

VICTORIA AVENUE - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY: PETITION (P.206/98) - REPORT

**Presented to the States on 20th July 1999
by the Public Services Committee**



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Report

The Members will recall that, in October 1998, following the tragic accident in which fourteen-year-old Christopher Cauvain was killed attempting to cross Victoria Avenue, Senator Bailhache presented a petition to the States requesting -

“the Public Services Committee to investigate and report back to the States on the measures necessary to ensure that pedestrians can cross Victoria Avenue in safety”.

On behalf of the Committee, the officers at Public Services Department have investigated and studied the problems associated with implementing measures that would assist pedestrians to cross this extremely busy road. As the petition was presented in October, it has not been possible to observe and record the situation during the summer season when it is likely that more people will wish to cross Victoria Avenue and when the road is at its busiest. However, the Committee can assure the House that further studies will be done to gain the fullest picture and further recommendations implemented if required.

Victoria Avenue is 2.3 km in length and, from surveys, it has been established pedestrians cross the road in small numbers at several places along its length. These locations are -

West Park
Tyneville Lane
First Tower
Farley's Lane
La Rue du Galet
Millbrook Park
Bel Royal

To *ensure* the safety of pedestrians on Victoria Avenue without creating unacceptable delays to pedestrians and drivers alike, vehicles and pedestrians would have to be physically separated. This could be achieved either by using bridges or subways. The most pedestrian friendly arrangement would be to raise or lower the level of the road enabling pedestrians to cross over or under it at ground level. A series of flyovers or underpasses would involve a capital works project of a scale considerably in excess of La Route de la Libération underpass, and the Committee has assumed that due to the environmental impact, the cost and construction difficulties, detailed consideration of this option is not required.

To provide bridges or subways at or near each of these locations would again be a major undertaking. Approach ramps to assist wheelchair users and those pushing prams would be up to 100 metres long for bridges and 60 metres for subways, leading to long detours and the likelihood of many pedestrians persisting in crossing the road at ground level. Significant areas of land would be required for the ramps and roadside structures. Although adequate public land is available on both sides of Victoria Avenue, at West Park, this is not true at the majority of the other sites where private land would need to be acquired. For example, a bridge in the vicinity of Farley's Lane would involve acquisition and demolition of a property.

It is likely that a footbridge would cost in the order of £300,000, while a subway would be nearer £1million. Land acquisition would be additional to these costs.

If pedestrians congregated in significant numbers at one or two positions to cross Victoria Avenue, there might be justification to give detailed consideration to the provision of grade separated facilities at those specific locations. Actual surveys of pedestrian movements, however, show that the numbers crossing at any one place are low, at least during the winter period. (Details of recent pedestrian surveys are shown in Appendix 1.)

Given the likely difficulties of obtaining the necessary land required, the potential costs of such schemes and the likelihood that few pedestrians would find the bridges or subways beneficial, the Committee considers that pursuing such schemes is impractical and unlikely to improve pedestrian safety.

However, improvements can be made which will provide better opportunities for pedestrians to cross Victoria Avenue safely.

Evidence gathered by the Transport Research Laboratory, local authorities in the United Kingdom and here, in Jersey, shows that road level pedestrian crossing facilities do not guarantee the safety of pedestrians. Indeed it is recognised that crossings can cause accidents, and that, therefore, if no accidents have occurred previously, provision of a crossing can make matters worse. In Jersey, in the past few years, there have been serious injuries to pedestrians on pelican crossings at St Ouen, Georgetown, La Route de la Libération, the Tunnel and Bagot, with numerous near misses reported at many other locations. Zebra crossings are similar, with injury accidents at Five Oaks, Devonshire Place and Beaumont.

A summary of accidents on Victoria Avenue is given in Appendix 2.

Until recently, Victoria Avenue had a “Pelican” light-controlled crossing at First Tower, as well as pedestrian crossing phases on the traffic signals at La Rue du Galet and West Park where the Avenue meets the Esplanade. Eight people have been injured at the crossing at First Tower in the past seven years. Four of those injured were pedestrians, and another was a cyclist using the crossing. Bearing in mind the numbers of pedestrians crossing Victoria Avenue at First Tower, these figures suggest that the benefit to the majority of pedestrians of a pelican is questionable. The main reasons that such accidents happen are -

- because the crossing is infrequently used, drivers become accustomed to the lights being green and through the lack of concentration, do not “see” the red light;
- and
- approach speeds are high and drivers find difficulty in stopping.

The Committee recently introduced traffic signal control to the junctions of the spur road at First Tower on both the Inner Road and Victoria Avenue, for the purpose of accident reduction. The First Tower “Pelican” crossing has been removed and pedestrian phases incorporated into the traffic signals. This will have two benefits. Firstly the more frequent changing of traffic lights will greatly reduce the likelihood of pedestrian accidents caused by red light infractions. Secondly the introduction of traffic signals will create a “platooning” effect of vehicles, so creating more gaps for pedestrians to cross elsewhere downstream from the junction.

The traffic signals at La Rue Du Galet have recently been replaced, and as part of the accommodation works, the right turn lane width on Victoria Avenue has been reduced and central reserve used by pedestrians widened.

Following the demolition of West Park Café the opportunity exists to improve the road alignment and the pedestrian facility. The signal phasing would be unaffected, but the central reservation would be widened at its narrowest point from 1.3m to 3.0m, providing a much more comfortable and safer facility for pedestrians.

Given the low numbers of pedestrians crossing elsewhere along Victoria Avenue and the shortcomings of pelican crossings, the Committee cannot recommend installation of additional signal-controlled crossings, at present. One area that is popular with young families due to the park with paddling pool, and nearby beach, and which has been identified as an obvious route for pedestrians, is through Millbrook Park to the beach and promenade east of Bel Royal. Whilst the numbers of pedestrians crossing at this point indicate that a signal-controlled crossing would not be safe, it is accepted that the central reservation offers insufficient protection, particularly for mothers with perambulators. A scheme has therefore been designed to reduce the road carriageway widths from 6.8m to 6.1m, increasing the central reserve from 1.1 to 2.5m. Pedestrians will then be able to cross the narrower road in gaps in the traffic one carriageway at a time, waiting, if necessary, on the widened central reserve which will have low kerbs for pram and wheel chair use. Railings will be installed to create a staggered crossing route to ensure that pedestrians face the oncoming traffic, and additional signing erected to advise drivers of the presence of pedestrians. High skid-resistant material will be put down to help indicate the different nature of the area as well as to assist braking. Surveys have shown that there are sufficient gaps in vehicular traffic to permit pedestrians to cross safely at all times of the year.

A similar arrangement is recommended at Bel Royal, Farley’s Lane and by the Lower Park. As before, few pedestrians appear to cross the Avenue at these points, and so controlled crossing facilities are inappropriate. However, there are currently no crossing places for wheelchair users or people with prams between La Rue du Galet and West Park, other than at First Tower. These improvements will thus provide better opportunities for pedestrians to cross more safely.

The total cost for these works is estimated at around £100,000.

It is recognised that some Members will feel disappointment that the Committee is not recommending light-controlled crossings at frequent intervals along the Avenue. However, the evidence is overwhelming that such a proposal will result in pedestrians being injured unnecessarily. Until such time as all drivers travel at the appropriate speed for the conditions and respect traffic signals, pedestrian safety will be compromised. For these reasons, the Committee’s final recommendation, on measures to ensure the safety of pedestrians crossing Victoria Avenue and many other roads in the Island, is to ask the Defence Committee to progress the introduction of speed and red light infringement cameras. Such a measure will improve the awareness of all drivers but, in particular, those drivers who currently pose the greatest danger to pedestrians using light-controlled crossings.

RESULTS OF PEDESTRIAN SURVEYS

Victoria Avenue pedestrian and traffic movement information

Summary of pedestrians crossing Victoria Avenue on fine winter days 1999

0800-0900 hours

<i>Area</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>No. of movements</i>	<i>Controlled</i>	<i>Uncontrolled</i>
1	West Park to east of Tyneville Lane	15	7	8
2	west of Tyneville Lane to east of First Tower	21	0	21
3	west of First Tower to east of La Rue du Galet	44	17	27
4	west of La Rue du Galet to Bel Royal	10	5	5

1300-1400 hours

<i>Area</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>No. of movements</i>	<i>Controlled</i>	<i>Uncontrolled</i>
1	West Park to east of Tyneville Lane	5	0	5
2	west of Tyneville Lane to east of First Tower	15	0	15
3	west of First Tower to east of La Rue du Galet	20	12	8
4	west of La Rue du Galet to Bel Royal	6	1	5

In addition, pedestrian counts were carried out from 1300 to 1400 hours at a point between Millbrook Park and the opposite access to St. Aubin's Beach on Sunday 14th February, between West Park and St. Aubin's Beach, and between the Lower Park and St. Aubin's Beach on Sunday 28th February from 1500 to 1600 hours. The results are detailed below.

<i>Area</i>	<i>No. of movements</i>	<i>Controlled</i>	<i>Uncontrolled</i>
Millbrook Park	18	0	18
West Park	40	30	10
Lower Park (western end)	11	0	11
Lower Park (eastern end)	14	0	14

At the same point by Millbrook Park on 22nd February between the same hours, the traffic flow was assessed with the

number of gaps in traffic of six seconds or more being counted plus any extended gaps (12 seconds plus). The results are detailed below.

Eastbound

<i>Period</i>	<i>No. of 6-12 sec. gaps</i>	<i>No. of 12+ sec. gaps</i>
1300-1305	12	3 (18-20)
1305-1310	9	4 (14-24)
1310-1315	9	5 (15-24)
1315-1320	9	6 (12-27)
1320-1325	8	2 (20-28)
1325-1330	13	3 (15-32)
1330-1335	7	5 (17-22)
1335-1340	10	2 (20-26)
1340-1345	10	2 (15-17)
1345-1350	8	2 (16-19)
1350-1355	10	2 (16-21)
1355-1400	11	2 (21-22)

Westbound

Westbound traffic tended to be continuous for periods of ten to 30 seconds, followed by periods of ten to 20 seconds' inactivity. This was caused by the preceding traffic lights at La Rue du Galet. One or two vehicles turning right off La Rue du Galet on to Victoria Avenue occasionally broke this sequence.

ACCIDENTS ON VICTORIA AVENUE

Summary of accident statistics for Victoria Avenue,
1992-1998 inclusive

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total accidents reported</i>	<i>Accidents involving pedestrians</i>	<i>Pedestrians injured at pedestrian crossings</i>	<i>Vehicular accidents at pedestrian crossings</i>
1998	19	1	0	1
1997	19	0	0	0
1996	28	0	0	2
1995	17	0	0	1
1994	23	3	0	1
1993	29	3	3	0
1992	25	3	2	1

Comments

- 1998 - one pedestrian fatality near West Park;
one moped hit by car at pedestrian crossing at First Tower junction - no injuries.
- 1996 - two shunt accidents at pedestrian crossing at First Tower junction - one motorcyclist slightly injured.
- 1995 - one shunt accident at pedestrian crossing at First Tower junction involving a car and a moped - moped rider slightly injured.
- 1994 - one pedestrian seriously injured on westbound carriageway near 4th lay-by;
one pedestrian slightly injured on eastbound carriageway outside funfair 9th August;
one car accident at pedestrian crossing at First Tower junction - one driver slightly injured;
one pedestrian hit by car on eastbound carriageway at junction with Paris Lane - slight injury.
- 1993 - one pedestrian slightly injured opposite West Park Café in vicinity of pedestrian crossing;
one pedestrian slightly injured on eastbound carriageway at La Rue du Galet;
two pedestrians hit by car at pedestrian crossing at First Tower junction - one serious and one slight injury to pedestrians.
- 1992 - accident involving cyclist crossing pedestrian crossing at First Tower - cyclist seriously injured;
pedestrian hit by eastbound car in vicinity of La Rue du Galet;
two instances of pedestrian hit by eastbound car in vicinity of First Tower pedestrian crossing - all pedestrians were slightly injured.