

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

8 SEPTEMBER 2022

SPEAKERS

WRITTEN SPEECHES RECEIVED ARE BELOW THE TABLE

PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS (All speakers on all the items have 3 minutes except for County Councillors representing the relevant division who have 5)

Item	Speakers
4. Abingdon and Oxford: Various sites – School Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Nathan Ley• Duncan Parkes• Peter West• Chris Heron (Teams)• Rupert Griffiths• Cllr Naomi Waite (Teams)• Danny Yee
5. Oxford: North Parade- proposed permanent access restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tim Treuherz (statement only)
6. Crowmarsh The Street - proposed zebra crossing	
7. Oxford: First Turn – proposed humped zebra crossing	
8. Bicester / Launton: A4421 Charbridge Lane – proposed toucan and extension of shared use footway / cycle track	
9. Wantage: A417 Reading Road & Elder Way - Proposed Bus Gate and Turning Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wantage Town Council (statement only)

Statements received

Item 4

Cllr Nathan Ley

I wanted to be here today in-person, to see what will hopefully be Oxfordshire's first permanent School Streets be confirmed.

We all know the theory behind the idea, and we've seen it come into practice over these past 18 months or so during the trial period. More people coming to school by foot or by bike, more socialising outside the school gates, a reduced chance of accidents, and noticeably cleaner air in the critical radius just outside the school gates where the emissions and particulates can do the most damage to developing lungs. Not saying these schemes remove this factor completely, but it removes it from where it does the most damage to childrens lungs, and that's why it's important.

When I've gone down in person during school start and end, it's clearly fulfilled these objectives, and those parents I've talked to mostly agree. Change can be difficult when it comes to highways and especially trying to nudge people into healthier habits. I don't need to tell Cllr Grant that one! Thankfully with school streets it seems to be less contentious in practice, and even if it was more contentious, we should still proceed with them anyway, because it's the right thing to do, given it so closely aligns with the Fair Deal Alliance's priorities.

Seeing St Nicolas Primary School alongside 3 other city-based schools is a particular point of pride, making a school in my division the first outside of the city to implement one of these schemes, enabled by ANPR, powers we only got this year.

Of course, I can't take any credit for this myself, given the scheme was started prior to my election, and that the heavy lifting was done by volunteers, in particular parents and members of Abingdon Carbon Cutters and Abingdon Liveable streets. My thanks also go to OCC officers and supportive staff at St Nicolas School including the headteacher Mr Spooner. This trial, like so many others around the county, could quite easily have fallen apart, but its because of their

willpower and the open-mindedness of the parents that this has stayed the course.

I was particularly pleased to see such positive feedback in the consultation, and that a decent number of people responded to consultation to give their feedback.

On the 'constructive' side I think it is important that we listen to some of the concerns. There are 2 main things: firstly around possible displaced parking on Lenthall Road, Boxhill walk, Bowyer Road and Clifton Drive, often involving parking on double yellow lines, on pavements, and blocking driveways.

Secondly, there is the issue of the entry points. I note that the school itself has agreed to having only the 1 entry point; at the junction of Boxhill Walk and Fitzharry's Road, given they don't feel the entry point in Boxhill Road, on the other side of the stream, is required. Being slightly further removed from the project I won't claim to know better than them, but personally, instinctively having the second camera on Boxhill road feels like it would be fairer.

Nevertheless, mindful of not letting the perfect be the enemy of the good, on both of these issues I note in the report for this meeting it states that *"The School Streets team will continue to work with St Nicolas to monitor this and will work with the Parking Enforcement team to ensure parking restrictions are enforced and encourage safe parking behaviours"*. What I will say to that is I hope the team is true to their word and that we can get some guarantee of parking enforcement and a visible presence on the street, because we all want this to succeed.

But I'll just end by just saying this. These are the first 4 School Streets. It's not a lot as a proportion of all the schools in the county. But it's important that today we put down a marker for other schools and towns to follow. If Abingdon can do it, there's no reason why Witney, Wantage, Faringdon, Didcot, Bicester and Banbury can't follow suit.

Duncan Parkes

I'm a parent at Larkrise Primary School, where I also help maintain the Travel Plan, and volunteer on the school streets barriers.

I've mentioned before that two years ago 35% of students normally came to Larkrise by car, and as of a few months ago, only 14% still did, so 90 or so fewer children arrive at Larkrise by car every day.

Much of this reduction is because of the Cowley LTNs, and we're expecting further reductions in driving due to the East Oxford LTNs and the Quickways. But in order for any of this to work, we need children to feel safe, and for parents to feel that their children are safe, in the area immediately in front of the school: we need the Larkrise School Street. Please make it permanent today.

The school street being made permanent should not be the end of the process. At Larkrise we also need several more interventions. The Boundary Brook Road estate needs a controlled parking zone to reduce the number of parked cars - it's currently the first non-CPZ road out of the city centre, so has a lot of parking displaced from closer in. We need a reduction in parking both in front of the school and by the Howard Street cut through to improve sight lines.

The area immediately in front of the school could do with the road narrowing to make those drivers who are still allowed in take it much more slowly, and to make it easier for children to cross.

We could also do with road narrowing at either end of the cut through to Howard Street to make it easier for children to safely cross the road. The railing at the Howard Street end needs removing to make it easier for children's bicycles and indeed big bikes and bike trailers carrying children to get through.

Over the time our school street has been running, we've found it increasingly hard to find volunteers for the barriers, so I'm very pleased to see that ANPR is coming to take that task off our hands. Losing the volunteers on the barriers will mean there is no-one there to ask drivers to take it slowly - we need the road layout to speak for itself.

The current school streets rely heavily on volunteers to keep them going. It has only been possible to have school streets at schools where parents have enough free time, or flexible enough jobs, to volunteer at the start and end of the school day. This biases the school street

schemes towards schools with better off parents, and sucks volunteering time from other aspects of the school. I hope that ANPR will allow school streets in places where that volunteering time is hard to come by, and where there is less supportive school leadership.

I hope that the children of Larkrise can continue to benefit from the extra freedom and independence that the school street has given them, and that this is just the start, with school streets becoming widespread across Oxfordshire.

Peter West

Windmill School Road Closure

Good morning,

Thank you for inviting me to address you all regarding the Windmill School Road closure. I have summarised the key issues that were outlined in a separate document, distributed to you all recently.

There are four objections to the officer's recommendations to approve the installation of ANPR cameras.

1. The camera solution will increase the risk of accidents due to the unobstructed view of the designated section of road in front of the school to drivers, rather than the current physical barriers.

No accidents had been reported outside of the school to date, therefore the risk is perceived, rather than actual.

2. There was inadequate data to install, never mind support, the existing temporary barriers being made permanent. One traffic data chart was eventually provided that showed increased walking, one of the three key objectives, had reduced.
3. The consultation procedures were flawed and admitted as such, by council officers.
4. A Fol request (21132 FOI EIR) for the cost of the scheme revealed that the capital cost will be approximately £58,000 plus installation. Roz Smith has quoted a total sum of £80,000 in a public meeting. The Fol also revealed that the management costs would be in the order of £16k/ annum.

The total initial cost therefore will be in the order of £100,000. Surprisingly, I note that none of these costs are included in the Council documents provided or published.

ANPR cameras are the wrong solution as they will merely monitor, not control vehicles entering the designated section of road. I am amazed that, with the current cost of living crisis, council officers could recommend this obviously incorrect solution and that councillors could justify and agree to a scheme that will be operational for only two hours per day, during term times, at an initial cost of nearly £100,000 and a running cost of £16k/ annum.

There must be far higher priorities, particularly if the same costs are to be incurred on the 8 other school road closures being discussed today.

I assume and trust that councillors with integrity will not approve the officer's recommendation.

Thank you

Peter West

Chris Heron

I am a Larkrise Primary parent, and a regular School Streets volunteer steward, and I welcome the recommendation to introduce ANPR cameras to permanently manage a number of School Streets schemes. I'm hopeful that further schemes can be introduced across Oxfordshire in the future.

I'm speaking today regarding the issue of positioning of the ANPR system for the Larkrise Primary School Streets scheme.

Paragraph 38 of the decision document sets out three potential ANPR placement options.

Option 3 states "From a road safety perspective, this is a preferred option". The Larkrise School Streets stewards tried this exact barrier positioning for a time, but it produced a very dangerous turning area with lots of interactions between motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. Basically, frustrated drivers performing endless 3-point turns with a high volume of young active travellers around them. As I understand it the

headteacher reviewed the situation this barrier positioning caused and requested that the barriers be moved further into Boundary Brook Road, where they had been operating. In my view the option 3 ANPR placement is inherently dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists, as it basically just moves the school drop-off point up the road from the school gates, but creates a congested turning area. It should also be noted that the lane exiting Boundary Brook Road gets filled very quickly with drop-off-traffic, queuing at the lights to exit the estate, which then reduces road space for all users. In summary, although option 3 may seem beneficial to drivers, it is a very poor option for other road users.

I feel that the hotel parking can be efficiently managed, to allow for the whole of Boundary Brook Road to be within the School Streets scheme (option 1). The hotels with rear parking can clearly state on their website, via standard booking confirmations (e.g. 'how to find us' information'), that their car parks cannot be accessed during school streets operational hours. If any of their guests do get a fine, then they can retrospectively appeal it, where a hotel booking confirmation should be enough to overturn the fine. As already stated in the consultation document, an efficient appeal system is already required in order to fairly manage the temporary school staff situation. Over the course of a year I would wager that there will be more temporary school staff than hotel guests entering Boundary Brook Road during School Street operational times.

For hotel guests that do arrive during School Streets operational hours, they can temporarily park on a nearby side-road (up to two hours in a CPZ), then move their car into the car park once the School Streets has finished. This is similar to the 'park & stride' approach advocated in the consultation document for school drop-offs/pick-ups. The cameras will not issue fines for cars leaving the school streets area, so hotel guests could leave the car park whenever they like.

Anecdotally the car movements for this car park during school streets times are very infrequent. Hotel staff/proprietors would be granted exemptions. I understand the concern around damaging small businesses with new traffic measures, but overall option 1 seems a more balanced approach, where pedestrian safety and modal shift are maximised, and costs/disbenefits minimised.

Please also note that there is a second guest house (Harris Guest House) with a rear-parking entrance on Boundary Brook Road. If option

3 were to also cater for this parking access, the second ANPR position would need to be further into Boundary Brook Road, creating a larger 'drop-off zone'.

Many thanks,

Chris Heron

Rupert Griffiths

I am here to talk about the School Street initiative for Whitehouse Road. The purpose of a School Street is “to create a safe, welcoming, and attractive environment where children, parents, and teachers can walk, cycle, scoot, or park and walk to school in safety with less risk of air pollution and traffic congestion.” That is a great aim, and something anyone would support.

What causes the air pollution? The traffic and congestion. What causes the traffic and congestion? Cars. But not cars passing through, as this is a no-through road. Not cars coming to visit the area’s businesses or social venues, as there are none. Not cars heading down Whitehouse Road to park, as there is no available parking. Not cars owned by residents, as they have an exemption.

Who would otherwise want to take a car down Whitehouse Road during school pickup and dropoff times, who must be prevented with hefty fines and an expensive number plate recognition camera?

I have been one of them during the trial period, because I live down Whitehouse Road and I don’t have a car. I suffered an ankle injury and tried to take a minicab home, but it was blocked at the school street checkpoint because the exemption for residents only applies to cars owned by residents. It does not apply to people.

That left me dragging myself a thousand feet along the Thames path on one leg. It was an indescribably harrowing and painful experience, and it’s the reason why I came here to speak to you. It may seem as though this is an unfortunate consequence of a generally beneficial measure, but what other traffic is the intended target?

The restriction affects residents without cars – there are quite a few of us, particularly with the low-income housing in the area – and... the school itself. Almost all of the traffic to be banned for the benefit of the school is generated by the school.

The school community wants to reduce traffic, and that's great. The school community has already shown itself to be able to set and obey rules for its members – the children, parents, and teachers. Children arrive at school on time, correctly dressed, clean, and with whatever items they need for the day, because that community has decided on how its members will coexist, and they do it.

All of the school rules are set and upheld by the people of the school. They make life better for the people of the school, and they do not apply to anyone else. Local residents are free to chew gum or run in the corridors of our own homes, and the local government has no need or authority to police whether Year Fours are swearing.

A school rule about not arriving by car could very easily be added to the school rule about arriving on time for class. There is no reason to believe it would be anything but effective, it would not require council spending on a number plate recognition camera, and it would not punish local residents for not owning cars. It would reduce traffic during school times just as well as this scheme, with no need for further expenditure or draconian enforcement.

At the very least, why not try it? We have lived through an experimental traffic regulation order, which parents have learned to deal with. Now, let's allow the school community to come together and adopt the change – without council spending, and without making any new rules and fines. I believe in the school community, and I believe that it is entirely capable of adopting healthy and sustainable transport as an internal matter. The proposed Traffic Regulation Order serves no purpose, and I urge you to reject it.

Cllr Naomi Waite

I am Cllr Naomi Waite the City Councillor for Hinksey Park Ward where St Ebbes School is based. I'm speaking today to urge you to make the 4 trial school streets permanent, to highlight some of the additional support that was needed in our site to make the scheme a success and to ensure that a diverse range of voices are heard from today in their support.

St Ebbes has a broad catchment with a third of families living more than a mile away from the school. The introduction of the school street barrier was a critical part of a long term journey. Councillors funded an active travel champion who supported families with cycling lessons, a bike

library, a range of cycle buses and a park and stride scheme and all of these initiatives were critical in supporting our diverse parent body.

Naushad and Farheen live over 3 miles from the school and chose St Ebbes because it was on the way to Naushad's work. When the scheme started our active travel champion organised cycling lessons for the whole family and Naushad wanted you to hear about his experience:

When the scheme started, we were really distressed as we live outside the catchment area in Littlemore village and the only option to juggle around work and reach school in time was by car. However, having an Active Travel Champion was hugely helpful as we found there was someone who was listening to our problems and helping to find flexible solutions.

Now we are cycling I can say it has been wonderful and the kids love it. Although it's quite far for the boys it's a great learning experience for them. We cycle at other times and ride to the city centre and beyond. My wife has gained a lot of confidence and we are both using it as good exercise.

Samita is a single mum and a council tenant who needed to drive her kids to school to allow her to then quickly get to work on the other side of the city. She asked me to share her experiences with you today:

"When I first heard about the school street closing during the school run I was very upset. Things in my life seemed very difficult at the time and this just felt like additional pressure applied. Especially being a single working mum and not living so close to the school.

However as I got to speak with other parents I was offered a solution where my kids could cycle to school with the help of Laura and Marco. This was hard at first but I found the kids seemed to be a lot happier and not so rushed in the Mornings. Since then I have been able to increase my working hours and better my life which has made a huge impact on me and the kids. As a driver I am also more aware of how to use the road and respect cyclists.

It now makes sense to me why you put this in place. I feel like the school streets are a lot safer and my kids get to cycle and enjoy other activities which I am unable to do with them."

With these experiences in mind, I would urge officers to boldly expand the scheme but to consider each new school individually and to assess

what support the parent body may need particularly in the most deprived areas of the county. Thank you.

Danny Yee

I urge you to make the four pilot School Streets schemes permanent, as recommended by officers.

On the location of the camera for the Larkrise scheme, I have previously explained how Options 2 and 3 would create unacceptable road danger; the county needs to accept any extra administration attendant on Option 1, to address the concerns of the two hotels. Looking ahead, I have some suggestions for the future of the School Streets program.

While the county should continue to support schemes for schools that request them, having that as the only way for schemes to happen will limit the possible gains from them. The county should proactively initiate discussions of School Streets schemes at those locations where they will have the most effect.

In many cases school-run traffic is creating danger that affects the broader community, not just parents and children at individual schools. So the county needs to push, sensitively but more or less firmly depending on the context, on schools that are less enthusiastic. (In some cases head teachers may actually appreciate the county taking some of the decision-making away from them, as that will insulate them from parent anger.)

Three specific examples spring to mind.

The congestion and traffic generated by Magdalen College School creates road danger in Cowley Place and at the Plain. There have already been meetings about a potential School Streets scheme here, and it would be good to get those discussions underway again.

Tyndale School is located on Barracks Lane, which is a heavily used walking and cycling route. So the road danger created by the school-run there is affecting children going to other schools and people making other trips. The county should be approaching Tyndale to discuss how

to address this problem, not waiting on them. The structure of a scheme here is obvious - an ANPR camera on Barracks Lane at the Hollow Way junction.

The area around Charlbury Rd, east of Banbury Rd, contains several schools, secondary and primary. The heavily used NCN51 cycling route runs right through the middle of the area, and congestion and road danger there affects not just other schools but the entire community. Given the number of schools involved here, the county needs to take the lead in starting discussions of a School Streets scheme. (Again, the layout here seems fairly obvious, with cameras on the Bardwell, Linton, and Belbroughton junctions with Banbury Rd.)

A narrow focus on school-initiated schemes also risks exacerbating existing inequalities in active travel provision, by only helping schools that already have high active travel rates and supportive head teachers. A paper has just been published looking at London's School Streets schemes, showing they are less likely in areas with high car dominance. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1361920922002292>

Item 5

Tim Treuherz (statement only)

I write on behalf of Unlimited Oxfordshire. The organisation is one of consultees referred to in the report. I apologise for writing at such a late stage in the process. Please could you ensure that the decision maker is made aware of this letter.

The scheme could benefit from markings on the surface of the carriageway and footway clearly delineating the route for people with disabilities. This would provide certainty for businesses, their customers and people with disabilities so that there would be no disputes about the area to be kept clear. There is a precedent for this in that such markings exist at Saint Michaels Street in Oxford.

This point could be dealt with as an amendment to paragraph 13 (page 47) of the report inserting something like

Markings will be painted on the surface of the carriageway and footway clearly delineating the route for people with disabilities. This would provide certainty for businesses, their customers and people with

disabilities so that there would be no disputes about the area to be kept clear.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Yours sincerely

Tim Treuherz

Item 6

Cllr Stephen Sherbourne (Crowmarsh Parish Council)

Cllr Stephen Sherbourne (Crowmarsh Parish Council) informed meeting about positive feedback from the consultation and added that Crowmarsh Parish Council supported the proposals.

Item 9

Wantage Town Council (statement only)

Wantage Town Council believe that the decision on the proposed Bus Gate off the A417 at the Crab Hill development be deferred until such time as the Western End Link Road is completed and sufficient traffic data can be collected.

It is felt by the council that following the completion of the link road, a large proportion of the traffic will be taken off that section of the A417, negating the need of the bus gate.

This would potentially stop residents of that section of the development having to travel up to half a mile to access the roundabout either at the Eastern or Western end of the link road thereby reducing emissions.

END