

Providing event traffic management in line with COVID-19 restrictions

The impact of COVID-19 on events has been devastating but as we begin to emerge into a new post-lockdown world, events will return, spectators will come back, and event organisers will need to provide professional traffic management services which offer guidance and reassurance within continuing COVID-19 guidelines.

The Challenge

In 2019, The Boat Race took place with an estimated 250,000 people lining the banks of the River Thames for the 4.2-mile race.

Following its cancellation in 2020, the event returned in 2021 but organisers were faced with a very different challenge. Rather than attracting

thousands of spectators to London, COVID-19 restrictions dictated that the event had to take place “behind closed door”. In other words, spectators were not allowed. In addition, the location had changed. The race did not take place on the Thames but was moved to the River Great Ouse in Cambridgeshire.

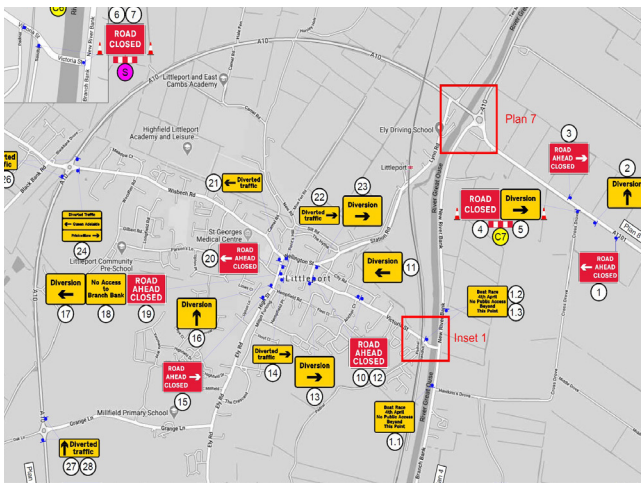
From a traffic management perspective, this changed the client’s requirement from providing traffic and crowd management to designing and implementing a secure zone around the race area to prevent spectators from attending. This required six miles of road closures as well as the closure of riverbank footpaths for three hours before the races started and an hour after both races had finished.

In addition, as the event was televised live, there was a requirement to support the TV company with set-up prior to the race day.



Our Solution

Chevron TM began working with race organisers at the beginning of 2021 to create a tailored traffic management plan which met the needs of all stakeholders. Sixteen CAD-produced maps, agreed with the client, detailed the arrangements which included pre-event set-up, event day and post event clear-up.



As part of the pre-event set up, we provided support for the installation of outside broadcast equipment which included a cone line to protect TV cables and a mobile works stop/go crew to facilitate the installation of a second TV cable along the side of a high-speed road. Advanced signage including directional information for the Oxford Boat Crew, was produced, and erected one week prior to the event.

On the day of the event, we supplied eight TM operatives and eight vehicles to install full closures on all roads leading to the River Great Ouse from Ely to Littleport. Our responsibilities for the duration of the race were to prevent public access to the riverbank and all bridges crossing the River Great Ouse from the start to finish lines. We also supplied an onsite manager to oversee the event. During the day, our operatives stepped in to provide additional support when event security personnel were assigned to other locations along the riverbank requiring extra cover on fixed closure points.

The Outcome

The Boat Race was one of only three events which Chevron TM managed since March 2020. As it was a closed event, client requirements and expectations were very different to previous events.

Close collaboration with the client throughout the design and implementation process resulted in a comprehensive and perfectly executed traffic management plan which ensured that members of the public were kept away from the event location and the boat race proceeded in line with COVID-19 restrictions.

The TV company has already stated that they will be in touch for next year's event when it will return to the Thames.



“Thanks for all your help and hard work at the event, it is greatly appreciated. I was really pleased with your team. Overall, very happy.”

**Chris Price - Event Manager
The Boat Race Company Limited**

