# Freeman Street in Grimsby sees 50 shop closures amid economic decline but eyes £28m revival plan



Freeman Street in Grimsby, Lincolnshire, stands as a poignant indicator of the ongoing decline of the British High Street, a trend mirrored across the UK. Once a bustling thoroughfare filled with local shops, national chains, cafes, and lively market stalls, Freeman Street has now turned into an area characterised by boarded-up storefronts and a noticeable lack of foot traffic. According to reports from the Mail Online, the situation is dire, with the closures of over 50 shops within a mere 250-metre stretch of road.

Residents describe the street as a "ghost high street," with the few remaining businesses predominantly consisting of vape shops, barbers, betting establishments, and fast-food outlets. The high street's once-popular £1 shop has also succumbed to the economic pressures that have forced many businesses to shut their doors.

Marie Moore, a lifelong resident of Freeman Street, reflected on the significant transformation she has witnessed over the years. "As a kid, we'd come here every Saturday,” she recalled, sharing memories of bustling visits with her family. "You couldn't move for stalls and friendly faces." Today, however, the reflective agreement among locals is overwhelming; the vibrancy of the past has been replaced by a stark decline, leaving them with little variety in shopping options.

Local resident Ben Watson, aged 37, echoed Moore's sentiments, stating, "If you're after fast food or a haircut, you're alright. But there's nothing else.” He also noted the troubling presence of social issues in the area, mentioning visible homelessness and drug use, which have contributed to a sense of unease. Reports from the area indicate frequent instances of violence and disturbances, particularly outside the few pubs that remain operational.

Economically, the town faces substantial challenges. Statistics reveal that more than half of adults in Grimsby are on benefits, with the East Marsh and Port ward recording the highest youth unemployment rate in the UK. This economic backdrop paints a concerning picture for the future of Freeman Street.

Despite these challenges, there are glimmers of hope for the town. Grimsby is home to Matthews Chippy, touted as offering the cheapest fish and chips in the UK at just £3, significantly below the national average of £9. Owner Stan Matthews expressed his commitment to providing affordable meals, signalling a desire to support the local community amid wider economic struggles.

Additionally, initiatives are underway for a £28.2 million redevelopment project aimed at revitalising the town. Plans include renovations to the waterfront, a shopping centre, and the construction of a new bridge, potentially ushering in a new era for Grimsby’s main thoroughfare.

As Freeman Street continues to navigate its path through economic decline and community challenges, the contrasting narratives of loss and potential revival suggest that there are still efforts in place to reshape its future.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.ft.com/content/4c9efaa7-c06b-45e3-9566-eca0f40eb326> - This article discusses the decline of Freeman Street in Grimsby, highlighting the closure of shops and the area's transformation into a 'ghost high street'.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-humber-67006309> - This report details how Mathews Chippy in Grimsby offers the cheapest fish and chips in the UK at £3, providing affordable meals to the local community.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-humber-22580603> - This article covers the £28.2 million redevelopment project aimed at revitalising Freeman Street, including renovations to the waterfront and shopping centre.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/nov/02/grimsby-named-unhealthiest-high-street-in-uk-by-rsph-study> - This study names Grimsby as having the unhealthiest high street in the UK, citing high vacancy rates and a prevalence of betting shops and takeaways.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-humber-16932958> - This report reveals that over a quarter of shops in Grimsby are empty, indicating a significant decline in the town's retail sector.
* <https://www.grimsbytelegraph.co.uk/news/grimsby-news/freeman-street-back-business-traders-1940720> - This article highlights the resurgence of Freeman Street, with new businesses opening and increased footfall, suggesting a potential revival of the area.
* <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2050900/run-down-uk-town-britains-most> - Please view link - unable to able to access data