined by Illich (1973), convivial spaces are '*the essence of urbanity*' and enable people to be '*festive and social*'. Shaftoe (2008) explores this further

stating that without convivial spaces cities would be '*mere accretions of buildings with no deliberate opportunities for casual encounters and positive interactions between friends and strangers*'.

Animation

Animation can be described as the purposeful employment of festivities, programmed activities and pop-ups which transform and enliven public spaces by creating a stage for urban life (Glover, 2015).

Animation can also happen organically when people feel comfortable in spaces.

People attract people

People go where people are. Social animals, we are constantly sending signals to each other and, without knowing it, informing each other's choices about the way we use and interpret our cities. An animated street

sends signals that are popular and as we see ourselves we are more. As William Leach people most people'.

However, as important to spaces are not of crowds to sense that sense that At the end of quantity.

High quality

A high quality an attractive peoples need (1992) place needs or spaces will be understood



is to passers-by that the area is
attractive. Naturally curious,
other people enjoying a space
are inclined to visit it ourselves.
H. Whyte puts it 'what attracts
it, it would appear, is other

As discussed by Gehl (2010), it is
to clarify that successful public
space is not determined by the amount
that they attracts but by the
space is inviting and popular.
of the day its about quality over

Quality public realm

Quality public realm is not only
open space but one that meets
needs. As discussed by Carr et al
spaces that do not meet peoples
needs serve no important function
and are underused or unsuccessful. The

five core needs of people in public spaces
are comfort, relaxation, observation,
engagement and discovery.

Milsom Street is blessed with beautiful
architecture but without offering people
comfortable places to meet, sit, relax,
people watch and explore, it loses out to
other spaces in the city.

What does success look like?

The core aim of the event was to test the
pedestrianisation of Milsom Street outside
of the Christmas Market. Secondary to
that was the reimagination of the street in
to a space that meets the needs outlined
above. These aims were underlined
by a commitment to the retailers and
restaurants of Milsom Street, Milsom
Place and Green Street that the event would
serve them and would not attempt to bring
competing activities into the space.



CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

The starting point

As discussed by Tibbalds in his 1992 paper 'Places matter most' the most successful places are grounded in their historical, geographical, physical and cultural context. Research was undertaken to gain a better understanding of Milsom Street and its context. This helped to inform the concept and the way the street was designed for the event.

Milsom Street ... a quick history

Milsom Street is named after Daniel Milsom, an 18th Century wine cooper (merchant). Milsom held two plots of land; Town Acre, the land north of George Street, and Milsom Gardens, on which Milsom Street was laid out in 1761.

Image credit: Bath in Time (Artist unknown)



DEVELOPMENT

Originally private townhouses, the transformation of the street into a shopping thoroughfare began towards the end of the Georgian era, continuing into the Victorian period.

The street is now home to over 30 different shops and restaurants including one of the oldest department stores in the world, Jolly's.

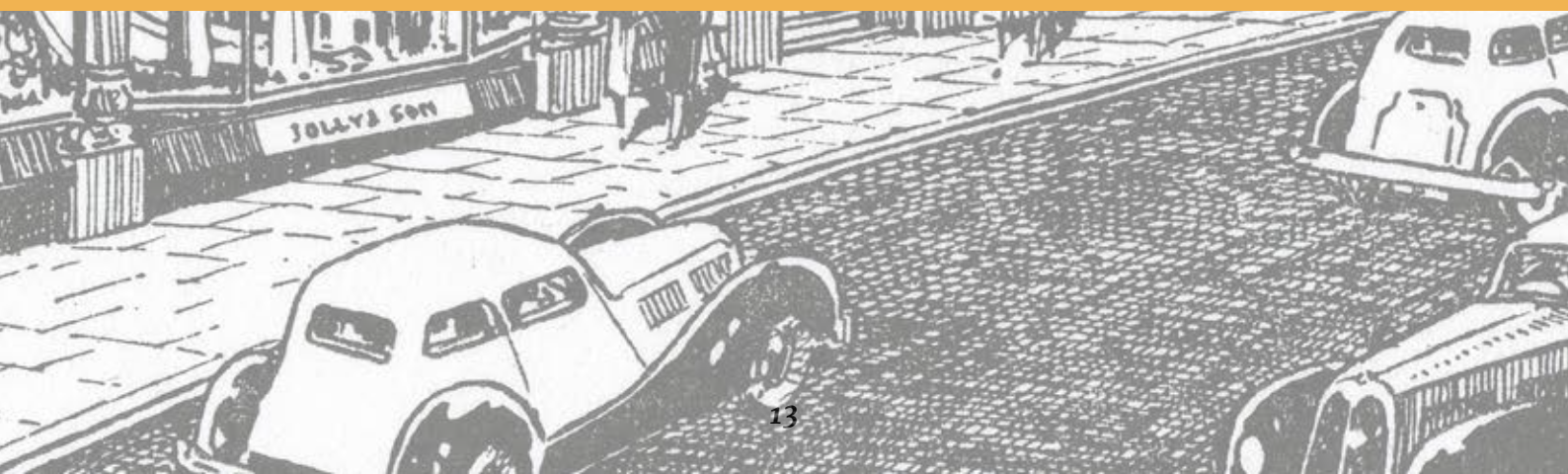
Beyond Milsom Street

After gaining an understanding of Milsom Street's context, a study of successful pedestrian areas in cities in the UK and around the world was conducted in order to review best practice and determine urban design principles that could be applied to the event.

Idea Development

Equipped with the theory, inspired by Milsom Street's history, informed by international best practices and with the project's aims in mind, the idea of a European style boulevard with a street garden was developed. This formed the centrepiece of the scheme from which the rest of the event was designed.

Determined to make the event work for the businesses, the idea of encouraging the local retailers and restaurants to adopt the highway was explored. This gained much support from the business community and each business was given the opportunity to spill-out in the road.



Building upon this, the concept of 'Love Milsom Street' was developed.

Aims

- Test the merits of pedestrianising Milsom Street outside of the Christmas Market by restricting vehicular movements
- Reimagine the streetscape as a new public realm that offers people an attractive and comfortable place to meet, sit, relax, people-watch and explore
- Encourage businesses to reclaim the street as their own and animate the space
- Create an experience that encourages the public to rethink the way we use our high streets in the future.

Concept

The creation of a street garden and European style boulevard populated by local businesses expanding into the highway, buskers and street performers.







— the weekend

SEPTEMBER 21ST - 22ND



Love Milsom Street took place on the 21st and 22nd of September 2019. The road was closed throughout the weekend and 40 businesses from Milsom Street, Milsom Place and Green Street spilled out into the street.

Each day started with a soft opening at 9am with businesses and activities setting up by 10:30am.

Cafe Rouge led the way, taking full advantage of the space in front of the restaurant. One of the most successful ventures of the weekend, by midday on Saturday the outdoor seating area was full and continued to be long into the evening.

Additionally HAY, teaming up with Dutchboy Waffles, created a popup coffee shop in front of the store. This formed a key anchor in the street scene and created a bookend to the street garden.

From the coffee shop the street garden extended north up Milsom Street. Grass sofas, deck chairs and flower boxes populated the space. A temporary busking pitch was set up outside No. 30, a vacant unit in the middle of Milsom Street, which the local busking community was invited to use for the weekend to help enhance the atmosphere.

The pitch proved successful and with music, refreshments and somewhere comfortable to

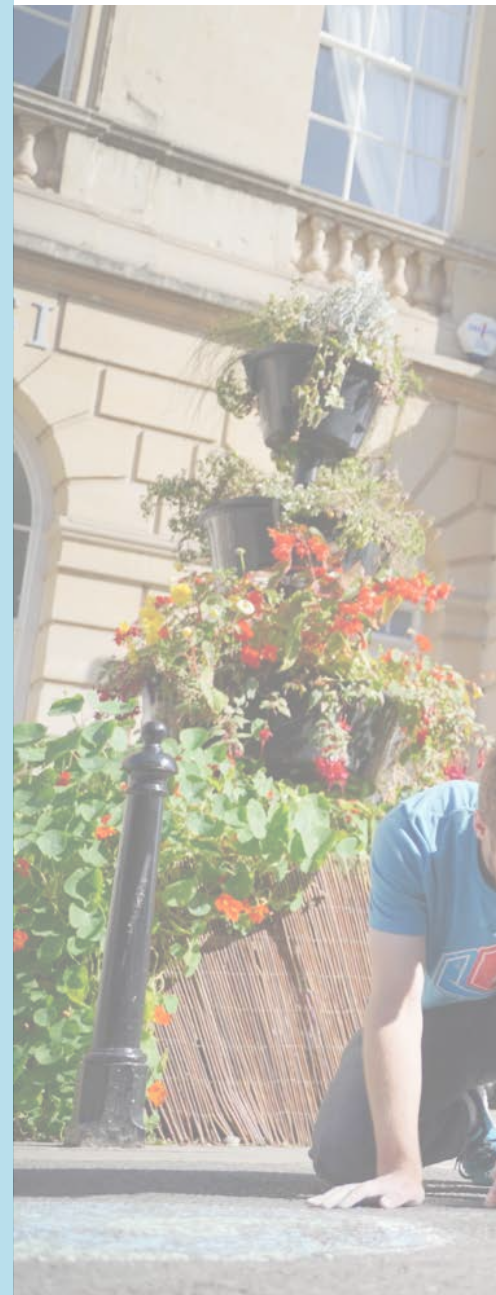
sit the street garden became a popular place for passers-by to stop and enjoy the late September sunshine.

Bookending the street garden at the north 'Patina and Co', an off-grid craft beer company, and 'Scout and Sage', an awarding micro distillery joined the event. The intention was not to invite any outside organisations to the event, however due to unforeseen circumstances one the businesses of Milsom Street had to pull out. To fill the void an invitation was put out to local businesses that did not already have existing premises in Bath City Centre.

Playing with the car-free element of the weekend, both 'Patina and Co' and 'Scout and Sage' bought their vehicles, re-purposed as bars, to the event. Additionally, The Botanist bought their travelling gin bar, which was situated outside their premises at the southern end of Milsom Street.

To provide entertainment for children, Bee Painted, Bath Children's Literature Festival and Super Pirates joined the event. Making the most of the street closure, Super Pirates used the highway for activities such as hopscotch, story telling and chalk drawings. It didn't take long for the grown ups join in and groups of people were decorating the street in chalk.

The central section of the street was given over to the businesses in Milsom Place. Chanii B, Le Vignoble and Bandoock all made appearances on the street. Quadri and Yves Delmore also participated with in-store promotions.



*"Experiments like this are always
useful and informative"*

Nick Tobin, Vice-Chairman of FOBRA





The promotions didn't stop there, throughout Milsom Street and Green Street stores and restaurants celebrated with discounts and in-store activities. Ted Baker hosted a jazz band, the Kooples poured champagne, Vinegar Hill had a prize draw, and Kiehl's offered discounts and free testers with their Wheel of Kiehl's.

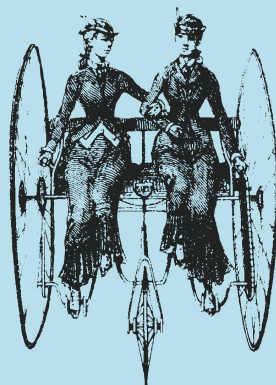
OKA, Santorro, Portman all spilled out on to the street and both Loch Fyne, and Miller & Carter had weekend deals on food and drink.

In Green Street the party continued, with French Connection, Amathus, SP Green

Jewellers and Loake all hosting various activities. The Old Green Tree hosted a BBQ and outdoor bar and Belhushi arranged live music and a mini competitions.

In addition to this many businesses helped promote the event by contributing gifts to Visit Bath's influencer weekend.

The final element of the event was the #LOVEBATH letters which were positioned at the bottom of Milsom Street. Throughout the weekend it was one of the most photographed spots in Bath and helped raised the profile of the event, Milsom Street and the Love Our High Street campaign.



440

businesses participated in the event

403

— the numbers

STATISTICS AND TRENDS

During the event data on the flow of people, consumer spend, air pollution and much more was obtained in order to compare the weekend against daily, weekly, monthly and annual trends.

Given this was the pilot event, no quantifiable targets were set however analysis of the data helps to identify what the successful elements of the event were as well as highlighting areas of improvement.

ent

9000

*pedestrian movements on Milsom Street
the during weekend*

0

*the number of times pollution
on George Street exceeded
unacceptable levels*

1

*incident of anti social
behaviour reported*

*delivered
with the support of*

3

partner organisations

Visit Bath, Bath BID and Milsom Place

weeks of planning

10

12.4mm

*of rainfall recorded during the
weekend*

highest tempeature recorded

24⁰

*5° above the average for
the time of year*

a peak hour flow rate of

2,984

pedestrians

17% higher than the average for September
between 2017 and 2019

overall spend of

£13,000

funded through WECA Love Our High Street programme

over

50,000

interactions on social media platforms

during the event weekend



ANALYSIS

Business Participation

40 businesses from Milsom Street, Milsom Place and Green Street participated in the event. This accounts for businesses that adopted the highway and/or ran promotions to support the event. This represented a 86% participation rate. Business models or head office protocols were the main reasons given by non-participating businesses, however many were very supportive of the event.

Consumer spend

Bath BID's Smart City Data initiative collates data and profiles spending habits across the city centre. Still in its infancy, there is currently no comparable data available for the event weekend.

Pedestrian movement

Pedestrian flows were derived from BID footfall counters positioned outside Nos. 7-8 and Nos.27-28 on Milsom Street. Footfall peaked between 3pm and 4pm

on the Saturday at 2984 people per hour. This represents an increase 17% when compared to the average peak hour flow for other Saturdays in September*.

The flow of pedestrians was lower on the Sunday, peaking at 2015 people per hour however when compared to other Sundays in September* this represented a 35% increase.

An additional footfall counter is located on Burton Street however, as there can be no guarantee that pedestrians passing this point visited Milsom Street during the event weekend, this data has been excluded from the analysis.

Traffic and air quality

The event coincided with the start of the Universities' academic year. It was anticipated that the volume of traffic would be higher than usual. As part of the traffic management scheme, signage was put up a week before the event to

inform local residents of the event weekend, the impact of the event on the city were utilised.

In order to monitor the impact of the event on the city, a pedestrian monitoring scheme was implemented. This increase in pedestrian activity over the weekend, NO. 27-28 on Milsom Street was considered to be a key indicator in Particle Counter data. Milsom Street at Milsom Place and 22nd Street was considered to be a key indicator when the speed of the event was considered to be a key indicator of the data. The data was considered to be a key indicator of the data.

Weather

An important factor to monitor the impact of the event on pedestrian interventions, the minimum.



traffic and, during the event
the city's matrix (VMS) signs

to assess whether the event had
an impact on air quality, data from the
monitoring stations was obtained. Despite
the spikes in traffic during the
event, PM_{2.5} levels across the city were
generally at acceptable levels. Spikes
in PM_{2.5} Matter occurred on George
Street at midnight on the 21 September
and 22 September. Given that no event
was taking place on Milsom Street
on these dates, the spikes occurred the event is not
likely to be catalyst. On review of all
data for September these spikes are
likely to be anomalies.

Another aspect of the event was
the impact weather had on
movement. Wet weather
conditions were therefore kept to a

The data set included all weekends in September between 2017 and 2019

A weekend of two parts. On the Saturday the event was blessed with clear skies and higher than average temperatures. The Sunday was wet and changeable, however footfall was still higher than average. During the event weekend there was considered to be no correlation between pedestrian flows and poor weather conditions.

Planning

The planning of the event was undertaken in collaboration with Visit Bath. Planning for the event started in the middle of July, taking 10 weeks.

Finance

The overall costs of the project at the time of writing was £13,000*. This does not include Officer time and the in-kind support provided by Visit Bath, Bath BID and Milsom Place. The in-kind support consisted of planning and logistics, marketing and storage.

Marketing, social media and press

To support the event a marketing and social media campaign was created. This ran alongside B&NES and WECA official press releases.

Much consideration was given to how vigorous the campaign needed to be. Ultimately it was decided that the pedestrianisation of the street needed to be tested without being unduly influenced by marketing. The marketing therefore

focused on celebrating the street and discussed the concept being tested rather than attempting to persuade people to attend the event.

The event gained the attention of the press featuring in local newspapers before and after the weekend. It was also covered on BBC Radio Bristol on the Saturday morning and on Point West on Sunday.

In order to reach a bigger audience, the project team also took over Visit Bath's social media platforms during the event. Across social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) the event received over 50,000 interactions, of which the vast majority were positive.

Summary

There are many positive statistics and trends that can be interpreted from the data, in particular business participation and pedestrian flows.

Some elements, such the Universities' Fresher week and the weather, were outside of the project team's control however the impacts can be mitigated through planning in the future.

There are some gaps in the data, such consumer spend, and there is a recognition that more sophisticated techniques could be used to capture data such as footfall, pedestrian flow and air quality in the immediate area.

** to the nearest 000's*

— the verdict

THOUGHTS AND FEEDBACK

As discussed earlier on this report, whilst statistics are important the feeling and atmosphere created by a space is also crucial to determining its success.

In order to gain an understanding of the how the local communities felt about the event, businesses, residents and visitors were invited to fill out a survey.

The survey was broken down into three different sections with an opportunity to provide further comments.

- Pre-event
- Event weekend
- Post-event/Future

Copies of the surveys are provided in the appendices.



*of the businesses located on
Milsom Street, Milsom Place and
Green Street ...*

94%

felt that event met or exceeded their
expectations

52%

felt that the increase footfall had a
positive effect on sales

96%

said that would support more road
closures and events on Milsom Street





*"the pocket park and outside dining
were great"* Resident/Visitor

*"On the Saturday we saw a significant improvement to
our sales. I would like to see more car free weekends"*

Manager at India Jane (No. 20 Milsom Street)

"...the atmosphere was what made it great"

Manager at French Connection (No. 3 Green Street)

*"We've recieved many
positive comments from local
businesses and residents in
support of ongoing closures...
in the future."*

Cllr Joanna Wright, Cabinet Member for Transport

*"The atmosphere was fantastic but I was a bit disappointed
at the lack of wheelchair access."* Resident/Visitor

*"It was nice to see something
different on the street"*

Ass. Manager at Moss Bros. (No 22 Milsom Street)

*[I enjoyed] the relaxed atmosphere, no
traffic, it felt like an open community
event*

Resident/Visitor

*"Reintroduced some 'life'
back into Milsom Street"*

Nickie Portman (No. 28 nd 32 Milsom Street)

*"We did really well on Saturday ... we were up 20% from
other weekends. I would not support making it car-free
permanently ... but having these weekends every now and
again is a good idea, maybe once a month"*

Manager at Maythers (No. 3 Milsom Street)

*"it created a great atmosphere
on Milsom Street"*

Manager at Jolly's, House of Fraser (7-14 Milsom Street)





Press and social media

The event was covered by local newspapers and community forums. It also featured on BBC Radio Bristol and BBC Points West.

Visit Bath social media platforms were utilised and an influencer meet was held which helped raise the profile of the event. By the end of the weekend, Milsom Street had become one of most photographed areas of the city across local social media channels.

Perceptions

On the whole feedback was positive. When comparing the feedback to the quantitative data it is interesting to learn that there is a disconnect between businesses perception and the reality on the ground, particularly when it comes to footfall.

It is also evident that there is a still view held that the bus stop, parking and live traffic helps increase trade. Both academic literature and case studies across the UK and the rest of the World, however, refute this claim.

Consensus or dissensus?

It is evident from the feedback, from all sources, that there is an agreement that investment in Milsom Street and the north of the city is required in order to revitalise the area. Of what form that should take, there is less agreement.

When asked if Milsom Street should be closed in the future, the overwhelming response from the survey was yes. When asked how often, the response ranged from a permanent closure, to weekends only or monthly. This uncertainty is echoed by other businesses, residents, visitors and community groups who have different needs and ambitions for the area.

There is also a resistance from local residents and workers who depend on the park and ride, as well as a concern about the lost of blue badge and resident parking bays.

Strengths

The event successfully tested the concept and achieved all of the project aims. There was a high level of support for the event amongst businesses and strong level of participation on the day.

The atmosphere of the event was highly rated by businesses, residents and visitors alike and there is a strong desire for more schemes.

The project gained the attention of the local media and support was generally positive.

In addition to this, the car-free weekend, along with the delivery of a week of activities, including the Bathscape Walking Festival, and a commitment to future interventions, won the award for Best Campaign at the 2019 Act TravelWise Awards.

Weaknesses

The event coincided with the start of the Universities' academic year which creates high volumes of traffic in the city. Had the event not be planned around International Car Free Day it is unlikely that this weekend would have been chosen.

There was an appetite for more aggressive marketing of the event from the business community however it was felt that this would create a superficial increase in footfall which is not in line with the aims of the project. It is recognised however that the aims of the project could be more widely communicated.

There was also a desire for more resources to be put towards a wet weather plan, however again it is felt this would create a superficial environment. In order to revitalise Milsom Street the public realm and retail offering needs to be attractive all year round, whatever the weather.

Opportunities

There is strong support from residents and businesses for closures on the street and beyond. This provides an opportunity to test different programmes in the next year.

A programme of improvements and efficiencies approached and further opportunities collected. Data for long term planning.

Threats

Identified threats include limited resources, ambitious objectives, park and ride provision, a highway works programme. Work also needed to assure businesses and residents of evidence to support traffic results.

— the lessons

SWOT ANALYSIS

ties

ong support from businesses,
and Councillors for further
Milsom Street during 2020
There are opportunities
rent concepts and deliver a
of activities throughout the

ne of activities allows for
to be create and a streamlined
to be adopted. It also provides
ortunities for data to be
ata will be used to inform the
lans for Milsom Street.

hreats include availability
s, competing needs and
f different organisations,
le provision, parking
ccessibility and planned
rks in Queen Square.

eds to be undertaken
sinesses that there is no
suggest that parking and
ts in higher consumer spend.



— the next steps

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short Term

Having analysed the data and reviewed the feedback there are some key short term recommendations that can be delivered as part of a plan of works for 2020/21. These include;

- Review of project aims
- UK and international case studies
- Best practice research relating to mobility and accessibility
- Review of placemaking tools

These short term goals will be incorporated into the preparation of a Full Business Case for investment into Milsom Streets public space including street furniture and associated works and a future programme of events and animation activities.



Long Term

The long term aspiration for Milsom Street is to support the transition of the area from retail core towards a mixed use urban quarter with an emphasis on leisure and culture, together with active ground floors and a greater mix of residential and non-retail uses on upper floors. A Milsom Quarter Masterplan exercise is planned for 2021, which will help set the future direction of the area.

Plan of Work 2020/21

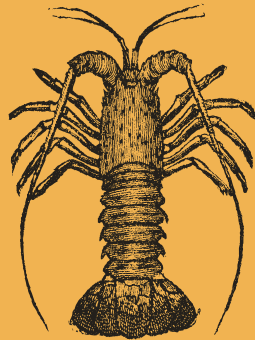
Spring - Winter 2020

- Short term pilot interventions to support existing businesses and help reanimate the street
- Collect data to inform Full Business Case
- Consultation and engagement focused on engagement with landlords, property agents and traders.

Spring - Summer 2021

- Prepare and submit Full Business Case to WECA
- WECA Committee to consider Full Business Case and make a decision on funding award





Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

