

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 12 SEPTEMBER 2019

CASSINGTON, HORSEMERE LANE: PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF MOTOR AND HORSE DRAWN VEHICLES, REVOCATION OF ONE-WAY ORDER AND WEIGHT LIMIT AND REVERSION OF STATUS TO RESTRICTED BYWAY

Report by Director for Infrastructure Operations, Communities

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed prohibition of motor and horse drawn vehicles, the revocation of the existing one-way restriction and weight limit and change of status to restricted byway at Horsemere Lane Cassington as advertised.

Executive summary

2. Horsemere Lane is single track road linking Bell Lane within Cassington village to the A40. The road is currently subject to a one-way order (the road being one-way from north to south) and also has a 5-tonne weight restriction, but concerns have been expressed over many years of the adverse impact of traffic on Bell Lane using Horsemere Lane to access the A40 and also the safety of pedestrians and cyclists using the lane itself, together with concerns over the safety of the junction of Horsemere Lane with the A40. It is also reported that quite frequently vehicles contravene the one-way restriction resulting in danger to all users of the lane. In view of this the local member has requested that the lane is closed to motor vehicles and horse drawn vehicles (other than those accessing a property on the lane), with a gate being provided approximately mid-way along the lane to make the restriction self-enforcing. The lane would be available to all users in both directions up to the gate from both Cassington village and the A40, with the existing one-way restriction and 5-tonne weight restriction being revoked, noting that only pedal cyclists (and pedestrians) and anyone requiring access to land adjacent to the lane would in practice have cause to use the lane.
3. Proposals currently being developed for providing a bus lane on the A40 between Eynsham and Oxford would – separately from consideration of above concerns – include the above closure of Horsemere Lane to vehicles (other than pedal cyclists and vehicles requiring access to adjacent land) as a preferred option to accommodate the scheme.

Introduction

4. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation on a proposal to introduce a prohibition of motor vehicles restriction on Horsemere

Lane, Cassington as a result of representations by the local member, Cllr Charles Mathew.

Background

5. The current proposals have followed previous consultations on similar proposals carried out between 10 January and 8 February 2019 (see Annex 1 for plan, and Annex 5 for the responses, comprising 11 objections and 10 expressions of support) and - following input and further clarification of the highway status and additional input from the County Councils `Rights of Way` & Legal (Environment) teams - a second consultation carried out between 7 March & 5 April 2019 (see Annex 6 for the responses, comprising 8 objections, 6 expressions of support with the Parish Council neither supporting nor objecting but outlining their concerns).

Consultation

6. Following the above consultations further input from Legal Services a final proposal was prepared and this is shown at Annex 2.
7. Formal consultation on the updated proposal was carried out between 6 June and 5 July 2019. A public notice was placed in the Oxford Times newspaper, and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, West Oxfordshire District Council, Cassington Parish Council and the local County Councillor. Public notices were also placed on site and letters sent directly to approximately 65 properties in the immediate vicinity, adjacent to the proposals.
8. Twelve responses were received during the third consultation period. 5 objections, 1 supporting the principal but not the use of a single gate to enforce, 4 expressions of support and a response from Thames Valley Police not objecting. The British Horse Society had concerns about the possible re-classification of the route in light of restricting its use. These responses are recorded at Annex 3 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.
9. Detailed responses were received from a single member of the public to the various consultations and these are set out at Annex 4.

Response to objections and other comments

10. Thames Valley Police while objecting to the initial proposal expressed no objection to the current (final) proposal on the grounds that it would be self-enforcing.
11. Cassington Parish Council responded to the consultation in March with a concern that the proposed closure will cause an increase in traffic at the traffic signalled junction of the A40 with the Eynsham Road, Cassington and have expressed the view to the designers of the Bus/Lane Park and ride scheme

that a slip road toward Oxford together with re sequencing of the lights will be necessary to accommodate this extra traffic.

12. West Oxfordshire District Council expressed support for the proposals.
13. The British Horse Society expressed concerns that the proposal would make it impossible for horse drawn carriages to use the lane contrary to its status as a restricted byway, noting that if the permitted users are to be limited to pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians then bridleway status would be appropriate. However, it should be noted that the current proposals still permit vehicles of all types to access the lane in both directions, but with a closure point to prevent it being used as a through route other than by pedestrians and cyclists. While accepting that the practical effect of the proposal would still make this an unusable route for horse drawn carriages, it is understood that the actual usage of the lane at present by such vehicles is effectively nil and, therefore, that the proposal, if approved, would not in practice have any adverse impact in this respect.
14. Objections were received in all the consultations from members of the public (predominantly residents of Cassington) on the grounds of the additional time and distance required for traffic currently using the lane to access the A40 to travel east to use the only alternative local route via the Eynsham Road and its signalled junction with the A40. These representations included concerns over the lack of justification for the scheme, noting that there were no relevant reported injury accidents within the last 10 years. Concerns were also expressed that there appeared to be no technical assessment of the additional queuing and delays at the A40/Eynsham Road junction that would result from the traffic currently using Horsemere Lane diverting to the Eynsham Road. Concerns were also expressed over the impact of the additional traffic on Eynsham Road at Cassington, including increased noise and vehicle emissions
15. Expressions of support were also received in all the consultations from residents of the village citing concerns over the volume and speed of rat-running traffic and also noting the illegal use - often at speed- of the lane by traffic travelling into the village against the one-way restriction. However, one of these also expressed an objection to the current proposal in respect of the risk of vehicles entering the lane failing to see that it is closed ahead and continuing to the closure point where they would be unable to turn around; additionally, concerns were raised on the risk of fly tipping or other illegal activity and expressed a preference for the options previously consulted on.
16. While the overall balance of opinion as reflected in the consultation responses - while reasonably close – falls on the side of those objecting or raising concerns to the proposal and noting also the current uncertainty over its impact on queuing and delays at the A40/Eynsham Road junction, the case for proceeding does appear sufficiently strong to recommend approval, on the understanding that monitoring is carried out to assess its actual impact and that the scheme is reviewed within six months of its implementation should it be approved.

Key
 Section of highway to be closed

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved

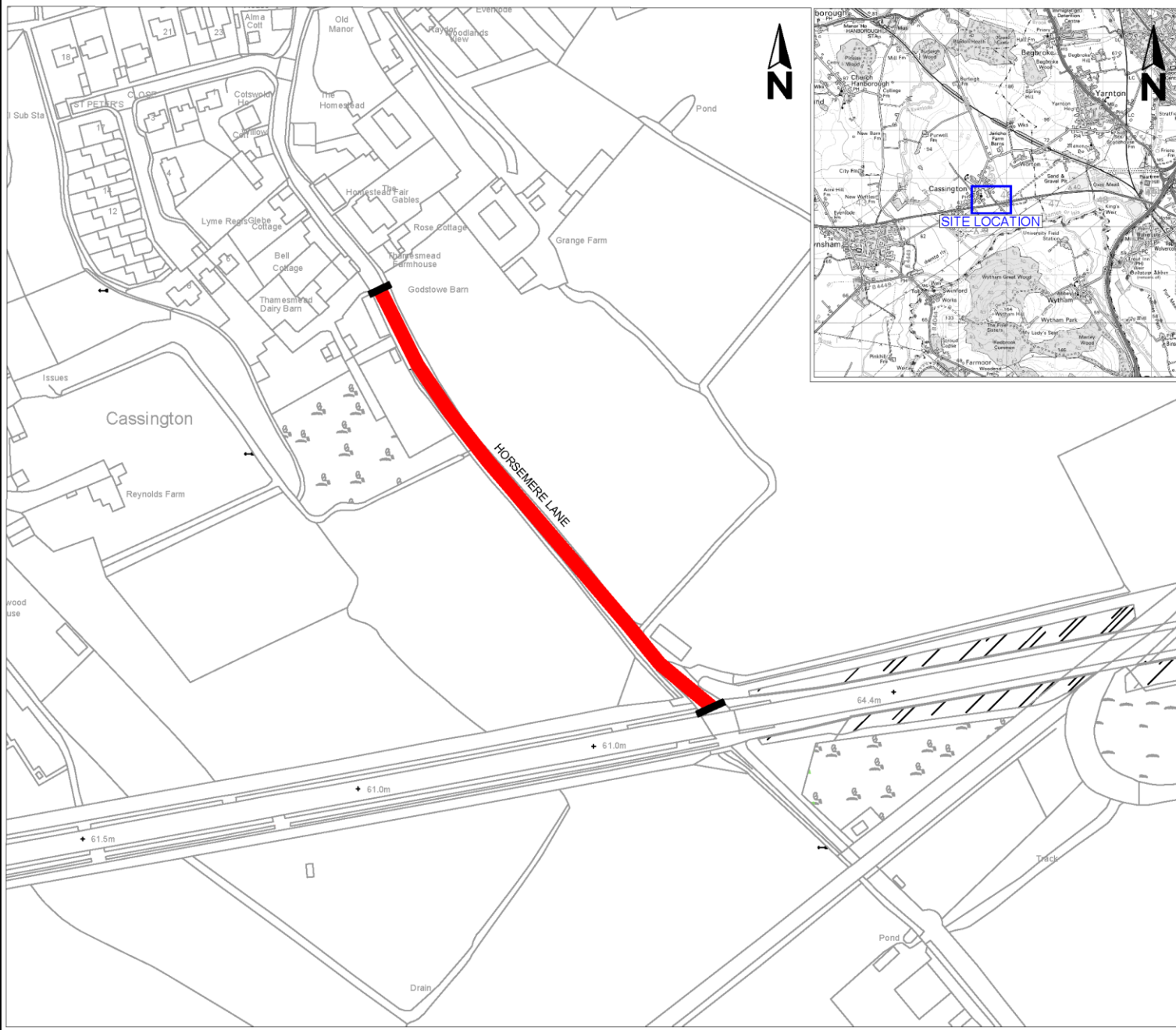
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 ROAD CLOSURE

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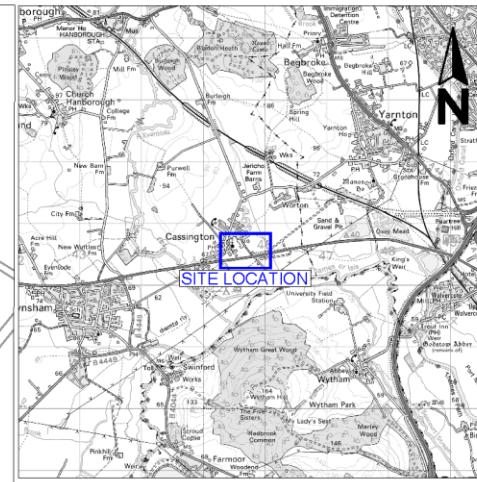
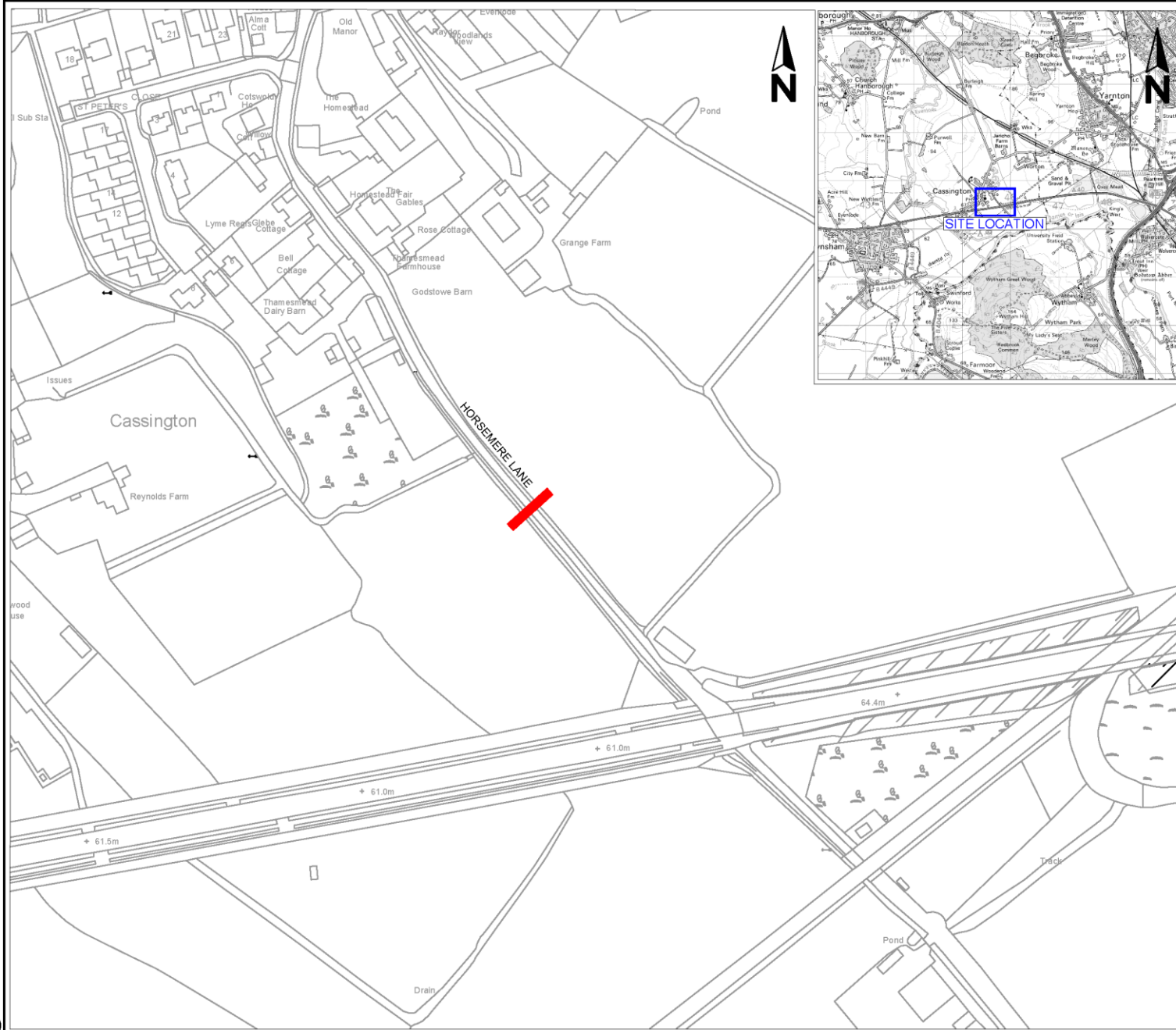
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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>No objection – The restriction will be self-enforcing by gate which is fundamental to our response which must be placed maintained and be effective by the Highway Authority without the need for Police supervision. It is imperative given the road safety mitigation and justification from OCC that this is the case as the junction with A40 has poor site lines which could be considered high risk in road safety terms should some traffic use this for access illegally.</p>
(2) Local Resident, (Cassington)	<p>Object - The traffic will know build up through the village going to the traffic lights at Cassington turn onto the A40 when Horsemere Lane Closes</p> <p>This will cause more noise for residents of Eynsham road along with more pollution. which the county council should be reducing not increasing.</p> <p>To my knowledge there has been no accidents on the approach to Horsemere lane or turning onto the A40.</p> <p>You will not solve any problem by closing Horsemere Lane, because there is still no Path for Children or Adults to walk on as Bell Lane goes into Horsemere Lane.</p> <p>There are properties down there where motor vehicles come out as you know.</p>
(3) Local Resident, (Cassington)	<p>Object – (See Annex 4 for detailed response)</p>
(4) Local Resident, (Cassington)	<p>Object – I have previously objected twice already and I am confused about why there is a new proposal as nothing appears to have materially changed which will influence any previous objections already raised. I have to wonder whether this is simply tactics on the part of the council and others involved to slowly wear down those who have already objected twice. My assumption is that not only views expressed this time around will be taken into consideration, but that all previous objections will also be taken into account given (as I said) that there is no real</p>

CMDE14

	<p>meaningful change to the proposal. Failure to do so would, I believe, constitute a failing on the part of the county council to give a fair hearing to all objections raised, and to follow due legal process.</p> <p>Firstly - this is an example of extreme nimby-ism. A very small number of residents are asking for a road to be closed without any due consideration given to the impact of the closure on other village residents. I have yet to see (and I believe that none is available) any data which has analyzed the impact of traffic moving to Cassington lights (or potentially through Yarnton). How many cars will be backing up the Eynsham Road, how will the phasing of the lights be adjusted to accommodate increased flow, what delays will this cause to (for example) the school buses? There will be additional build-up of traffic at a set of lights where accidents been known to happen quite frequently in the past, including children walking and cycling to school.</p> <p>On the other hand, I have been informed that there is no history of any traffic incidents on or near Horsemere Lane. If one of the reasons being given is potential danger and risk of accident, the risk of accident and danger through diverting the traffic to Cassington lights will be much greater, Again, residents living near Horsemere Lane are only thinking about themselves.</p> <p>In addition, I believe that the way this has been handled by the local Parish council has been very poor, and not worthy of those serving in an elected public body. Apparently there has been a referendum at some point in the past, but I was certainly not informed of this and I know of other people in the village who are similarly unaware that a referendum happened. I would be interested to know whether the referendum made it clear that in closing Horsemere Lane there would be very negative impact on other parts of the village. It is my belief that only those living near Horsemere Lane and in favour of the closure have been communicated to properly, indicating bias on the part of the Parish Council who should be representing the views and interests of all villagers.</p> <p>This closure should not go ahead for the above reasons - there is total lack of any evidence to support the stated reasons for closure, and most importantly the negative impact has seemingly not been assessed at all. Finally, I find it really rather incomprehensible given the amount of tax and council tax that I pay and all of the news of cuts and budget squeeze, that you are choosing to spend so much time and money on this biased, 'nimby-istic' proposal. What a ridiculous waste of time, money and effort.</p>
<p>(5) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Object – The proposal will put unnecessary pressure on other exit points from the village, and in Yarnton. Also, it will increase travel journey times especially to work. Alternative traffic slowing and/or restricting methods (such as resident only access) would be preferred.</p> <p>There is no evidence of accidents, or injuries although I would agree that some using the lane (for example as a rat run) do drive too fast - thus the suggestion of alternative restriction measures.</p>

CMDE14

<p>(6) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Object – There is no reason at all to close this road and there are also serious concerns over the way the proposal has been presented. There have been no accidents at all on the lane in over ten years. The only accident has been on the pavement crossing it - and that was due to a driver - in a queue - illegally turning up the road and hitting a cyclist. This is not a justifiable reason to close the road. Indeed, if it were, the junction from Cassington at the traffic lights would need to be closed, where over 20 accidents have occurred in that same time period.</p> <p>Horsemere Lane at present simply helps reduce the amount of traffic that would otherwise cause congestion at the Cassington traffic-light junction. It saves time for people heading eastwards along the A40. If everyone were made to drive to the lights instead it would simply increase the traffic through the village and add to the time it takes all drivers to reach the Wolvercote roundabout. It would have no positive effect at all. Junction at Horsemere Lane is plainly no more different or dangerous than countless other T-junctions, given the easy views of straight road both ways and the natural breaks in the traffic caused by the traffic lights. The lane itself needs to be better maintained - that's all - and maybe a 20mph limit put in - though speeding is not an issue there.</p> <p>There seems to be no evidence at all that closure of the road is justifiable on any grounds. Nor has there been any evidence of research on the impact on traffic at the lights. The Council have been asked repeatedly by interested parties to provide the relevant research and stats to support closure - no info has been sent, despite repeated requests.</p> <p>There does not seem to be any proper research or procedure to back the closure at all, in short. It can only be concluded that the proposed closure has been motivated by a small number of local residents and is not objective or representative of the public interest. As pointed out above, there are also serious concerns over the whole manner in which the matter has been conducted.</p> <p>Surely the much simpler and better option, anyway, is to save scarce money by simply doing the following to ensure the continued safety of those living near the lane or using the lane and junction: Put clearer signs for drivers and cyclists at the convergence of lane and cycle-way - including new Give-Way signs on the pavement and a standard cyclist-slowng railings at either side before the junction. Put clearer "no left/right turn" signs on the A40. And put a 20mph speed limit on Horsemere Lane. There is no need at all to close the road.</p>
<p>(7) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – Firstly we would like to say we SUPPORT the closure of Horsemere Lane, for the following reasons:</p> <p>The majority of the use of the lane is by rush-hour traffic seeking a short-cut to the A40. The structure of the lane is unsuitable for the volumes and speeds of such traffic which run to hundreds of vehicles each weekday morning.</p>

CMDE14

	<p>The legal status of the lane is actually already a Restricted Byway and has been since the classification was changed by the 2000 act. It is only the incorrect signage and lack of restrictive bollards/gates that allow vehicles to use the lane as a road. A properly implemented closure would restrict use of the lane to its correct classification.</p> <p>Although one-way, the attractiveness of a short-cut off the A40 results in occasional cars choosing to travel the wrong way up the lane during the evening peak hours.</p> <p>The newly proposed bus lane improvements on the A40 will result in the exit from Horsemere Lane onto the A40 being less suitable.</p> <p>Object – We fully supported the plans put forward in the first and second consultations, which saw the lane being blocked/gated at both ends. The third consultation has changed the proposed closure to a single point approximately halfway down the lane. We OBJECT to this specific aspect of the proposal for the following reasons:</p> <p>We feel that vehicles will continue to try and use the lane, only to come across the closure and need to reverse back up the quite narrow lane.</p> <p>We feel the unrestricted access to the ‘dead-end’ parts of the lane may result in use of the lane for fly-tipping or other illegal activities, given the centre point is largely hidden from view.</p> <p>We feel the need to maintain loading/unloading along the length of the lane is unnecessary. The lane is bordered on the entire south-west length by a stream (highlighted in blue on the attached PDF). The majority of the north-east side is bordered by land owned by us (hatched purple), and we fully support the proposal and have no requirement for loading/unloading, we feel the access provisions in consultation one and two were perfectly adequate.</p> <p>We therefore feel that the closure would best be implemented by two points of closure as indicated by the green marks on the attached. However, we would rather see the lane closed, and if a single point of closure is legally the only option available, we would rather see that option than the lane not be closed</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – Closing Horsemere Lane would make Bell Lane safer. The number of cars using the lane is an issue as they come up the wrong way. We also get lorries trying to get down, which are over the weight limit. Bell Lane in places is only wide enough for one car and has no pavements. The road is not designed for this current usage. The main Cassington road is suitable for two-way traffic and has pavements.</p>

CMDE14

<p>(9) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – Bell Lane is not suited to traffic and pedestrian mixed traffic.</p> <p>The carriageway is not particularly wide at the "lower" end of the lane, and pedestrians especially children walking to school are often in conflict with traffic (especially in the morning rush hour). Although there is a weight restriction within the village and also within Horsemere Lane, this is not policed and heavy vehicles vs pedestrians is not a good mix!</p> <p>Vehicles leaving Bell Lane are often in conflict with vehicles travelling South towards the A40, making access difficult for local residents who live closer to the A40 beyond Bell Close.</p> <p>Although traffic surveys have not been conducted it is common knowledge that the majority of traffic using Bell Lane in the morning actually enters from the Yarnton side of the village and as such has entered from the north via Bladon. The lane is not designed to cater for such traffic, this has caused significant wear to the surface of Horsemere Lane.</p> <p>The council have proposed closure, and we strongly support the closure due to the improved safety that this will provide to pedestrians and cyclists in Bell lane.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – Horsemere Lane is a small single-track road that is used as a rat run by hundreds of cars a day and it isn't fit for purpose. I have witnessed cars coming up the wrong way to avoid the traffic at Cassington lights numerous times. Cars drive too fast on the lane and it is worrying when you see children and animals unable to cross the road. A number of pets have been hit and it is unsafe. It is very difficult to pull out of our drive at rush hour (we live in Bell Lane) as cars rush down around the corner at speed. Overall, I believe it is dangerous and it is used as a rat run by vehicles outside the village. If it is closed, the traffic will dissipate. When the roadworks were being done at the Peartree Roundabout, the flow of traffic decreased dramatically and did not build more at the Cassington village lights on Eynsham Rd so it is unlikely it would happen if Horsemere Lane was closed.</p>
<p>(11) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – My property on Bell Lane (to the west) and the ONLY property which has a garden running adjacent Horsemere Lane. I don't want to build houses on the "flood meadow" and therefore I don't want nor see the need for a gate half way down. The field to the east is also flood plain and has access to the field at the bottom of Bell Lane and therefore they also would not benefit from a single gate. The office property behind Godstow further to the west</p>

CMDE14

	<p>accesses their land from a gate either on the A40 for the larger field to the west and the office from a shared driveway with Godstow barn, Thame mead farm and the old dairy. Again, all supporting the need for not wanting a single gate.</p> <p>If we do have a single gate, this will be a black spot, with no street lighting or pavements negativity affecting burglaries, fly tipping, dogging, car-pooling and not using the park and ride, generally misbehaving. This would have a negative impact on people wanting to use Horsmere Lane re cyclists, walkers, horses. This will increase the possibility to injury to both humans and animal alike.</p> <p>As agreed with OCC Officers and others in past meetings with OCC, most traffic using horsmere lane is transient from neighbouring villages and towns looking for the rat run. We believe most traffic looking for alternative routes rather than horsmere Lane would access the A40 via Freeland on to the A40 sooner. Any traffic from Bladon and Woodstock would more than likely continue to Yarnton therefor we would find an overall decrease in traffic through our village. This would make Witney and Freeland drivers more likely to use the park and ride! Robert courts visited my property and also agreed there could be a slip road helping traffic access the A40 and would help campaign for that in the A40 plans thus helping the issue of traffic blocking up. Obviously when horsmere Lane was build it was built for villagers and farmer to access the A40 and adjacent fields and was never designed to old much traffic, Bell Lane has no pathway or street lights as with horsmere lane which make traffic very dangerous. The road just was never built for such traffic. So where would a traffic increase if any would go, the only place it should go is ON THE MAIN ROAD. Recently I have suggested villagers introduce child snake or crocodile system for village children to get to school. This would ease traffic at the school gates. 446 vehicles using horsmere lane was an extreme week, much road works was surrounding the area e.g. Wolvercote roundabout. But more importantly from my own survey on that same week 70% of 446 used the lane between 6-8am commuters getting into the office or around Oxford thus would not affect the school bus or junction at Cassington lights. The impact on Cassington lights with horsmere lane shut and a slip road at the lights would be a positive and safest thing to do for all.</p>
<p>(12) British Horse Society</p>	<p>Concerns - It is important to include equestrian where ever possible as we are all considered as 'vulnerable' road users.</p> <p>I would like to point out that the consultation states that the lane will be closed to 'motor vehicles and horse drawn vehicles'. But the third point states that the lane will be a 'restricted byway'.</p> <p>The definition of a restricted byway is -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sections 47-50 of the 2000 Act introduce a new category of highway called the "restricted byway". A restricted byway is defined as a highway over which the public have restricted byway rights, with or without the right to

CMDE14

	<p>drive animals of any description. "Restricted byway rights" include a right of way on foot, on horseback or leading a horse and a right of way for vehicles other than mechanically propelled vehicles (this includes a right of way for pedal cycles and horse drawn vehicles).</p> <p>This will cause confusion as, by law, a restricted byway includes all non-mechanically propelled vehicles (e.g. horse drawn vehicles)</p> <p>If a route is only open to horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians it would need to be classed as a 'bridleway'.</p>
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Response to 3rd Consultation

Objections to the proposal

The entire grounds for closure of the lane have stemmed from the selfish desire of residents that live close to Horsemere Lane to the detriment of residents who use the lane and residents at the other end of the village who would be impacted by the closure.

The council propose to close Horsemere Lane to motor vehicles for road safety reasons. There is no evidence that there is a road safety issue.

This is the third consultation. No objections have been disseminated from the first two rounds or made available to the public.

It is clear that as the outcome of closure would be the same under any of the draft orders, which have clearly been amended to stave off future legal challenge, that objections filed for all three consultations must be collated and considered.

The argument that there is a road safety issue must be struck as invalid using the council's own evidence.

The evidence from accident data collected over the last ten years shows zero accidents on Horsemere Lane and only one accident at the A40 junction on the pavement. There have been zero accidents involving pedestrians or cyclists on Horsemere Lane in the last ten years, (01/01/08 – 31/10/18).

Using this factual evidence collected by the council, point 2 and point 3 hold no water. The one accident at the junction was caused by a queuing motorist travelling eastbound making an illegal left turn into Horsemere Lane and hitting a cyclist travelling east on the cycle path. Clearly illegal, extremely rare and ill-advised manoeuvres by motorists can't lead to road closures otherwise many motorways and dual carriageways would be closed.

By contrast, there have been 23 accidents at the Cassington Lights where most of this traffic would be forced to join the A40, following closure.

The council state that Horsemere Lane is used as a 'rat-run' to the A40. Horsemere Lane is a road, documented in legal documents for 50+ years and provides a vital link between the village and the A40 particularly for traffic travelling eastbound.

Horsemere Lane provides a significant time benefit to users' early in the morning, when diverting via Cassington lights would double or triple the time taken to travel from the village to the Wolvercote roundabout. (needs of the locality)

The council's traffic surveys show a volume of traffic using the lane, particularly between 0800HRS and 0900HRS. However, despite numerous requests, no analysis or modelling has been presented to understand what impact closing Horsemere Lane would have on traffic flow through the village and at the Cassington lights junction. I have asked the council on numerous occasions by letter and by telephone for this impact analysis. The requests have been ignored.

This traffic has to go somewhere if the road closure goes ahead, impacting other junctions. In the meeting of 1st June 2018 attended by representatives of OCC and CPC, it was

CMDE14

acknowledged that the additional traffic would impact the Eynsham Road/A40 signalised junction.

A jet lane request was re-iterated at this meeting. This would be inaccessible at peak times as measurements will show that due to the land available it would only take 5 – 6 cars to block the eastbound slip road/jet way.

This was further acknowledged as a problem by Cllr Charles Matthew who stated in correspondence that "cars are ignoring the instruction preventing, when the lights change, the Cassington traffic to gain access to the A40 – on occasion for more than one change of lights". This will be significantly compounded issue if Horsemere Lane was closed. However, assuming the Cassington lights were phased to change every 3 minutes in favour of traffic exiting Cassington, and assuming clear access onto the A40 in both directions, (which is never the case in peak hours), there will be a build-up of 12.5 vehicles for every sequence in addition to the traffic that already builds up at the junction and isn't able to exit west or east on the A40. Taking an average car length of 4.8m (the standard parking space in the UK is 4.8m), that equates to an additional tail back of 60m.

The tailback will extend further back than there is room to create an eastbound slip road/jet lane, so cars wanting to turn left will be building up and blocking cars who are already queuing to turn right towards Witney, including the school bus. Cars will also restrict the ability of residents to exit driveways. It will be evident that the slip road will also cross the cycle path.

Additionally, currently the law is not adhered to at the yellow cross-hatched zone at the Cassington lights. It will be crucial that this zone is equipped with camera and ANPR system to discourage and prosecute habitual yellow box offenders, who will further jam up this junction with the significant additional volume of traffic.

The argument proposed that turning left onto the A40 presents "potential conflict" is an unsubstantiated argument. The traffic accident data clearly shows this has not caused an issue during the past ten years. Further, 'T' junctions featuring a minor road joining a major exist in their thousands countrywide. The A40 approach is substantially straight in this area, providing excellent visibility. Anecdotally eastbound traffic is pretty accommodating for vehicles leaving Horsemere Lane. At times of free-flowing faster traffic, the break in the traffic created by the phasing of the Cassington lights provides natural gaps. Phasing could be modified to create increased gaps.

Locally, a 'T' junction created by the exit from Tesco's east of Cuckoo Lane has the potential for far more incidents due to the volume of traffic leaving Tesco's. This traffic crosses the cycle path without significant signage nor devices to slow down the progress of cyclists or make them aware of the hazard.

East of Horsemere Lane, approximately 500m away, another exit, frequented by lorries from M & M Waste Solutions, also crosses the cycle path and due to road elevation, visibility for traffic from the west is reduced.

It is stated that degradation of the road surface is a reason for closing the road. Degradation has been perpetuated by poor maintenance in the past and as with other roads the solution is to resurface the short road to a higher standard.

As with thousands of lanes and smaller unclassified roads country-wide, more caution may be required from drivers, however the 5-tonne weight limit and the council's own factual evidence showing there have been no recorded incidents along Horsemere Lane supports the argument that road users are driving appropriately for the road and conditions.

CMDE14

The average speed across all data is shown to be 19.9 mph and between 0800 – 0900 HRS 21.3 mph.

Therefore, the closure is objected to on the grounds that no evidence has been presented to support the reasons presented for closure in the "Statement of Reasons".

I further object, as the council have failed to take sufficient steps to notify all road users having a vested interest. No signage was placed at the entrance to Bell Lane, Horsemere Lane nor at the end of Horsemere Lane facing oncoming traffic, which would be clearly visible to motorists. This objection was raised during the first consultation period. The small tokenistic signage finally affixed, was not put up at the start of the 2nd consultation period. It is also noted that the traffic survey data provided after repeated requests, isn't up to date. A further objection is raised on the grounds that the parish council have sought to include only some residents of the village "at that part of the village" at meetings, illustrating an inequitable bias to certain residents in preference to all residents and to road users who have a vested interest.

At a Parish Council meeting in June 2019, a resident from the Cassington Lights end of the village raised concerns about the impact of the closure of Horsemere Lane.

An objection is made as the Parish Council have proposed to misuse Section 106 money to fund closure of the road.

It is stated in the minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 2nd August 2018 that –

"Received an email re the gates. Cllr Thomas would like to have a meeting with the residents with regards to the gates. However, the price didn't include the signage. A gate would need to be used at each end so that we can avoid fly tipping. There is £3k from the section 106 which would cover the Traffic Order. There maybe some money over which could possibly help cover the cost of the gates."

It will be understood that Section 106 money is to be used for Social and community projects.

This meeting was not opened up to all residents and was held at a time that would ensure working people could not attend.

The public have a statutory right to attend meetings of the parish council and its committees and they should be held at a time that is reasonable for most people to attend.

This closure proposal is objected to as the Parish Council have failed to follow an open and transparent process and have clearly been led by a very small group of residents with selfish interest. In response to a Freedom of Information Request, it has been stated that meetings went un-minuted and the council claim not to understand the term "correspondence" and have failed to provide a single copy of any letter or email to or from the council relating to this matter.

The Parish council have however stated that key evidence has been deleted.

"If they are emailed to the clerk then they would have been put up on the 2 notice boards in the Parish but the emails would have been deleted as copies would be available for anyone to request direct from OCC."

The Parish Council are surely aware it is not acceptable to delete records during a process and the OCC have repeatedly ignored requests to provide supporting evidence of the traffic survey and any subsequent impact analysis.

The Parish Council will no doubt be aware under Section 77 Public authorities should make

CMDE14

sure that their staff are aware that under section 77 of the Act it is a criminal offence to alter, deface, block, erase, destroy or conceal any information held by the public authority with the intention of preventing disclosure following a request under the Act for the information. Evidence gathered under a Freedom of Information Request has shown that the Parish Council have failed to include all village residents and sought meetings with the OCC and "residents of connecting Bell Lane". This shows a bias.

This closure proposal is objected to on the grounds of 'poor and inappropriate use of council funds', since the cost of traffic order, court costs, road closure and cutting an eastbound slip road will be significant and with tight budgets could be better spent on education social or health infrastructure.

The council appear to agree and stated at the meeting on 1st July 2018 that there wouldn't be funds available to close the lane unless this formed part of the A40 bus lane scheme. Since no factual arguments have been offered, illustrating the scale any of the alleged issues, and the arguments offered cannot be substantiated, it can only be concluded that the proposed closure has been motivated by a few local residents at the head of Horsemere Lane at its joining with Bell Lane and not at the behest of the wider motoring community. Since not one single accident has been reported on Horsemere Lane, in the last ten years, and using the traffic flow data cited by the Parish Council, at the low estimate, 520,000 vehicles have used this route without incident during the last ten years there are no valid grounds for closure.

Further impact would be caused by the closure with villagers living in Bell Lane, Bell Close, Peter's Close etc now forced to turn left onto Yarnton Lane, using the already dangerous Yarnton Lane/Bell Lane junction where it is widely acknowledged visibility is poor and speed limits are not adhered to.

Speed and general junction issues and the County Council's resistance to a convex mirror to aid awareness of ongoing traffic are all issues that have been raised at parish council meetings.

In correspondence obtained with a Freedom of Information Request it has been shown that certain residents will "find the money for the gates and signage" to close the road. It is completely unacceptable for Oxford County Council to accept funding from one group of residents with self-interest to close a highway used by other residents of the village and numerous other motorists and a road that was paid for by the villagers. Such closure will only push the problem to the other end of the village where there is no space to cut a slip road to alleviate traffic flow.

In regard to point 4.

Should the council consider on reflection that remedial work be worthwhile to raise awareness and reduce the chance of incidents in the future, there are a number of simple cost-effective measures that could be put in place to "avoid danger" and "ensure danger is minimised".

- Repaint the give way signs on the pavement on the A40 cycleway
- Place a red triangle warning road sign "Cycleway ahead" at the end of the road
- Install a 'no left turn' on the eastbound side of the A40
- Install a 'no turn right' on the westbound side of the A40
- Restrict the speed limit along Horsemere Lane and Bell Lane to 20mph from the junction with St. Peter's Close
- Place a "Give Way" sign at the end of Horsemere Lane where it joins the A40
- Place traffic calming railings on the cycle path in such a layout, as commonly used that forces cyclists to reduce speed, zig-zag and be aware of the junction they are about to cross.

Considering all the above, closing the road does not consider needs of 'all' the locality.

Response to 2nd Consultation

Objections to the proposal

The council propose to close Horsemere Lane to motor vehicles for road safety reasons. There is no evidence that there is a road safety issue. In fact, the evidence from accident data collected over the last ten years shows zero accidents on Horsemere Lane and only one accident at the A40 junction on the pavement.

There have been zero accidents involving pedestrians or cyclists on Horsemere Lane in the last ten years, (01/01/08 – 31/10/18).

Using this factual evidence, point 2 and point 3 are inarguable.

The one accident at the junction was caused by a queuing motorist travelling eastbound making an illegal left turn into Horsemere Lane and hitting a cyclist travelling east on the cycle path. Clearly illegal, extremely rare and ill-advised manoeuvres by motorists can't lead to road closures.

By contrast, there have been 23 accidents at the Cassington Lights where most of this traffic would join the A40, following closure.

The council state that Horsemere Lane is used as a 'rat-run' to the A40.

Horsemere Lane is a road and provides a vital link between the village and the A40 particularly for traffic travelling eastbound.

Horsemere Lane provides a significant time benefit to users' early in the morning, when diverting via Cassington lights would double or triple the time taken to travel from the village to the Wolvercote roundabout. (needs of the locality)

Crucially the council have presented no supporting evidence to support the claim that Horsemere Lane is a 'rat run'. No statistical data has been published to support this statement, presenting traffic numbers using the road against time of day.

Further, 'if' it can be demonstrated that the 'rat run' claim can be substantiated with traffic surveys, no analysis or modelling has been presented to understand what impact closing Horsemere Lane would have on traffic flow at the Cassington lights junction.

I have asked the council on numerous occasions by letter and by telephone for this data and analysis. The request has been ignored.

The Parish Council have also refused to provide this data. However, in the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 10 June 2015 it is stated "that between 0800 and 0900, 200 – 250 vehicles use this Lane."

This traffic has to go somewhere if the road closure goes ahead, impacting other junctions. Assuming the Cassington lights are phased to change every 3 minutes in favour of traffic exiting Cassington, and assuming clear access onto the A40 in both directions, (which is never the case in peak hours), that means there will be a build-up of 12.5 vehicles for every sequence in addition to the traffic that already builds up at the junction and isn't able to exit

CMDE14

west or east on the A40. Taking an average car length of 4.8m (the standard parking space in the UK is 4.8m), that equates to an additional tail back of 60m.

This will extend further back than there is room to create an eastbound slip road, so cars wanting to turn left will be building up and blocking cars who are already queuing to turn right towards Witney, including the school bus. It will be evident that the slip road will also cross the cycle path.

Additionally, the law is not adhered to at the yellow cross-hatched zone at the Cassington lights. It will be crucial that this zone is equipped with camera and ANPR system to discourage habitual yellow box offenders who will further jam up this junction with the significant additional volume of traffic.

The argument proposed that turning left onto the A40 presents "potential conflict" is not a substantiated argument. The traffic accident data clearly shows this has not caused an issue during the past ten years. Further 'T' junctions featuring a minor road joining a major exist in their thousands countrywide. The A40 approach is substantially straight in this area, providing excellent visibility. Anecdotally eastbound traffic is pretty accommodating for vehicles leaving Horsemere Lane. At times of free-flowing faster traffic, the break in the traffic created by the phasing of the Cassington lights provides natural gaps. Phasing could be modified to create increased gaps.

Locally, a 'T' junction created by the exit from Tesco's east of Cuckoo Lane has the potential for far more incidents due to the volume of traffic leaving Tesco's. This traffic crosses the cycle path without significant signage nor devices to slow down the progress of cyclists or make them aware of the hazard.

East of Horsemere Lane, approximately 500m away, another exit, frequented by lorries from M & M Waste Solutions, also crosses the cycle path.

It is stated that degradation of the road surface is a reason for closing the road. Degradation has been perpetuated by poor maintenance in the past and as with other roads the solution is to resurface the short road to a higher standard.

As with thousands of lanes and smaller unclassified roads country-wide, more caution may be required from drivers, however the 5-tonne weight limit and the factual evidence showing there have been no recorded incidents along Horsemere Lane supports the argument that road users are driving appropriately for the road and conditions.

Therefore, the closure is objected to on the grounds that no evidence has been presented to support the reasons presented for closure in the "Statement of Reasons".

I further object, as the council have failed to take sufficient steps to notify all road users having a vested interest. No signage was placed at the entrance to Bell Lane, Horsemere Lane nor at the end of Horsemere Lane facing oncoming traffic, which would be clearly visible to motorists. This objection was raised during the first consultation period. The small tokenistic signage finally affixed, was not put up at the start of the consultation period.

A further objection is raised on the grounds that the council have repeatedly refused to answer reasonable requests for statistical data and analysis gathered to support this initiative.

It is also noted that if the traffic survey data exists, as cited in the Parish Council minutes, this data isn't up to date.

A further objection is raised on the grounds that the parish council have sought to include only some residents of the village "at that part of the village" at meetings, illustrating an inequitable

CMDE14

bias to certain residents in preference to all residents and to road users who have a vested interest.

An objection is made as the Parish Council have proposed to misuse Section 106 money to fund closure of the road.

It is stated in the minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 2nd August 2018 that – “Received an email re the gates. Cllr Thomas would like to have a meeting with the residents with regards to the gates. However, the price didn’t include the signage. A gate would need to be used at each end so that we can avoid fly tipping. There is £3k from the section 106 which would cover the Traffic Order. There maybe some money over which could possibly help cover the cost of the gates.”

It will be understood that Section 106 money is to be used for Social and community projects.

This meeting was not opened up to all residents.

This closure proposal is objected to as the Parish Council have failed to follow an open and transparent process and have clearly been led by a very small group of residents with selfish interest. In response to a Freedom of Information Request, it has been stated that meetings went un-minuted and the council claim not to understand the term “correspondence” and have failed to provide a single copy of any letter or email to or from the council relating to this matter.

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This closure proposal is objected to on the grounds of ‘poor and inappropriate use of council funds’, since the cost of traffic order, court costs, road closure and cutting an eastbound slip road will be significant and with tightening budgets, money could be better spent on education or health infrastructure.

Since no statistical, and factual arguments have been offered, illustrating the scale any of the alleged issues, and the arguments offered cannot be substantiated, it can only be concluded that the proposed closure has been motivated by a few local residents at the head of Horsemere Lane at its joining with Bell Lane and not at the behest of the wider motoring community.

Since not one single accident has been reported on Horsemere Lane, in the last ten years, and using the traffic flow data cited by the Parish Council, at the low estimate, 520,000 vehicles have used this route without incident during the last ten years, then there are no grounds for closure.

Therefore, closing the road does not consider needs of ‘all’ the locality. In regard to point 4.

CMDE14

Should the council consider on reflection that remedial work be worthwhile to raise awareness, reduce the chance of incidents in the future, there are a number of simple cost-effective measures that could be put in place to “avoid danger” and “ensure danger is minimised”.

- Repaint the give way signs on the pavement on the A40 cycleway
- Place a red triangle warning road sign “Cycleway ahead” at the end of the road
- Install a ‘no left turn’ on the eastbound side of the A40
- Install a ‘no right turn’ on the westbound side of the A40
- Introduce a speed limit along Horsemere Lane and Bell Lane to 20mph from the junction with St. Peter’s Close
- Place a “Give Way” sign at the end of Horsemere Lane where it joins the A40
- Place traffic calming railings on the cycle path in such a layout commonly used that forces cyclists to reduce speed, zig-zag and be aware of the junction they are about to cross

Response to 1st Consultation

Objections to the proposal

The following documents have been cited but not included in the document pack ~
The County of Oxford (*Horsemead Lane, Cassington) (One Way) Order 1967.
The County of Oxford (Weight Restriction) (*Horsemead Lane, Cassington) Order 1961.

Lack of sufficient public notice to all road users

No physical notice in a position likely to be clearly visible by road users has been placed at either end of the highway. (evidence collected).

Publicised in a newspaper with a circulation of a mere 12,638.

Publicised on a notice board on Bell Lane that most motorists would be passing travelling at 20mph – 30mph and have zero chance of seeing. Only walkers would see this who won't be negatively impacted.

Publicised in Cassington News without reference to the website address for consultation documents.

A notice should be posted to all residents of Cassington, Worton, Long Hanborough, Freeland and North Leigh who are likely to use this route onto the A40 but do not receive Cassington Parish News.

Lack of impact analysis

No analysis has been published documenting the number of users, or evidence of use at peak times.

No impact analysis has been provided showing where traffic would impact other highways, junctions or villages and all road users.

What assessment has been done on the volume of traffic that would be forced to queue at the traffic lights at the A40 junction and back up into the village, limiting access to the A40 Westbound and Eastbound?

What study has been undertaken to simulate re-phasing the traffic lights to ensure this additional volume of traffic isn't held up unnecessarily. Without the additional traffic, it can often take three or four light sequences to get out of Cassington towards Witney.

Reasons not evidenced

CMDE14

I frequently use this public highway, and access to the A40 is simple and easy as with other 'T' junction onto main roads. Sometimes a short wait is required for a break in the traffic but often road users signal their intention to grant one passage.

There is no greater conflict or safety issue than with any other 'T' junction access to the A40 without traffic lights such as those at Barnard Gate and Cuckoo Lane.

In the 14 years + that I've used the highway, I've probably come across contra-flow pedestrians or cyclists less than two dozen times. If this is considered an issue then merely make the highway a 20mph zone.

No factual grounds or evidence has been presented with regards to road safety.

Impact on other road users

The impact of closing Horsemere Lane, is likely to have an impact on villagers at the Eynsham Road end of the village with the additional weight of traffic forced to exit the village at the traffic lights on the A40. The traffic lights at the junction of Eynsham Road and A40, is already a bottle-neck in the morning without additional volume of traffic.

The Cassington school bus will also be impacted by the increase in traffic at this junction.

There is no room to create an eastbound slip road at this junction, ensuring that traffic intending to turn left, will be mixed in a queue of traffic waiting to turn right. At the rush hour, both morning and evening traffic backs up and can take numerous cycles of the traffic lights to make it out onto the A40.

Analysis on a daily basis during January 2019 at 6 o'clock in the morning suggests that the time taken to travel from Bell Lane to the Wolvercote roundabout via the Cassington lights is at least double the time taken when using Horsemere Lane. At other times, between 7 and 9 for instance the time penalty is likely to be significantly greater. Only on two occasions did I see another vehicle using Horsemere Lane!

With the new developments at Vanbrugh Meadows, Hanborough Gate and other developments on the outskirts of Long Hanborough this highway provides a vital link from Long Hanborough, Worton and Cassington through to the A40 will be increasingly important.

Reasonable requests for analysis ignored ~ lack of transparency

Despite writing to the county council and parish council on numerous occasions, for more than six months, OCC have refused to answer questions or provide the results of traffic surveys or impact modelling.

I've written on the following dates –

3rd July 2018

1st September 2018

1st January 2019

24th January 2019

Re: Horsemere Lane

Statement of Reasons dated 10th January 2019

In the above document the aim is stated as to ""improve road safety and reduce conflict with traffic on the A40.""

It is further stated that aim is the provision of ""safe movement of vehicles and other traffic, and the proposed measure is aimed at ensuring that danger is minimised whilst considering the needs of different classes of traffic."" [emphasis added]

Presumably the since the reason proffered for inconveniencing certain classes of road tax paying traffic, there must have been one or more recorded incidents along Horsemere Lane or at the junction of Horsemere Lane and the A40.

CMDE14

It is requested that you publish supporting statistical evidence for this claim as would be provided to the Dept. of Transport during the last ten years, by year, providing number of incidents and trends.

Evidence showing

Casualties involved in reported road accidents by DoT measurement criteria ~

Killed

Seriously injured

Slightly injured

Since no supporting evidence has been published, the consultation should be extended until the following documents are placed in the public domain for review.

Traffic surveys, showing volume against time of day and day of week

Impact analysis of road closure

Evidence of reported accidents

Further notice of consultation should be published widely by postal delivery to other road users who would be affected by such closure including residents of Long Hanborough, Freeland, North Leigh, Combe, Stonesfield, Yarnton etc and additionally a clear advertising of the consultation on notices at the entrance to Horsemere Lane."

RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>Object – I have visited the location and familiar with the route which from my observation gets occasional but continual use by motor vehicles which could be a problem given that Police supervision would not be a long-term solution given the remote location and a very low priority in the circumstances. In which case locals observing the feature would be unhappy and frustrated in the ineffective outcome, although placed with understood safety justifications.</p> <p>I note that the TRO allows Police and other emergency services access which I would expect in this type of order although from a response time/operational perspective for Police would not see this as essential. The alternative route is fairly short distance to access the A40 and Police do not see that as justification in keeping this lane open for their purpose.</p> <p>From my experience users are likely to continue using the route illegally and accept and acknowledge egress being difficult to access the A40 with the limited site lines. I would promote therefore that this restriction should be self-enforcing (M veh' Restriction) with locked bollards that emergency services could open as required or as a fully closed stopped up road!</p> <p>Thames Valley Police will object to this order unless firm arrangements are made to make this self-enforcing or alternatively considered for a road closure order and is physically stopped up in those circumstances</p>
(2) Local Resident, (Cassington)	<p>Object – I live off the lane and use it daily to access A40. While I fully understand why the residents in the lane want it closed I feel the volume of traffic having to use the lights to exit the village on the A40 will increase and cause major delays the lights only allow about 3 cars out at a time.</p> <p>This will impact my working day as I will have to allow extra time to queue. This could be solved by having a slip road onto the A40 at the lights to allow more traffic out. The lane closure needs to go hand in hand with the creation of a slip road. This lane us used as a rat run by other villages as a quick way onto the A40 ideally would like it kept open for village use only.</p>

CMDE14

<p>(3) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Object - 1) its a handy route to the A40 - needed more than ever now with additional houses in the village.</p> <p>2) as a resident of over 20 years I've not seen any increase in traffic on the road</p> <p>3) residents on the road brought or moved to the houses fully aware of the road - complaining about the road is like moving to the country and complaining about the smell.</p> <p>4) have not heard a convincing case that supports the road closure</p> <p>5) this is a historic right of way. Why do the few residents who want to close it have the right to close this historic route and turn this village into a single route village, benefiting the few and putting the wider public out?</p>
<p>(4) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Object – COMPLETELY OPPOSED TO CLOSE A ROAD THAT PROVIDES ALTERNATIVE ROUTE OUT OF THE VILLAGE</p>
<p>(5) Local Resident, (Freeland)</p>	<p>Object – Traffic is far too heavy at rush hour. The Cassington junction is insufficient to manage traffic as seen by extensive traffic jams every weekday morning and evening. This will get worse with all the new housing. Having this road allows at least some relief I. The pressure points in Cassington, Eynsham and on the a40 and it is utterly unhelpful to remove roads in the area that has some of the worst rush traffic jams I. Oxfordshire.</p>
<p>(6) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Object – Here are the reasons for my objection to the proposed road closure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no impact analysis data has been shared or provided - has this in fact been done? - I use Horsemere Lane to access A40 every morning at 7.30, at the most there is one car in front or behind me, usually there are none so I simply (based on personal experience) do not believe that there is an issue to resolve here - the result is that this proposal appears to be purely based on the desire of a very small number of houses (5 max) not to have traffic driving past their doors; in no way does this represent a safety hazard, any more so than for any other houses which opens directly onto a road; these residents knowingly purchased a property with direct access onto a road, so why do they want to make others suffer for their past decisions? - in line with other nimby-ists, local residents who want this clearly don't care about the fact that the volumes of traffic will be pushed somewhere else, most likely towards the Cassington lights (or through Yarnton); the phasing of the lights does not cope with any build up of traffic as is, so how will it cope if morning and evening commuter traffic ends up there? There is one access lane (realistically, the left turn is too short to matter) and traffic will build up through the

CMDE14

	<p>village in front of other people's houses. Again - have numbers been done and an analysis of impact and phasing of lights been carried out? Apparently not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - as a result of the above, it is likely that school buses will end up arriving late in the morning - the whole proposal smacks of bias and a lack of impartiality; certain people in the village appear to have close ties with certain people on the council; is this proposal being treated according to due process and with objectivity? <p>Requests for impact studies have been ignored, current road users have not been communicated to effectively (are they really supposed to see a small notice on a village noticeboard or stumble across a notice in the Oxford Times?); a line in the Cassington News with no link in case residents want to object - really?. Anyone interested or affected should be requesting all relevant information (including emails between village residents and members of the council) via the Freedom of Information Act.</p>
<p>(7) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Object – I use Horsemere Lane every day to get to work. It would increase my journey time to work everyday. I use the road at different times of the day (from 7am to 9am) in the morning and there is never any significant traffic on it (rarely one car in front, waiting to turn onto A40). Closing this lane will divert more traffic down to the Cassington lights and I am concerned that as there is no 'slip road' to go left at the Cassington traffic lights, then the queue will be long and back up through the village. The light timings at Cassington would have to change but even then there are often cars queueing on the A40 and people turning right (leaving Cassington) would block the option to turn left (into Oxford).</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Freeland)</p>	<p>Object –Can't understand this. It's perfectly safe to turn left into the A40 from Horsemere lane as the Cassington lights halt traffic anyway and allow a window even if traffic is heavy. Visibility is good regardless. Turning right maybe could be prohibited as a compromise as I can see that is sometimes dangerous with the speed of traffic on the Westbound carriageway. But please don't stop the left turn and add to the massive congestion at Cassington lights from the village at morning and evening rush.</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Object – Horsemere lane should remain open.</p> <p>When the council has the means to build a relief road, then that is the time to look at closing Horsemere Lane. For the moment it needs to remain open.</p> <p>Being a resident of Bell Lane I do not agree this will improve road safety in the village you will just be creating new problems.</p>

CMDE14

	<p>As for your reasoning to reduce conflict with traffic on the A40 east of Cassington you will be putting more pressure on traffic travelling through the Village of Yarnton joining the A44 to travel to Oxford and of course traffic travelling to the East of Oxford.</p>
(10) Local Resident, (Cassington)	<p>Object – Horsemere Lane was opened up for villagers’ access to the A40 not transient traffic from other areas and there is plenty of room for a slip road</p>
(11) Local Resident, (Cassington)	<p>Object – (See Annex 4 for detailed response)</p>
(12) Local Resident, (Cassington)	<p>Support – At certain times of the day, it is extremely difficult to reverse my car off my drive! I believe this volume of traffic to be totally unacceptable.</p>
(13) Local Resident, (Cassington)	<p>Support – The volume of traffic has increased over the time that I have lived in Bell Lane. I believe that it is now at an unacceptable level and it has become difficult to reverse of my drive at certain times of the day.</p>
(14) Local Resident, (Cassington)	<p>Support – The legal status of Horsemere Lane is already a Restricted Byway and use by motor vehicles should not actually be allowed. However, legacy signage, combined with the 'rat-run' benefit sees hundreds of cars every morning using Bell Lane and Horsemere Lane to achieve a short-cut onto the A40. As local residents to the lane, our household fully support the proposed closure.</p>
(15) Local Resident, (Cassington)	<p>Support – Thank you for proceeding with this closure. Traffic uses this road as a rat run, this is unsafe for pedestrians especially children trying to walk to/from school.</p> <p>Motorists continue to ignore the one-way system and do so at break neck speed.</p> <p>Converting Horsemere Lane to a bridleway suitable for cyclists will ease access into Cassington when entering from Oxford as walking against the traffic flow is equally dangerous at the moment.</p>

CMDE14

<p>(16) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – I support the closure to Horsemere Lane as it is currently unsafe due to lack of a footpath and not fit as a road to support the over 250 cars that use it as a "rat run".</p>
<p>(17) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – The speed cars come up bell lane and Horsemere Lane is so dangerous and so frequent. We cannot pull out of our drives in the morning, I've nearly had several accidents like my neighbours as the corners are blind and there is no footpath. Children especially are at risk with no pavement. If you try and walk a dog or your elderly walking down Horsemere Lane (BRIDLE PATH), there is no where to go and stand, cars beep their horn intimidate you. I'm just waiting for a large accident on the a40 at the Horsemere Lane junction, the speed camera is placed in a very precarious position and takes drivers eyes off the road. The lane was never designed to be a proper road and now it's just plain abuse, one day 600-700 cars. 50 years ago when the village gave the road to OCC traffic was a lot different and less frequent and dangerous. I believe it was opened to help the villagers and not be a rat run. In the 100 metre section of lane there must be 50 potholes which never all get fixed. Please close the lane and have the traffic stay on the main roads where they belong before someone get hurt. Three years ago OCC wanted the lane closed, please just do it, then cyclist can continue to go both ways and thats much greener. Robert Courts from Baldon brought up the dangers of rat runs through his village in parliament and all the pms agreed we need to have good planning for the a40 and surroundings. I cannot see how cars could possibly pull on to the a40 through a bus lane safely. We see businesses like Thames water vans coming up the wrong way and when you contact the police with photographic evidence they do nothing. Other problems include oversized lorries. It plain ridiculous. It will take me 2 minutes extra to drive around and I'm not bothered at all for safety's sake and it's a dangerous junction to pull out of anyway.</p>
<p>(18) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – No comments</p>
<p>(19) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – I would like reassurance that my access will not be restricted by the proposed changes..</p>
<p>(20) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – The lane has become far too busy as it is used as a 'rat run', with many cars zipping along Bell Lane to enter Horsemere Lane. Joining onto the busy A40 can take time and often leads to drivers becoming impatient and taking risks to join the A40.</p>

CMDE14

<p>(21) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – Bell Lane has become extremely busy with vehicles taking a short cut to the A40 during rush hour periods in order to avoid Cassington traffic lights. Horsemere Lane is certainly not in a suitable condition for the vast amount of vehicles using this route.</p> <p>There is also an increased risk of accidents on the A40 due to the number of vehicles now exiting this junction which was never intended as a busy exit onto the A40.</p> <p>For all of the above reasons I am in support of the 'Prohibition of Motor Vehicles' on Horsemere Lane.</p>
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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	Object - (See Annex 5 for response)
(2) Cassington Parish Council	<p>Concerns – The proposed closure will cause an increase in traffic at Cassington Lights as traffic tries to exit the village toward Oxford.</p> <p>The Parish Council have made it clear to the designers of the Bus/Lane Park and ride scheme that a slip road toward Oxford together with re sequencing of the lights will be necessary to accommodate this extra traffic.</p>
(3) West Oxfordshire District Council	Support – In the interests of pedestrian and road safety, West Oxfordshire District Council supports the closure of Horsemere Lane to motor vehicles and horse drawn vehicles.
(4) Local Resident, (Cassington)	Object – (See Annex 4 for detailed response)
(5) Local Resident, (Cassington)	Object – My Views remain the same. Please present them again. Also point out that in School Holidays Horsemere lane is less used.
(6) Local Resident, (Cassington)	<p>Object – I would like to make a formal objection to the above proposal. There is no reason at all to close this road and there are also serious concerns over the way the proposal has been presented.</p> <p>First, there have been no accidents at all on the lane in over ten years. The only accident has been on the pavement crossing it - and that was due to a driver - in a queue - illegally turning up the road and hitting a cyclist. This is not a justifiable reason to close the road. Indeed, if it were, the junction from Cassington at the traffic lights would need to be</p>

CMDE14

closed, where over 20 accidents have occurred in that same time period.

Horsemere Lane at present simply helps reduce the amount of traffic that would otherwise cause congestion at the Cassington traffic-light junction. It saves time for people heading eastwards along the A40. If everyone were made to drive to the lights instead it would simply increase the traffic through the village and add to the time it takes all drivers to reach the Wolvercote roundabout. It would have no positive effect at all.

The junction at Horsemere Lane is plainly no more different or dangerous than countless other T-junctions, given the easy views of straight road both ways and the natural breaks in the traffic caused by the traffic lights. The lane itself needs to be better maintained - that's all - and maybe a 20mph limit put in - though speeding is not an issue there.

There seems to be no evidence at all that closure of the road is justifiable on any grounds. Nor has there been any evidence of research on the impact on traffic at the lights. The Council have been asked repeatedly by interested parties to provide the relevant research and stats to support closure - no info has been sent, despite repeated requests. In sharp contrast to such silence, the parish council were proactively concerned to encourage residents "at that part of the village" to attend meetings on the issue. This was clearly not going to give a representative sample of opinion on the matter.

I also understand that the Parish Council have proposed to use Section 106 money to pay for the costs of the closure. This money is for social and community projects, not to be misused for this kind of action. Furthermore, there are no minutes or records of relevant correspondence, which should be available to all under the Freedom of Information Act. I understand that the Parish council have said that this information has been deleted.

In response to such requests for information it has been stated that meetings went un-minuted and the council claim not to understand the term "correspondence". Again, despite repeated requests, it has failed to provide a single copy of any letter or email to or from the council relating to this matter.

There does not seem to be any proper research or procedure to back the closure at all, in short. It can only be concluded that the proposed closure has been motivated by a small number of local residents and is not objective or representative of the public interest. As pointed out above, there are also serious concerns over the whole manner in which the matter has been conducted.

Surely the much simpler and better option, anyway, is to save scarce money by simply doing the following to ensure the continued safety of those living near the lane or using the lane and junction: Put clearer signs for drivers and cyclists at the convergence of lane and cycle-way - including new Give-Way signs on the pavement and a standard

CMDE14

	<p>cyclist-slowng railings at either side before the junction. Put clearer "no left/right turn" signs on the A40. And put a 20mph speed limit on Horsemere Lane. There is no need at all to close the road.</p>
<p>(7) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Object – Live off this lane unless junction onto A40 is improved with a slip road will cause chaos through village use this lane every day and do not want it closed.</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Object – I use this route to commute to work every day. I'm concerned that the traffic lights at the end of Eynsham Road (that joins A40) are not going to cope with the increase in traffic leading queueing though the village. If you want to turn left onto A40 (leaving Cassington) - no option of a slip road.</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Object – The proposal to close this road is deeply flawed. It is based on the wishes of a small number of residents, and is not supported by any evidence or data around where the traffic will be diverted and the potential impact on residents on the other side of the village.</p> <p>It is a vital link from the village to the A40, diverting via the Cassington lights would have a very negative impact on journey times for people living in the village, especially as the volume of traffic on he A40 is likely to continue to increase.</p> <p>We should not be spending any money on this, and the proposal to divert some 'community budget' to make this happen to fulfil the selfish desires of a small number of residents is outrageous.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (Freeland)</p>	<p>Object – Provides a way of gradually adding access to the A40 rather than forcing a traffic queue in Cassington.</p>
<p>(11) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – No pavements and parked cars on a single-track road at the bottom of bell lane, start of Horsemere lane makes walking on bell lane dangerous, and is worst on Horsemere lane due to the width of the lane, children are at major risk and have to be accompanied on their walk to school. Pets have been killed this year. No street lights compound this issue. Horsemere Lane has grass and moss growing on it 12 months of the year. Cars, vans, a motorbikes regularly come up the wrong way to escape the A40. My house shakes with the traffic from 07:00-09:00 and again 16:00-18:00 as car drive fast. 700 cars in one day according to the survey OCC did last year. This is causing structural damage to some of the oldest set of houses in the village and many are grade II listed. Horsemere</p>

CMDE14

	<p>Lane was never designed for that amount of heavy traffic and the pot holes never go away. OCC contractors don't fill all of the pot holes and report the crumbling lane as defective and not suitable for its current use. Pulling out of my drive often take several minutes and is dangerous, due to lack of pavements, blind corners and speed and volume of traffic. Lorrie's get stuck on a regular bases and turn around on my gravel drive causing further damage. I know of a car hitting a bollard and over turning due to blind corners and speed. The lane was originally given to OCC for residents of the village a second exit onto the A40, this is now abused and known as the rat run. Where Horsemere joins the A40 to the East is a large bridge and opposite the lane traveling west is a speed camera, people are looking at their speedos there're not to get a speeding ticket. This causes added dangers of pulling out onto the A40. There are already too many deaths on the A40 and I expect this is already a black spot, hence the gatso camera. Any changes to the A40 with a bus Lane is going to make this hazard much worst. People who oppose the closure I think are very selfish. As the police don't have resources to patrol the lane, residents are left to deal with abusive and aggressive drivers who often guest and sound their horns between 07:00-09:00. Many residents are old and this causes much stress and anxiety directly affecting their health. Since moving here I am now prescribe diazepam to help. I speak on behave of 95% the residents who have to deal with these issues on the lane. The survey the parish council conducted had overwhelmingly support to close the lane. The parish agreed that the lane should also be closed. I believe four years ago OCC wanted the lane closed. On a freedom of information request. Closing the lane would save thousands of pounds each year. Another green issue is that many people use the lane for cycling to and from Hanborough train station to oxford. I believe this is a hot topic for OCC a requires more support and is a OCC initiative. Please close the lane.</p>
<p>(12) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – As a resident close to Horsemere Lane, we bear the full brunt of the early morning 'rat-run' of Oxford destined vehicles looking to obtain a shortcut onto the A40 along a route unsuitable for this purpose. Horsemere Lane is, by legal definition, already a restricted byway and therefore this proposal to restrict movement along the lane with physical barriers and correct signage seems the correct approach, particularly with the separate plans for the A40 recently consulted on.</p> <p>As a landowner directly adjacent to Horsemere Lane, we will however require access for verge and fence maintenance.</p>
<p>(13) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – Objections on the grounds of additional traffic going to the Cassington Lights junction ignore the origin of most of this traffic. It predominantly comes from the direction of Long Hanborough and Bladon and would, when the lane is closed, either go through Yarnton or through Bladon and not through the village at all. Most of these are "rat-runners" who will take the hottest route. There are daily near misses in Bell Lane as we residents try to make our way</p>

CMDE14

	<p>out of the village against a continuous stream of cars, often seemingly oblivious to the fact that the lane is two way to the last dwellings. We need this restriction now.</p>
<p>(14) Local Resident, (Cassington)</p>	<p>Support – Traffic continues to use the road as a rat run, the pathways are not suitable for traffic and vehicles to mix especially for children and youngsters walking to school.</p> <p>The volume of traffic entering the lower end of Bell Lane - into a blind corner in the mornings makes it very difficult to exit Bell Lane safely, forcing vehicles into the almost non-existent pathway.</p> <p>Traffic regularly travels in the wrong direction during the evening rush hour.</p>
<p>(15) Local Resident, (Freeland)</p>	<p>Support – On driving away from a relative's home in Horsemere Lane there have been frequent occasions when I have been shocked/surprised by vehicles coming the wrong way up Horsemere Lane from the A40. Vehicles appear to travel far too quickly because the drivers know they are in the wrong and are trying to get away asap. I have been very lucky not to have had an accident. Also it is impossible to sleep with large noisy commercial vehicles inconsiderately using the lane in early mornings.</p>