

# A38 Junction Improvement works in Taunton

Important works are starting in Taunton this month around the A38 Mary Street, Billetfield and Paul Street junctions, to support a residential development.

The developer has helped us to draft this set of Q&As which hopefully explain what's happening, why and how this might affect pedestrians and road-users.

## What's happening?

As part of the Quantock House residential development, junction improvement works - which were included in the planning application – will be carried out by the developer from Monday 26 April. The work includes upgrading the traffic signals and improving pedestrian access to the town centre.

Key features of the work:

- The installation of a dedicated right-hand turn lane into Paul street as you approach from the Billetfield direction.
- A proposal is in place to introduce a permanent right-hand turn ban into The Mount as you approach from the Mary Street direction, so it will become 'left in and left out' only from The Mount onto A38 Billetfield. This will happen at a later date.



To recap - these improvement works are taking place on the Mary Street, Billetfield and Paul Street junctions.

## Who is undertaking the works?

The developer (AHH Group, Affordable Housing and Healthcare Group) will be working in partnership with specialist sub-contractors and Somerset County Council to safely deliver the works.

## How long will the works take?

Works will commence on Monday, 26 April 2021 and are scheduled to last 9 weeks. The traffic management will be in place for the duration of the works.

## How will access to Paul Street & The Mount be affected?

For the duration of the works lane closures will be required on all approaches to the signalised Paul Street junction, so all eastbound and westbound traffic will be reduced to a single lane approach on the A38 Mary Street & Billetfield.

To keep traffic flowing along the A38, Paul Street will be reduced to a 'left in, left out'. There will be signed diversion routes in place via Silver Street and Compass Hill.

This approach will reduce the number of traffic light phases needed during the works and so aim to reduce the wait times for traffic on the A38; the existing permanent signals will be switched off and replaced with temporary signals.



There will also be a right-hand turn ban into The Mount for A38 eastbound traffic so to ensure traffic flow is maintained as much as possible on the A38 Mary Street & Billetfield, this will be on a 'left in and left out basis' as with Paul Street.

As part of the scheme a permanent right-hand turn ban is to be put into place on completion of the works.



### Why can't normal access to The Mount, Paul Street including retail facilities and the car parks be maintained?

Normal access can't be maintained as a safe works area needs to be created to allow the necessary construction work to be undertaken. This unfortunately reduces the amount of carriageway available for 'normal' traffic.

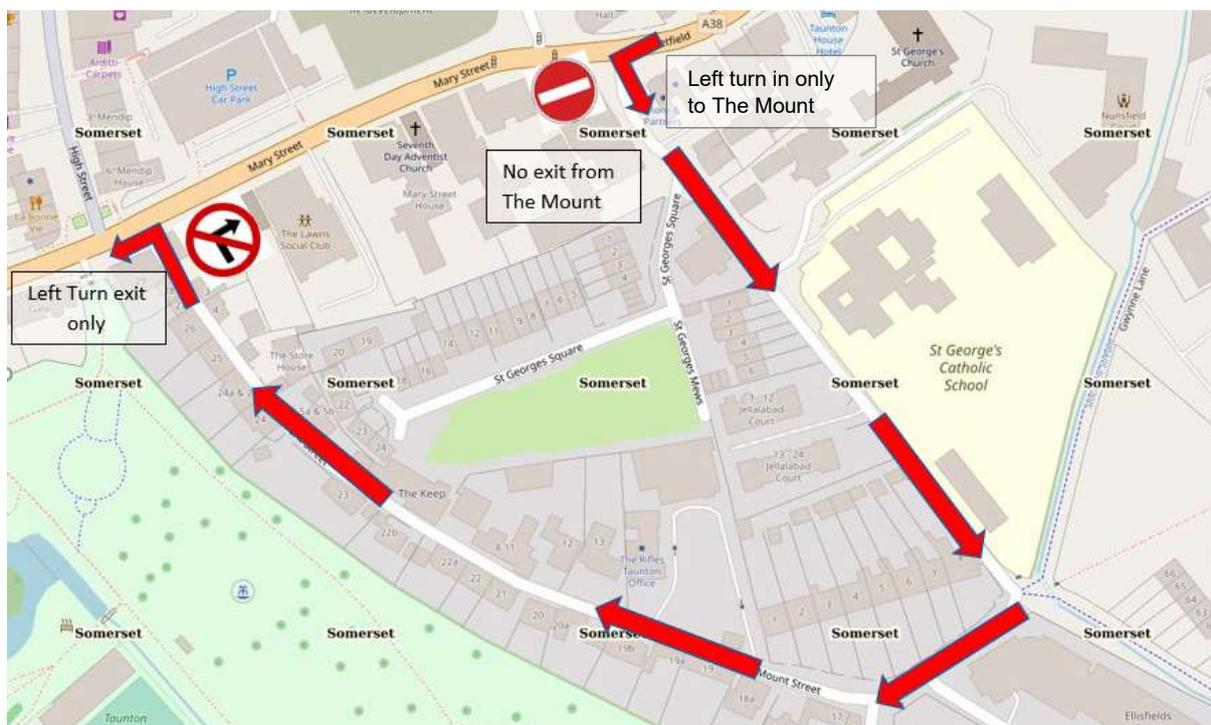
To maintain normal access would require additional traffic light phases as traffic flows will be already be restricted. This would certainly result in longer wait times on the A38 Mary Street & Billetfield and it is important that traffic flows on the A38 are maintained as much as possible given the importance of this route.

### How will this affect St Georges School, and residents along The Mount

For the duration of the works The Mount will become a one-way system similar to that used for the Taunton Flower Show. This will help with school traffic and reduce congestion along the narrower sections.

Traffic will only be able enter The Mount from the Billetfield (Sainsbury) direction and will have to exit via Mount Street.

To recap, it will be left in via The Mount and left out via Mount Street



### **Will Pedestrian access be affected?**

Yes, temporary alternative crossing points will be in use, with safe and suitable walkways in place along with any localised diversions routes.

### **Why can't East Street be reopened to ease the disruption?**

East Street remains closed to support social distancing and support cycling and walking. This has been the case since last summer and needs to remain in place while government guidelines on social distancing are still in force, as the narrow pavements on the north side of East Street would not allow for social distancing to be maintained. This combined with queuing systems in place outside retailers and building societies would force pedestrians into the road and/or parking bays.

Footfall on East Street since non-essential retail re-opened on the 12 April has been 25% higher than 2019 figures and continues to be very strong as businesses start to re-open, and we expect this to continue as hospitality and food and beverage businesses start to re-open in mid-May.

### **Why didn't this work get done during lockdown?**

The work is part of the overall developer schedule as detailed in the planning application, and it was planned some time before the Covid crisis hit and lockdown rules came into force. The work is essential and is needed to move the development on towards completion – fortunately it is commencing nearly three weeks before we get to the next key 're-opening' date of 17 May, and currently traffic levels during the week are between 15-20% below the normal level.

### **Why can't the works take place during the School Summer Holiday period?**

The new Quantock House development cannot be occupied until these works have been taken place and these works will also introduce improvements in time for the summer on this key junction.

Fortunately, the timing coincides with a reduction in traffic flows before the busier summer period when this would have much more impact. With more 'stay-cations' taking place due to the pandemic there is the potential the network will be much busier than usual during the summer.

The works need to be coordinated in line with other network activities.

### **What has been done to minimise disruption?**

The developer undertaking the works has met with Somerset County Council to discuss how best to minimise the works, while keeping the roads open and maintaining access. Discussions have taken place to reduce the works duration and limit the potential for severe disruption.

Night working was considered but due to proximity of residential properties it is considered unsuitable due to higher noise levels, however there may be some evening works for the more disruptive resurfacing works.

### **What is the diversionary route for access into Paul Street?**

A diversion route suitable for all vehicles will be signposted and advertised and can also be found at [www.travelsomerset.co.uk/roadworks](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/roadworks) or [One.Network](#).

### **Why can't the works be carried out at night?**

Where possible extended hours will be worked and some elements of the works, such as resurfacing will be done during the evenings, however given there are residential properties nearby the levels of noise and light would not be acceptable. It is also much safer to work during daylight hours as longer hours can be worked so reducing the overall duration of the works.

**Why can't normal traffic flows be restored when work finishes each day?**

To restore the road to normal traffic every day is not possible as the works will require excavation in the road and footways.

**Have the local and wider community been informed?**

Engagement with businesses and Somerset West and Taunton has been carried out. This Q & A sheet will hopefully address some of the more commonly asked questions. Social media will also be used.

**For details of these works and other roadworks as well as traffic updates in Somerset you can follow [Travel Somerset \(@TravelSomerset\)](#) / [Twitter](#)**