

# 'Council's safe zone is killing our town'

"IT SEEMS as if Ceredigion County Council are doing everything in their power to try and kill our town off." That is the reaction of a leading Cardigan businessman after the town's high street was closed off on Friday as part of the controversial Covid safe zone.

Julian Beynon-Lewis, acting chair of Cardigan Traders, maintains town businesses have already been hit. He also questioned the effectiveness of the safe zone in ensuring social distancing and claimed Cardigan was actually "less safe" for pedestrians than it was before.

"This has been an absolute disaster for our town," Mr Beynon-Lewis said.

"We took a poll of traders last September and around 66 per cent were against it. This year is even worse - one long established business

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has reported a 30 per cent drop in takings and a 40 per cent reduction in footfall.

"All we can do, is try and ensure the safe zone does not continue beyond summer.

"Last year Ceredigion County Council introduced free parking - this time they have not only brought back charges but increased them, while at the same time bringing in cashless machines few seem able to operate.

"I don't see how the measures brought in make the town safer in any shape or form. Any benefit from getting traffic out of town is surely outweighed by the damage to the local economy."

● More on pages 4 and 16.



An action group opposed to Cardigan's revised Covid-19 safe zone staged a protest in May.

# Council slammed for 'ruining' tourist town

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ABERAERON traders have been left 'tearing their hair out' due to ongoing works on the town's safe zone, according to one councillor.

Cllr Phill Davies claims some visitors are being put off from journeying to the seaside resort as it has been left 'an unsightly mess,' with fewer parking spaces.

Since the safe zones were reinstated by Ceredigion council's 'Gold Command' Cllr Davies said that he was constantly being asked if the local authority were 'trying to ruin Aberaeron'.

"They may not be trying, but they are most certainly succeeding," he said.

"They have started more work in the tourism centre, closing off a large part of the car park in Pwllcam as well as dozens of parking areas.

"All this to actually end up with fewer spaces than we had originally, in a town where space is at a premium.

"The last few days have seen cars circling the one-way system in a vain attempt to park, and many have said they just give up and leave."

Cllr Davies said that the works being undertaken

ahead of the summer season have started too late, and he forecasts that people would 'vote with their feet'.

"They are going elsewhere - to the cost of local traders in the town," he said.

"To say that there is anger locally is a huge understatement - traders and residents are tearing their hair out.

"Those who have visited for the first time having seen pictures of our once lovely town are totally dismayed."

Ceredigion County Council maintain that despite 'some disruption' the end results would enhance the town.

A spokesperson said: "The Safe Zones have been introduced to create safe and welcoming towns for people to enjoy whilst adhering to the social distancing requirements and allow businesses to trade whilst complying with current restrictions.

"In Aberaeron, improvements are being made to the Pwll Cam area where the raised sections are being lowered down to the level of the existing footpath, which will create a wider and will be more accessible space for people to circulate around the harbour whilst continuing to allow parking.

"New and additional seating space will be provided which, once completed, will be better for those visiting."



The closed car park on Tabernacle Street.



Residents have complained safe zones make the town look ugly.

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