

## **STILL NO ACCESS TO BATH CITY CENTRE FOR BLUE BADGE HOLDERS**

The dictionary definition of equality

*the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.*

Please can the council explain to me and other Blue Badge Holders how this applies to the continued exclusion of the city centre to Blue Badge Holders, a situation not scheduled to change until January next year.

It needs to be recognised that the current restrictions in the city centre..namely no access for vehicles between the hours of 10 am and 6pm (except for convoluted prior arrangements) are not because of security issues but were brought in for social distancing during the pandemic. The security arrangements are NOT yet in place as the TRO consultation process IS STILL ONGOING.

Why then are the barriers still there? Its because THIS council decided to use discretionary powers to extend the regulation on social distance for a further 6 months. This is laughable given that all restrictions on mask wearing/social distancing etc were legally abandoned months ago. Its laughable when I can attend the theatre where people are sitting 4 heads to a square metre...I don't need a Covid pass either! People are requested to wear masks in the theatre and some shops and hospitality venues ..but they don't and mask wearing has all but been abandoned by most people.

Who, therefore, are the council seeking to protect by the extension of social distancing regulations?

The answer, of course , is no-one. The continued closure of Cheap Street/Westgate Street/Upper Borough Walls is not for social distancing but the anti-car agenda and wanting to let cafes and pubs put tables out on the streets at the expense of people with mobility issues.

This group of people, residents and tourists alike, have been denied access to the attractions and shops of the city centre during the lovely summer weather and are now to be denied access to the Christmas events which are being much hailed by the council and Bath BID. Why? How can this be EQUAL in either rights or opportunity? We would all like to "*Rediscover the Magic*" ..and why can't we?...because Blue Badge Holders are not to be let into the centre until JANUARY..when the weather is cold and Icy and many disabled people do not venture far from home. What is equal about the Council's approach here?

So, what is to happen? I hope, in the spirit of Christmas goodwill that the council will remove the barriers during the daytime to allow access to less mobile people to do their Christmas shopping in person supporting local traders as we are being urged to do, visit the Abbey Quarter artisan stalls and experience Christmas shopping in daylight rather than having to wait until it is dark and cold.

The current consultation on access for Blue Badge holders and the methods of allowing access is for when the Anti terrorist TROs are in place..which currently they are not. Its simple to lift those barriers..please do it and let's ALL share in the Christmas spirit .

Please, please...listen to this appeal. Do the decent thing and lift the barriers TOMORROW...you have the power.

Lynda Lloyd

7<sup>th</sup> November 2021 for Cabinet meeting 10/11/21