

A VISION FOR BEAR FLAT CENTRE

Update September 2023

In December 2020, BFA published its Vision for Bear Flat Centre*.

We said:

Traffic is the dominant feature, not a 'village' centre. It could be a much more attractive and agreeable place to shop and visit – and a stronger focus for the community.

This paper aims to put forward a vision as to how Bear Flat Centre could be improved over the next five years. The intention is to stimulate debate and spark more ideas – and to get everyone working together to make a better centre.

What's happened since?

This update summarises progress (or lack of it).

Reducing the Impact of Traffic

	Vision	Update	Latest
Re-allocate road space	Wellsway's four lanes of traffic could be reduced to three, or even two, releasing space for walking, cycling and landscaping	2023 WECA announced a scheme for the A367	BFA made submission to WECA. WECA due to issue revised proposals, expected in 2024
New crossing	A pedestrian/cycle crossing is needed on Bloomfield Road near The Gore**	2021 Bid submitted by Cllr Duguid for funding for schemes on lower Bloomfield Road. 2022 B&NES committed funding for Bloomfield Road measures	Scheme in the pipeline for a crossing near Bloomfield Green. BFA pressing for a crossing near the Gore**.

*From the top of Wells Road (by the chemist) to the fork of Wellsway and Bloomfield Road, i.e. the local shopping area.

**The Gore is the green triangle where Bloomfield Road and Wellsway meet

Brightening and Greening the Centre

	Vision	Update	Latest
Enhance The Gore	Greening of the space, with new planting and seating; reducing the visual impact of the utilities' boxes	2022 Phase one completed – fountain renovated (and large utility cabin behind it removed)	Further phase on hold pending WECA scheme (see above)
Enhance Hayes Place	Adapt to make a pedestrian-dominated space, with traffic allowed to pass. Land released for wider pavements, planting and seating, perhaps an event space	2021 Bid submitted by Cllr Duguid for funding, based on a scheme drawn up by BFA. Outdoor seating permitted at The Good Bear, with BFA support	The bid has 'scored well' on the B&NES criteria. Decision awaited
Greening the Centre	More trees to be planted and other landscaping such as a mini park on Wellsway	2021 B&NES agreed tree planting, but put on hold pending WECA scheme	BFA pressing for planting and landscaping as part of WECA scheme

Developing and Promoting a Vibrant Local Centre

	Vision	Update	Latest
Campaign	Campaign to push Bear Flat as a local centre	Revised <i>Welcome to Bear Flat</i> leaflet published 2022	
Publicity	More promotion needed of businesses	BFA doing more to publicise what the Centre offers e.g. business focus items in the <i>Bear Flat Flyer</i>	BFA seeking to involve traders in combined initiatives
Maintaining the Public Realm	Minor issues when Vision first published	More significant now with Council cuts and ban of harmful sprays	BFA team undertaking weeding and cleaning of Bear Flat Centre. Likely to be broadened
Keeping Bear Flat safe	Minor issues when Vision first published	Higher incidence of minor crime latterly	BFA addressing the problem in discussion with police, councillors and businesses
The Bear	The white polar bear recognised as the most distinctive visual feature, and forms the BFA logo	BFA instrumental in both retaining the bear and keeping it white in the 2022 upgrade	BFA supported a new roof terrace at The Bear Inn, adding to the Centre's offer (not yet created)