

Divisions Affected – *Wantage West*

## **DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT**

**11 DECEMBER 2025**

### **EAST CHALLOW: CORNHILL LANE (BOAT Nos.196/3/10, 20, 30 & 40) – PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES & CARRIAGES**

**Report by Director of Environment and Highways**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- (a) **Approve the introduction of a new ‘Prohibition of motor vehicles & horse drawn carriages’ restriction on Cornhill Lane BOAT (Nos.196/3/10, 20, 30 & 40), as advertised.**

#### **Executive Summary**

2. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation on proposals to introduce a ‘Prohibition of Motor Vehicles & Horse drawn Carriages’ restriction on Cornhill Lane in East Challow, which is a BOAT (Byway Open to all Traffic) that links the A417 Faringdon Road to the north, and the B4507 Ickleton Road to the south – as shown in **Annex 1**.
3. The proposals are being put forward due to the unsurfaced nature of the Public Right of Way, and it being highly vulnerable following damage caused by motorised vehicles and the subsequent extensive works undertaken to repair the route.
4. The proposals seek to prohibit motor vehicles & horse drawn carriages wider than 1.6m all year round from using Cornhill Lane, whilst use would continue to be permitted for pedestrians, cycles, horses, disabled persons wheelchairs and powered mobility conveyances, motorcycles, horse drawn carriages less than 1.6m wide, as well as for access by agricultural land users and highway maintenance vehicles, and refuse collection.
5. Motorcycles would initially be permitted to use the route, however this would be kept under review should the proposals be approved and implemented.
6. These proposals were previously consulted on in September 2024, and subsequently approved at the 'Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for

Transport Management' meeting in November 2024. However, following receipt of challenges & representations, and subsequently seeking further advice, they have been re-consulted on.

## Corporate Policies and Priorities

7. Of the three priorities identified within the newly adopted 'Oxfordshire Strategic Plan 2025-2028' which are listed below, these proposals actively support priority nos.1,2 & 3:
  - 1) Greener Oxfordshire – *“We want our communities to enjoy clean air, access to green space, and safe and sustainable ways to move around. This means reducing traffic congestion and investing in public transport, cycling and walking; protecting our natural environment; and helping Oxfordshire respond and adapt to a changing climate.”*
  - 2) Fairer Oxfordshire – *“We want all our residents to benefit from the advantages our county has to offer. This means supporting a local economy that benefits everyone; assisting people who face challenges in finding work; making our services as easy to access as possible; and helping communities in need.”*
  - 3) Healthier Oxfordshire – *“We want all our residents to be happy, healthy and safe. This means helping children get the best start in life; creating opportunities for young people to reach their full potential; supporting older people to age well and stay independent for as long as possible; and encouraging everyone to make healthy choices.”*
8. The banning of larger motorised 4x4 vehicles on Cornhill Lane would prevent unnecessary interactions by such vehicles with walkers, cyclists, equestrians, and disabled users. This can help to reduce any intimidation and perceived danger that some will feel and encourage more outdoor recreation.
9. The central, sunken area of Cornhill Lane has experienced significant surface damage over the years due to off-road motorised vehicle use (see photographs of surface damage and repair works). This Byway lies adjacent to the boundary of the North Wessex Downs, a Nationally Protected Landscape, and forms a vital part of the local green infrastructure. It connects key routes within the public rights of way network, offering residents and visitors a means to explore and enjoy the wider countryside.
10. The damage caused by motorised vehicles has necessitated the prolonged use of Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) to close the lane for repairs. These repairs often involve soft landscaping techniques that are sympathetic to the natural environment and require time to settle and become effective.
11. Restricting larger motorised vehicle access is a proactive measure that supports the council's corporate objective to preserve and improve access to nature and

green spaces. It ensures the lane remains safe, sustainable, and accessible for the local community and to as many user groups as possible.

12. The Council believes this approach strikes the right balance between protecting our countryside and maintaining inclusive access.

## **Financial Implications**

13. Funding for the proposals (including consultation) has been met from existing revenue and capital budgets.

## **Legal Implications**

14. The consultation that has been undertaken complies with the consultation requirements for the various elements as required by law including under the Highways Act 1980, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and any other relevant legislation.
15. The scheme has been promoted by the Council as the Highway Authority and Traffic Authority under the Highways Act 1980, and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

*Comments checked by:*

*Nicole Olavesen (Solicitor - Environmental)*

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## **Staff Implications**

16. The design & appraisal of the proposals, as well as the consultation process have been undertaken by Officers from the 'Countryside Access' and 'TRO and Schemes' teams as part of their regular day-to-day duties.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

17. No negative implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of the proposals.

## **Sustainability Implications**

18. The proposals have been put forward for safety reasons, so that the majority of users will be able to sustainably use Cornhill Lane throughout the year.

## Risk Management

19. Not introducing the TRO could lead to continued surface damage to the byway from larger recreational motorised vehicles, resulting in further potential temporary restrictions for all users due to safety concerns. Officers believe that approving the proposals would allow the byway to remain open all year round for the majority of users.

## Formal Consultation

20. Formal consultation was carried out between 17 September and 17 October 2025. A notice was published in the Oxfordshire Herald Series & Oxford Times newspapers, and an email was sent to statutory consultees & key-stakeholders, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, countywide transport/access & disabled peoples user groups, Vale of White Horse District Council, relevant local District Councillors, East Challow & West Challow Parish Councils, and the local County Councillor representing the Wantage West division.
21. Public notices were placed on site in the vicinity of the proposals, and the Parish councils, and local Councillors (including County & District) were also encouraged to use the consultation documents provided to publicise the proposals amongst local residents as necessary.
22. Those that contributed to the original consultation in September 2024 were also informed, providing them with the relevant consultation documents & details on how to submit a response.
23. During the course of the formal consultation, 10 responses were received via the online survey, comprising of one objection to the use of the BOAT by any motorised vehicles from a local Parish Councillor, two partially supporting, five in support (including East Challow Parish Council and Oxfordshire Cycling Network), and two non-objections.
24. Additionally, a further three emails were received directly – with Thames Valley Police not objecting, providing that the proposed prohibition would be sufficiently engineered to prevent vehicle use, and also questioning the needs to allow Motor-cycle usage, citing that this would compromise the more vulnerable permitted users such as pedestrians, pedal-cycles, horse riders, and disabled users.
25. The ‘Green Lane Association’ (GLASS) submitted a comprehensive objection, which can be found in full in **Annex 4** (available in separate document).
26. A local resident of Stanford in the Vale also submitted an objection (including photos, as shown in **Annex 3**), on the basis that it would exclude horse-drawn carriages with four wheels, which they felt had no logical basis, and could be discriminatory as carriages can offer greater vehicle stability for vulnerable

and/or disabled users, citing their use by the 'Riding for the Disabled Association' (RDA) in this effect.

27. The full responses are shown in **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors. Any comments received that Officers identify as containing personal abuse and/or other personal information will be redacted as appropriate.

## **Officer Response to Objections/Concerns**

28. Thames Valley Police has not raised any objection in principle to the proposed prohibition, merely questioning why the prohibition did not also apply to motorcycles. Essentially it is content provided the prohibition is sufficiently engineered to prevent vehicle access and that it would not be reliant on Police enforcement.
29. Officers have no reports of motorcyclists riding dangerously, and there is currently no evidence to suggest that motorcyclists are responsible for the surface damage. This will be kept under review. The question of the positioning and design of gates, gaps, and barriers is being carefully considered to ensure they are effective and fulfil their intended purpose.

### The presence of vegetation:

30. Repeat vegetation clearance works are documented to have taken place yearly since 2011. Accepting that the clearance of undergrowth from all public rights of way throughout the growing season is a challenge, a further package of measures will be implemented (to include additional vegetation clearance) undertaken in accordance with ecological sensitivities and all relevant environmental legislation.

### Absence of Signage and Barriers:

31. Periodic visits are made to attend Cornhill Lane to check and refresh the existing TTRO signage. However, signage of this type in rural areas is often vulnerable to removal or displacement.
32. Reference was made to the absence of concrete blocks on Google Street View. As noted in the report, there are residential properties at either end of Cornhill Lane with private access rights to their houses a short distance from the main roads. For this reason, it was not practicable to place concrete blocks directly at the junctions with the adjoining roads. Instead, the blocks are positioned along Cornhill Lane to avoid impacting these private access rights.

### Widths, Gates, and Disabled Access:

33. An issue has been raised regarding carriage drivers and the need for a minimum 1.8 metre gap (or 1.6 metres with bollards) and is noted. However, officers are

concerned that a gap of 1.8 metres will risk continued access and damage by larger motorised vehicles.

34. A 1.6 metre restriction would accommodate some commonly used carriages whilst limiting access for larger motorised vehicles although, as highlighted in one of the consultation responses, some four-wheeled carriages used by Riding for the Disabled Association groups, can have axle widths of 1.49m. Therefore, the intention is to relax that original restriction and allow a 1.6 metre gap, which would support access for these countryside carriages. The TRO will be amended accordingly.
35. A gap wider than 1.6m would compromise the intention of the TRO by enabling larger, heavier motorised vehicles to access Cornhill Lane. As noted above, the Police are effectively stating that they have no resource to enforce breaches of any TRO themselves which is why there is a requirement for a physical barrier as a preventative measure. Some authorities have trialled combination bollards with contact details for access, but this approach has proven to be unsustainable and very difficult to manage, particularly in terms of controlling who receives access codes. Again, this was noted in one of the consultees responses.
36. The purpose of the TRO is to prevent larger motorised vehicle use on the route, not to restrict access for disabled users. The order includes specific exemptions for classes of disabled vehicles. This change may impact a small number of individuals who rely on larger motorised vehicles access to the countryside. However, for the reasons outlined in the consultation and this report, we believe that access to Cornhill Lane by larger vehicles should cease.

#### Other Public Rights of Way:

37. References were made to other public rights of way that fall outside the scope of this consultation and, therefore, of no direct relevance. [These have been noted, however, and will be addressed by the officers' priority approach. Managing a 2,800-mile public rights of way network across Oxfordshire provides a particular challenge and, to ensure this is carried out effectively and equitably, cases are prioritised based on public safety, levels of use, and the severity of obstruction, giving precedence to routes that are fully obstructed over those that are only partially impeded].

#### Additional comments:

38. The Council's intention is to keep Cornhill Lane open and accessible to the widest possible range of users, including those with mobility challenges. It recognizes the importance of inclusive countryside access and aims to balance the needs of all lawful users.
39. Despite ongoing maintenance efforts, including clearance, surface repairs and drainage improvements, heavy ruts have repeatedly appeared along the central sunken section of the lane. Photographic evidence documents that these ruts re-emerge even after repairs, creating hazardous conditions for all users.

Vegetation clearance has been documented as repeat issues yearly since 2011 and as stated earlier, further clearance works will be programmed in.

40. The Council's decision to temporarily close the route was driven by safety concerns, as the deteriorated surface posed risks to the public. These temporary closures were not as a consequence of an isolated incident; the recurring nature of the damage caused demonstrates the complexity of managing unsealed rural roads for shared use. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that farm traffic is using the byway which might, otherwise have caused damage.
41. The proposed width restriction is specifically designed to prevent access by larger, heavier 4x4 vehicles, which are more likely to cause significant surface damage compared to lighter vehicles such as green lane motorbikes. Feedback from other user groups has also indicated that damage to the lane has been caused by 4x4s, reinforcing the need for targeted regulation. The Council's approach is to prioritise public safety and the long-term sustainability of Cornhill Lane.

#### Balancing Off-Road Use, Surface Preservation, and Ecological Concerns:

42. Cornhill has not been entirely cleared of vegetation across its full extent, despite calls from off-road groups for a more thorough removal. This is due to several important reasons rooted in both practical land management and environmental stewardship. Due to its setting within the landscape, along its central section, Cornhill Lane has become, in effect, a sunken byway which sits lower than the surrounding land. This creates a camber, or gentle slope, on either side of the byway. The cambered sides are particularly vulnerable to surface damage if disturbed further, especially by vehicles straying from the established track.
43. To prevent additional surface damage to these cambered slopes, established vegetation and trees along the edges have been left in place. The roots of this vegetation help stabilise the soil, reducing the risk of further erosion and slippage. If all vegetation were removed, the exposed soil would be far more susceptible to being washed away by rain or churned up by vehicles, leading to even greater damage and loss of the byway's structural integrity.

#### Ecological Considerations: The Green Corridor:

44. Beyond surface preservation, there are significant ecological reasons for retaining established vegetation. The remaining trees and plants form a naturally established green corridor. This corridor provides valuable habitat for a range of wildlife, supports local biodiversity, and contributes to the overall health of the landscape. Removing these green spaces would disrupt local ecosystems and diminish the area's natural beauty.

#### A Balanced Approach:

45. The current approach seeks to strike a balance: the byway itself remains accessible for use, while the surrounding vegetation is preserved to protect both

the land and the environment. By leaving the established green corridor and not clearing all vegetation, Cornhill Lane can accommodate recreational use while fulfilling responsibilities to conserve the natural and physical environment of Cornhill Lane. This is in keeping with how all public rights of way are managed in that they are not routinely decimated of all vegetation across the full extent of what is deemed to be the highway.

46. In summary, Cornhill is not totally cleared of vegetation to prevent further surface damage, protect the sensitive cambered slopes, and maintain an ecologically friendly green corridor that benefits both people and wildlife.

**Paul Fermer**  
**Director of Environment and Highways**

Annex(es):                      Annex 1: Consultation plan  
  Annex 2: Consultation responses  
  Annex 3: Detailed consultation response  
  Annex 4: (*separate document*): GLASS response

Background papers:        n/a  
Other Documents:         n/a

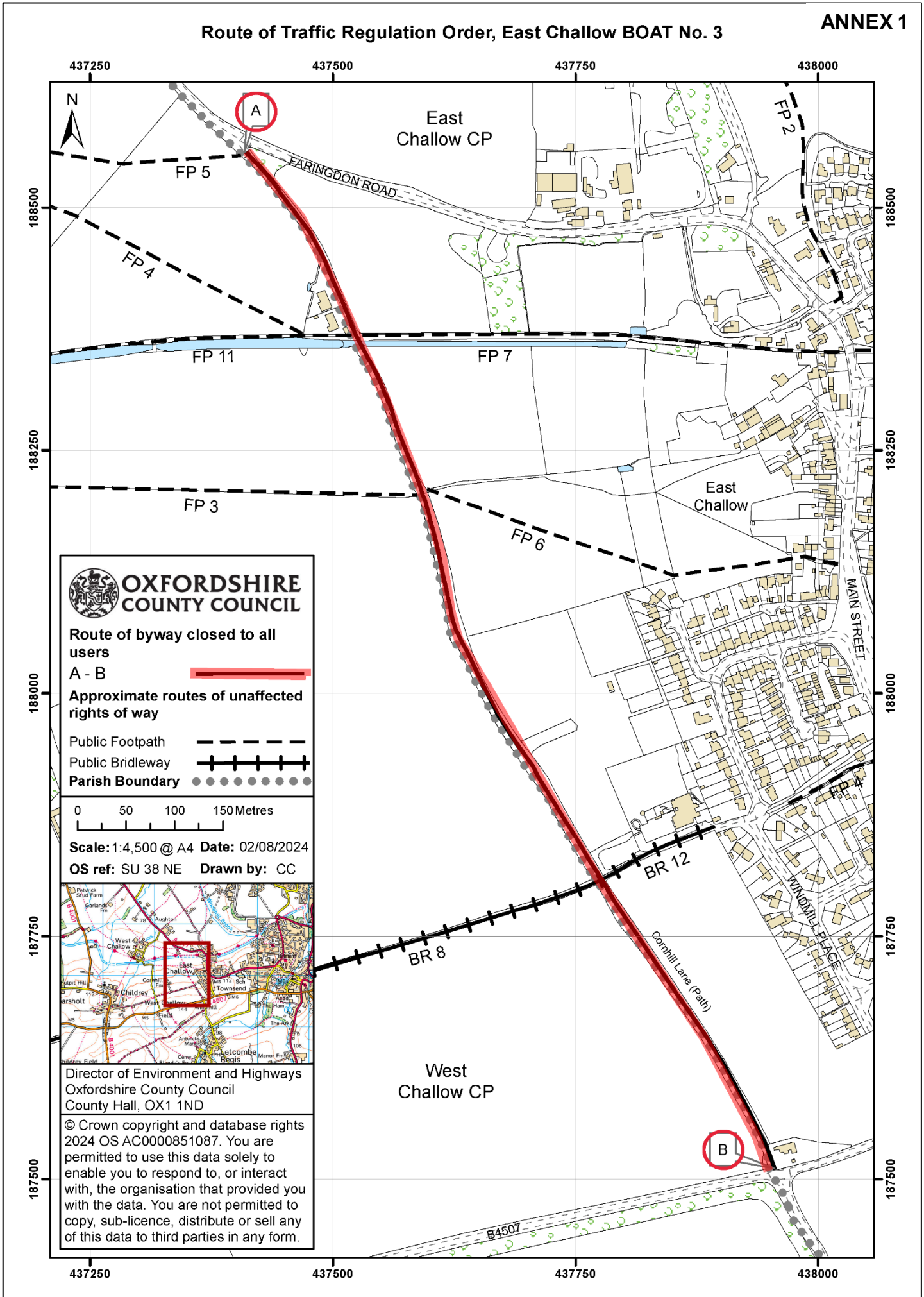
Contact Officer(s):        Steven Tabbitt (Team Leader – Countryside Access)  
  Dave Keeley (Operational Manager – Environment & Heritage)

December 2025



# Route of Traffic Regulation Order, East Challow BOAT No. 3

ANNEX 1



## ANNEX 2

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(e1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p><b>No objection</b> – In principle the Police do not object providing the Prohibition is sufficiently engineered to prevent Vehicle use.</p> <p>Can I question why there is a need to allow Motor Cycle usage . surely this would compromise the more vulnerable permitted user namely pedestrians , cycles , horse riders and disabled.</p> <p>Despite the presence of a TRO there must be no expectation placed on the Police in terms of any future enforcement.</p>
(e2) Local group/organisation, (GLASS)	<p><b>Object</b></p> <p><i>(Full response shown at <b>Annex 4</b>)</i></p>
(e3) Local resident, (Stanford in the Vale, The Timms)	<p><b>Object</b> – This is the second time that there has been a public consultation on the Cornhill Lane TRO and therefore my second submission.</p> <p>For public trust and accountability, it is important that those holding senior positions and making decisions on behalf of the county council show due diligence and check/question the accuracy of the information council officers are providing to these legal processes and understand the actions and working practices being implemented by officers, whom they should have oversight over.</p> <p>There is a real concern that TTROs have not been correctly or appropriately implemented by council officers. Their presentation sets out a concern for public safety, yet on the ground there is clear evidence that this has not actually been a top priority for officers. Absence of signage, leaving stumps, ruts, low branches and allowing the vegetation to narrow the paths, as well as concrete blocks (some obscured with vegetation) to stop or damage 4X4 users, with little regard to the risks and impact on other lawful users.</p> <p><i>(Full response shown at <b>Annex 3</b>)</i></p>

<p>(o1) Local Cllr, (West Challow Parish Council)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – I am objecting to the use of Cornhill Lane by motor vehicles (resident’s houses at the Faringdon Road end excepted) because it is completely unsuitable for motor vehicle use. Cornhill Lane crosses the canal over a bridge of questionable load bearing capacity and then makes its way up hill as a track which, in wet weather (and especially the winter months), has been greatly eroded and damaged by 4x4 usage in the past. Vehicle use has made it very difficult to use by cyclists, pedestrians et al due to the depth of the ruts which make for a slippery and overly muddy and waterlogged thoroughfare. There is simply no practical reason why vehicles should need to use this byway other than for 4x4 adventuring which comes at the detriment of other users who are essentially unable to navigate it such is the damage created by these vehicles.</p>
<p>(o2) Member of public, (Curridge, Curridge Road)</p>	<p><b>Partially support</b> –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am responding as an individual who lives and horse rides in West Berks but also rides in the area of Oxfordshire close to West Berks. I am a BHS access officer and a member of the Mid and West Berks Local Access Forum but I am not responding as either. However, my experience in these roles has helped formulate my response.</li> <li>2. I strongly support the TRO to prevent further damage due to motorised vehicles. BOATs were never intended for motorised use.</li> <li>3. I note, and fully support, that horse riders will be able to continue to use the route because, historically, such byways are for use by ridden and driven horses and, today, horse riders need access to off-road paths as much as possible for their safety away from motorised traffic.</li> </ol> <p>I note that para 2 in the Statement of Reasons hints at a desire to prohibit horses without any evidence that horses have caused the surface damage. It says: ‘ It would also be impossible to prevent use by horses and motorcycles without the installation of some very complex structures at the entry / exit points which is not practicable. Consequently, this TRO does not exclude these groups; ‘ Fortunately, ridden horses are not to be prohibited at this time as this would certainly be challenged.</p> <p>However, oddly, the proposed width restriction is slightly less than the statutory 1.52 metre minimum for a bridleway gap /gate on a bridleway without any explanation being given. This will make the TRO open to challenge.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. The proposal to restrict all horse drawn carriages is open to challenge. No evidence is submitted that carriages have caused surface damage.</li> </ol>

The TRO plans to prohibit horse drawn carriages wider than 1.5 metres. No information is given about the width of the gaps which will be used to prevent this access. A carriage of 1.5 metres width cannot fit through a 1.5 metre gap. What gap width is envisaged?

The British Horse Society has given detailed thought to the use of barriers to prevent access by motorised vehicles while allowing access for carriages – see the BHS Advice Note on Vehicle Barriers ( vehicle-barriers-1224.pdf) which states on page 4:

‘It is unlikely that a gap of 1.8m will admit the type of four-wheeled motor vehicles most used for illegal or antisocial access. Smaller street vehicles are not usually a problem and the smaller four wheel drive vehicles (e.g. Suzuki Jimny 1,645mm wide) would have clearance of less than 80mm each side. If a gap less than 1.8m is proven to be necessary on a byway, local carriage drivers may be willing to accept lockable bollards which can be lowered and for which they have the code, but this is only a solution where such acceptance has been negotiated by the highway authority with local users. The bollard when lowered must be less than 150mm high. Combination locks are more acceptable than key locking padlocks and the code should be circulated to the British Horse Society, British Driving Society and local harness clubs each time it is changed as well as a local list of users to whom it has been supplied. Failing to communicate with users about locks has withdrawn cooperation in many areas. Contact details for acquiring the code must be provided on site.’

No evidence is provided to show there is a need to restrict any horse drawn carriages. Thus, the gap should be 1.8 metres or 1.6 metres with the above conditions.

5. I have noticed that Oxfordshire County Council tends to use large logs and concrete blocks to restrict widths. I question whether these meet the correct safety standards for an emergency situation as they cannot be moved quickly. Emergency situations include an injured member of the public and, with the current climate, wildfires. The BHS advice note recommends retractable bollards with combination locks. I believe these are used on the Icknield Greenway in the Vale of the White Horse and they have been used in West Berks.

6. I have searched for the Council’s policy on gaps on rights of way but have been unable to find one. It would be helpful to know what Oxfordshire County Council’s policy is on gaps, gap widths and the physical structures to be used to achieve the required gap.

7. The accompanying map has a legend which says ‘Route of byway closed to all users A -B’. The use of ‘all’ seems to be inconsistent with the text?

<p>(o3) Local Cllr (East Challow, Hazel Close)</p>	<p><b>Partially support</b> – While I support restricting cars and larger vehicles, the evidence shows that cycles, motorbikes, and other large vehicles have also caused significant damage to the path. To protect the lane's condition and ensure safety, I believe the restriction should go further — limiting access so that the route is maintained only as a pedestrian walkway and bridleway. This would preserve the lane for safe public use while preventing ongoing damage.</p>
<p>(o4) Local group/organisation, (Oxfordshire Cycling Network)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – We support this lane being prohibit to motor vehicles. It has been at times used by cyclists as for leisure cycling, as an alternative to nearby busy roads, or to create a pleasant route linking with off-road tracks and quiet roads. However, in recent years it has become unrideable (and in parts almost unwalkable) due to rutting caused by 4x4s and to some extent motorbikes. The damage done by motorcycles may depend on the ground being 'softened up' by 4x4s however.</p> <p>We think the prohibition may need to include motorcycles, and this should be considered or kept under review.</p>
<p>(o5) East Challow Parish Council</p>	<p><b>Support</b></p>
<p>(o6) Local resident, (Harwell, Reading Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – This path is not suitable for vehicles</p>
<p>(o7) Local resident, (West Challow, Orchard Gardens)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – 4x4's have made a real mess of the path to the north of St Nicholas School, ruining the work that was carried out several years ago to improve the path</p>
<p>(o8) Local resident, (West Challow, Coppice Lane)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – Strongly supportive. Only sensible option. Cheaper. Better for pedestrians and residents directly impacted by abuse of Cornhill Lane.</p>
<p>(o9) Local group/organisation, (Oxford Trail Riders Fellowship)</p>	<p><b>No objection</b> – Ee fully support this proposal to prohibit all motor vehicles with the exception of motorcycles,we have seen the damage done by heavy 4 wd vehicles and have also requested our members to respect other users of this byway when it reopens.</p>

(o10) Member of public,  
(Newbury, Kersten Close)

**No objection** – I was using the BOAT today, and I found the information posted on the notification in stark contradiction to the condition of the path itself. The notice said that it could continue to be used by "for pedestrians, cycles, horses, disabled persons wheelchairs and powered mobility conveyances". However, when I came across two concrete blocks completely blocking the path (at the bridge at SU 37529 88359) I wondered how any pedestrian with any limited mobility, person with a bicycle, horse or disabled person would manage to pass the obstacle.

## Cornhill Lane TRO public consultation 2025

### An OBJECTION

The Order seeks to exclude carriages with 4 wheels which has no logical basis and is discriminatory as these carriages can offer greater vehicle stability for vulnerable or disabled users. 4 wheeled carriages are often used by the RDA and their carriage driving for the disabled groups with 4'11" wheel widths carriages. They are also used on other smaller sized carriages.



[Home](#) > [How We Can Help You](#) > [Carriage Driving](#)



### **Carriage Driving**

Carriage Driving has been a part of RDA since 1975 and is particularly useful for people who are unable to ride due to their disability or prefer a different kind of challenge. Many of the benefits of riding are also relevant to carriage driving; it helps to improve coordination and balance and gives the disabled driver a wonderful sense of freedom being out in the open air with a pony.

The ponies used are all assessed for safety and suitability, as are the volunteers (RDA Whips) who sit beside them in the carriage with a second set of reins so that they can give assistance where needed. The carriages are especially designed to carry wheelchairs if necessary. Every time a disabled driver is taken out they are accompanied by at least two volunteers.

Drivers can progress in the same way as the riders, many, due to their disability, just go for pleasure drives around the countryside and if they are unable to hold the reins the RDA Whip sitting beside them will do the driving. Often it is the only time these participants are able to go



The various council reports also make no reference to Cornhill Lane itself being a former Turnpike Road and it was used by carriages and whilst it is now overgrown, it has a general width capability of up to almost 30 feet in places.

### **Other concerns and issues**

The lack of adherence to the TTRO terms and conditions by the council officers, who state that it is still in force and the use of concrete block obstructions.

Whilst appreciating the need to deal with the damage that 4X4 use has caused to Cornhill Lane. The Christmas 2023 4X4 damage is partially attributable to the lack of appropriate signage by those taking out the TTRO on behalf of the county council.

The Councils Supporting Statement submission states that:

*The TTRO was enforced by the placing of concrete blocks at all access points along with 'Byway Closed' signage to prevent unauthorised access with vehicles. There was, however, a further incursion by vehicle users during the winter of 2023/24 by taking access around barriers at a point where a tree had fallen during winter storms. This caused further damage, needing further repairs carried out in February 2024.*

However, the Google Earth images below show that there was a failure of council adherence to the TTRO notice requirements, noting that "Appropriate signs are displayed to indicate when the measures are in force"

### **Google Earth - Street View August 2023**

The only ROAD CLOSED signage from public access points to Cornhill Lane was at the northern junction with the A417:





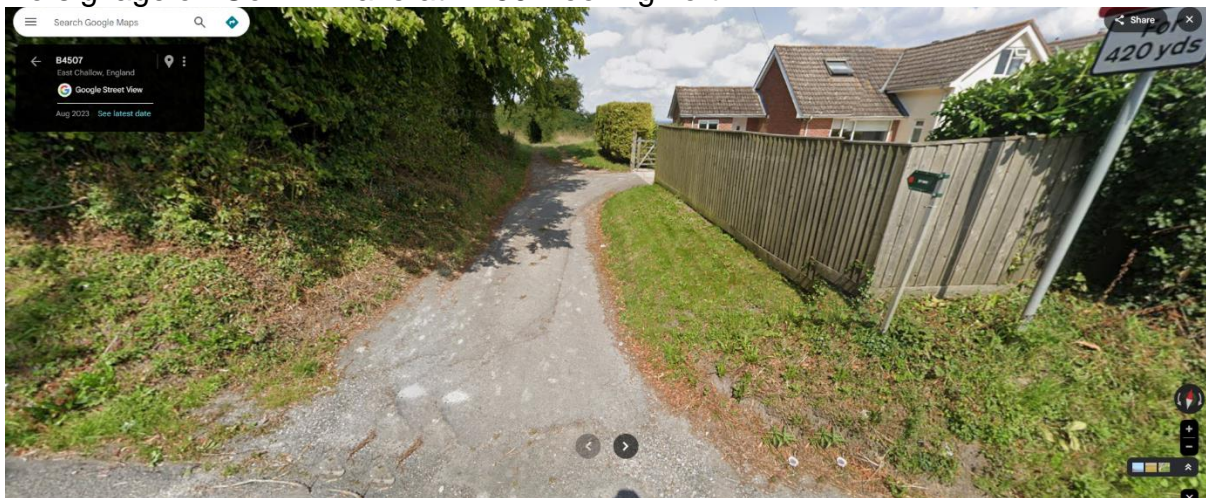
No signage or barriers at the bridleway junction looking north:



No signage or barriers at the bridleway junction looking south:



No signage on Cornhill Lane at B4507 looking north:



The Google Earth Street view images support the suggestion that the TTRO no longer appeared to be in force from 3 access points to Cornhill Lane in August 2023. Whilst there are now **no signs present at any of these access points in 2025** and



yet the concrete blocks are present. This means that the council has public (injury) liabilities and is contrary to the terms of the TTRO, as publicly advertised.



Obscured concrete blocks on Cornhill Lane and NO Road Closed sign

It should also be noted that the TTRO was in force until a specific date or until the works were completed, whichever was the sooner. The Statement of Reasons submission acknowledged that the works were complete in 2024, as quote:

*4. The effectiveness of the TRO will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis to see if desired outcomes are met, with the current good condition of the surface for a rural BOAT as the base line, helping to formulate whether further actions are required.*

And this is also confirmed in the 2025 Supporting Statement submission:

*In its current, 'undamaged' condition, this route is an asset to the local walking / horse riding / cycling community. The Council, together with local people are now anxious that it be opened up to those users and, of course, the concern is that all the good intentions might be undone in the way that has occurred several times in the past,*

### **Use of obstructions**

Council officers are both allowing and using obstructions to the width of restricted byways. These are creating public safety hazards and nuisance and stopping lawful users (including carriage drivers) from accessing connecting sections of the PROW network. Local examples include:



Icknield Greenway near Ginge - bollards width of only 59.5 inches (1.51m) and a boulder obstructing the approach (under TRO?)



OCC Section 66 obstruction on the Ridgeway National Trail near Ashbury - gap width of only 61.5 inches (1.57m) - under TRO?





Locked gates with only a 4ft gap (1.22m) and boulders on Ashbury restricted byway 19

Many other access points have no barriers



Ridgeway at the White Horse Hill (under TRO?)





Ridgeway off B4404 above Wantage (under TRO?)

Whilst above Wantage the Ridgeway also has a log gap width of 7ft (2.13m) (TRO?):



The barriers used are inconsistent with the TTRO & TRO explicitly stating that access for emergency vehicles is not unlawful or that Access would be maintained for emergency vehicles. Yet ambulances, fire engines and police vehicles are being obstructed from using these routes and this needs to be addressed.

\*Noting that the submitted 'Public Notice' has omitted Emergency vehicles\*

### Final points

This is the second time that there has been a public consultation on the Cornhill Lane TRO and therefore my second submission.

For public trust and accountability, it is important that those holding senior positions and making decisions on behalf of the county council show due diligence and check/question the accuracy of the information council officers are providing to these legal processes and understand the actions and working practices being implemented by officers, whom they should have oversight over.

There is a real concern that TTROs have not been correctly or appropriately implemented by council officers. Their presentation sets out a concern for public safety, yet on the ground there is clear evidence that this has not actually been a top priority for officers. Absence of signage, leaving stumps, ruts, low branches and allowing the vegetation to narrow the paths, as well as concrete blocks (some obscured with vegetation) to stop or damage 4X4 users, with little regard to the risks and impact on other lawful users.