

# Petition to Cambridgeshire County Council

1<sup>st</sup> September 2007 – presented by Tim Broad, Lighthouse Toys, Histon, Cambridge  
Representing

- the traders of Histon and Impington (one petition) and
- their customers / residents (second petition)
- including supporting letters from national traders with outlets in Histon & Impington.

## Summary

- This presentation concerns the planned complete closure of Gatehouse Lane (between Histon and Girton / Oakington) for 16 weeks for work on the Guided Bus level crossing.
- The traders of Histon and Impington do not want a complete closure to cars. There are alternatives, for example traffic lights allowing alternate single file traffic.
- If the road has to be fully closed, then please ensure that the duration of the full closure is kept to a minimum.
- The businesses of Histon and Impington will be fighting for compensation for every day that the road is closed, and will need to receive compensation in a timescale that will aid their businesses. Please confirm that the businesses will be compensated in full for their losses.

## Background

- Gatehouse Lane has already been closed for 7½ weeks in the spring of this year. The businesses experienced a loss in trade during the closure and in some cases, the period immediately following the closure.
- From the losses already experienced it should be possible to estimate the losses likely to be experienced during the 16 week closure – bearing in mind that this is in the busiest period of trading for most of them.
- The losses will be small compared to the size of the Guided Bus Project, however they will be significant to the businesses, some of which are small independents that operate under tight margins and with small reserves – the reserves are already depleted after the spring closure.
- National scale businesses are also affected, e.g. Co-op, Tesco.
- All of the businesses affected have customers from surrounding 'satellite' villages such as Girton, Oakington, Dry Drayton and Bar Hill where there are no local shops / banks / Post Office. The natural route for these customers to Histon and Impington is via Gatehouse Lane. The experience from the closure in the spring shows that these customers will shop elsewhere if they cannot easily get to Histon and Impington. E.g. use the main Post Office in Cambridge.

## Concluding Argument

- On the map, Gatehouse Lane appears to be an insignificant inter-village link road. I didn't appreciate its importance to the village until the spring closure – the shops of Histon and Impington act as a 'hub' to customers in the surrounding 'satellite' villages.
- Customers coming to the village to visit one shop or business are likely to visit other ones on the same trip. Consequently the trade in one business is dependent on both the footfall it generates, and also the footfall generated by the surrounding businesses.
- If the footfall is reduced so that one business is forced to close, then the footfall within the village will be reduced making it more likely that a second business will close. It is possible that a chain of closures may result.
- A loss of businesses in Histon and Impington will affect the surrounding villages, not just Histon and Impington.
- We urge the Council to consider not only the direct costs of implementing the Guided Bus project, but also the costs to the local communities – to traders, residents and the environment. The principle behind such a project is to serve the local communities, not to damage them.