



FORMAL

COMMUNITY OBJECTION TO OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC ORDER CLOSING WALTON STREET TO THROUGH TRAFFIC

This objection is made by Jericho Connections representing local stakeholders, both residents and local businesses, and supported by a petition containing 931 signatures

29th May 2020

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BASIS FOR OBJECTION

Jericho Connections - a local community group comprising of residents and businesses in Jericho and Walton Manor - was launched in November 2019 after Oxfordshire County Council issued an Experimental Traffic Order (ETRO) closing Walton Street to through traffic¹.

Jericho Connections sees the county council's aims of the closure as all worthy and valid, however, we believe that by closing the road in the manner in which they did the effect been the opposite and this document aims to showcase in detail why.

- The closure breaches:
- The Equality Act
- [Public Sector Equality Duty Act 2011](#)
- [OCC Constitution](#)
- [OCC Achieving Good Corporate Governance](#)
- [Equality Framework for Local Government \(EFLG\) 2018](#)
- [Oxfordshire Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy \(2018-2023\)](#)
- *2018 Local Air Quality Annual Status Report*
- Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

The aim was set up to fail from the beginning as only scant baseline data was available for the area prior to the closure and a very limited number of residents (c. 200 in the immediate vicinity of the closed section) and some partisan organisations were consulted. A wider two-week online public consultation was admittedly launched but this was not adequately publicised and consequently many residents, local organisations and businesses were unaware of its existence. An FOI request revealed that the almost non-existent publicity for the city-wide consultation was due to local authority budget constraints and yet you will note below that over half a million pounds of public money was spent on repairing a road that was destined for closure not to mention all the money that have gone into trying to further secondary consultation, information and signage.

Initially, Jericho Connections therefore started with an [online petition](#) asking OCC to reopen the road for six months in order to collect baseline data which would allow the council to scientifically assess whether or not the ETRO had been successful in meeting their aims. Without this essential data we argue that it is impossible to evaluate the outcomes. Paper petitions were also available at a few local shops and at the health centre and podiatry clinic. The online petition currently stands at 671 (Friday, 29 May 2020) with 253 additional paper signatories, making a **total of 923 signatories**.

However, as the closure's logistical, financial and human impact began to be felt, Jericho Connections became aware of the full weight of on our community and the general feeling within and also the painful human stories that were emerging.

KEY ISSUES

1. INCREASED ISOLATION

Our most vulnerable neighbours are facing additional challenges since the closure. Accessing vital services now takes longer and costs them more. We are concerned about the possible effect on some of our elderly and/or disabled neighbours' long-term ability to maintain independent living.

- Jericho has 14.4% pensioner households and 38.3% as 'lone parent families' with dependent children
- Poverty rates amongst children and older people are higher than the city average with 51% of all children & 65+ living below the poverty line.

¹ After several months closure whilst sink holes discovered during resurfacing were repaired

As a result of the closure the Oxford Bus Company have withdrawn their Pick-Me-Up service from Jericho. The offer of a new weekly shopping bus by the Baptist Church is well-meant and may help with some shopping needs but it isn't a sustainable long-term solution and doesn't address the most urgent need as to how to access healthcare. Neither is the existing minibus run via Aspire.

The needs of our most vulnerable and isolated neighbours must be at the heart of the actions and thinking by our common institutions. The Equality Act demands it!

Jericho Connections believes that by issuing the ETRO, Oxfordshire County Council contravenes the [Public Sector Equality Duty Act 2011](#)² by not “*considering all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work*” – in shaping policy and in delivering services - and that OCC have failed to have due regard of the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

The need for good relations between different people in our community have never been greater and the closure and the way it been managed have led to a rift in our community not easily mended as the elite have not listened to the vulnerable, those living in less well off part, i.e. majority.

[Read One Disabled Family's Story](#)

2. LOCAL BUSINESSES

Given that many of our citizen live and work locally at the beginning of 2020, long before the Covid-19 impact, Jericho Connections carried out a survey of the (mainly) independent businesses in Jericho. Almost 90% reported a negative impact on their business since the closure with a significant downturn in trade. They also experienced operational problems (for example, the chemist delivering prescription medication to the housebound, a local electrician being unable to attend to as many call outs in a day or the flower shop having difficulties in making deliveries as part of its core business). It is true that some are not affected as badly as others, but the broader picture is the important one here not any individual case. If our shops and restaurants are suffering, they will close. It will be harder for new businesses to become established. Jericho residents will thus need to travel further to work and shop making life even harder for those less mobile and with more limited experience or less ability to access online ordering. Again, we need a balanced approach that supports local traders as well as delivering on other goals. The majority of traders also feel that the character of Walton Street has changed significantly and that the lifeblood is being sucked from this once vibrant and unique destination.

COVID-19 BUSINESS UPDATE

This analysis was carried out prior to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK.

The impact of the pandemic on the local economy carries a further strong argument for the reopening of Walton Street in order to help trade return to the area and support Jericho's local businesses.

3. DISPLACED TRAFFIC AND INCREASED JOURNEY TIMES

For many residents, journey times have increased to get to key parts of the city and beyond. This is an inevitable knock on effect of the closure but if you add up all those extra 1½ to 2 miles per trip, that is a lot of extra vehicle use and thus extra pollution and carbon emissions. Perhaps not on Walton Street but elsewhere throughout Jericho, Walton Manor, St Giles and Beaumont Street.

² Changes in force before or on 19th February 2020

It is also adding to journey times for taxis, a service many of our elderly is depending on to access healthcare and also important for in particular the safety of women visiting our local restaurants and pubs. Getting a taxi is now much harder for many - when they can get a taxi at all (as some firms are threatening not to pick up from Jericho anymore). Cost per trip is up. Pre-closure taxi journeys into the city centre were £5, post-closure the fare has risen to between £6.50 and £8 each way. When you are on a fixed income (such as a state pension, minimum wage or disability benefits), that is a lot of extra money to find and once again hits the most vulnerable and least privileged members of our community the hardest.

Another inevitable outcome of the current situation is an increase in response times for emergency services.

FOI requests to all three emergency services reveal that they are unanimously against this closure. Both the spokesmen for the Fire Brigade (Rewley Road & Slade Park) White and Blue Watches have some concerns regarding emergency access...

"Since the current closure has been in place, we have attended quite a few minor incidents, and the only access has been via St Giles and Little Clarendon Street or St Margaret's Road for the Hydraulic Platform (due to the size and amount of swing on the vehicle)"

The Traffic Management Officer for Hampshire Constabulary & Thames Valley Police Joint Operations Unit, writes on behalf of the Chief Officer of Police...

"I accept this junction has been closed for a number of weeks due to road maintenance, however any longer-term proposal to restrict vehicular traffic is NOT supported.

- *Emergency response times for ALL Emergency services to this area will increase and detrimental to public safety.*
- *Walton Street is currently a defined Diversion route for Blue Light services and other vehicles during closures of St Giles.*
- *Alternative diversions [are] much longer and detrimental in terms of Emergency response to North Oxford."*

On our site we have received several anecdotal accounts from our Jericho residents of paramedics moving barriers with the help of passers-by or leaving the ambulance on the Worcester Street side of the barrier and running with a stretcher through the barrier and down Walton Street! A recent RTA involving a motorcyclist saw the injured rider lying on the tarmac for 50 minutes waiting for an ambulance and in a separate incident before Christmas a Worcester College student lay on their sports field slipping in an out of consciousness whilst an ambulance arriving at the main entrance discovered that the only access to the playing fields was just the other side of the barricade and were forced to drive the long way round.

Side streets like St Bernard's Road are being used considerably more than they should be as exit points from Jericho. Others are being used by HGV and other large vehicles as reversing points in order to retrace their steps back out of Jericho then now passing twice the northern end of Walton Street and the smaller roads to exit Jericho. Yes, there is a reduction in overall traffic on the southern end of Walton Street. But that which remains is now forced to use roads that were never designed for it. As part of a recent knee-jerk OCC change to reduce the amount of traffic using St Bernard's Road, vehicles seeking to leave Jericho is now being directed up St Margaret's Road, home to a primary school. Again, we have to look at the area and its place in the larger Oxford as a whole.

4. COSTS

We now know from a FOI request that the roadworks leading to this closure cost over £568,000. That is a huge sum of public money to repair and then close a road. What is much harder to quantify is the additional costs for residents and businesses this has then created. But we know from the business survey above that it has been and will continue to be significant.

THE WAY FORWARD

We have concerns that the same lack of planning put into the Walton Street ETRO will be echoed in the ZEZ creation of zones, bus gates and congestion charging in OCC's stampede to become a model for Zero Carbon cities around the UK.

Jericho Connections feel that OCC and the pro-closure supporters seems to believe that because the closure is in the name of the *Environment*, they have nothing to prove and that it falls to those who are challenging the process to carry out due diligence. What we need is research and proper planning accomplished, then full consultation ahead of revisions and implementation, followed by continued monitoring and changes where necessary.

This has to be evidence-based, and that means a temporary reopening so that the baseline data from ALL parts of the area and all factors also those socio-economic ones can be obtained and analysed. Yes, some partial data does exist, but it is not comprehensive. Once we more fully understand how Jericho is in terms of congestion, air quality and demographics we will be in a better position to decide how best to potentially change things making sure that we in all our efforts not only protect but improve life for our most vulnerable, our local traders and residents. Jericho Connections believes that together looking at all the factors and all the facts we can better our life, what is clear is this current closure process do not.

Let us start again, work together and build a better future for Jericho and Walton Manor.

Jump to **EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES – A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON TRAFFIC IN JERICHO...**

PETITIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | JERICHO CONNECTIONS

The online petition was launched at the end of November 2019. [Jericho Connections Petition](#).

We request that Oxfordshire County Council carries out due diligence by re-opening Walton Street for 6 months whilst baseline data is collected prior to a formal consultation.

Essentially, we don't disagree with the aims of the council - to improve air quality; improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians; reduce congestion and 'rat running'. They are all worthy and valid aims; however, we disagree with the way that the authorities have gone about shutting Walton Street.

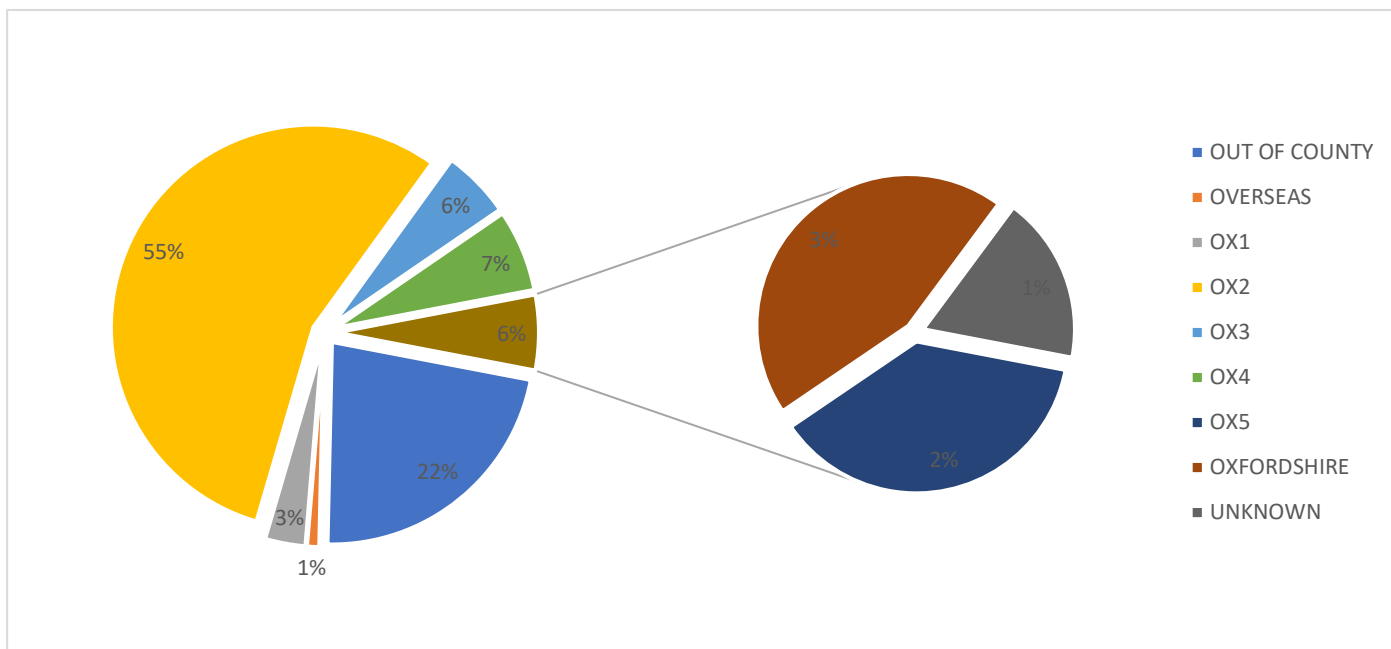
We believe that no baseline data has been collected prior to the closure and therefore there is nothing to compare the results of the closure against at the end of the consultation period. We also suggest that the closure fails to address the authorities' aims for the following reasons:

- air quality reduced in side streets in Jericho & Walton Manor
- increase in HGV traffic in the backstreets of Jericho
- impact on cyclists, children, the elderly and disabled has not been fully considered
- concern about the impact on response times for the emergency services
- increased mileage & journey times increases CO2 emissions
- congestion is pushed elsewhere
- increased rat runs in side streets
- negative impact on local businesses

The Jericho Connections petition has a total of **931** signatures (@ Friday 28th May), **679** online plus a further **252** [paper signatures](#) (petitions were available pre-lockdown in local stores). The particular strength of the Jericho Connections petition is the **percentage of local signatories** (i.e. OX1 and OX2). Requests for a post-code breakdown of the signatures on the Don't Choke Jericho petition (submitted to OCC Cabinet earlier this year) have been declined. However, due to the fact that we know their petition had a wide and targeted distribution list (e.g. county-wide cycling and environmental activist social media

streams) and has attracted city-wide signatories, we believe that a significantly **lower percentage of local people** have signed the pro-closure petition.

In addition, we are not able to evaluate how many signatories from other parts of Oxford/County (totalling 17%) either work or visit Jericho regularly and **can** therefore be classified as stakeholders.



<https://www.change.org/p/oxfordshire-county-council-to-provide-baseline-data-before-closing-walton-street>

[View the online Petition Signatures](#)

ALIVE & KICKING, JERICHO

A petition from Jericho's Alive & Kicking (50+ group) who are suffering increased isolation and reduced independence as a result of the closure.³ On 10th February Alive and Kicking in Jericho (a local 50+ group) submitted a petition to Ian Hudspeth asking for Walton Street to be reopened.

[View Alive & Kicking Petition](#)

FAILURES IN THE ETRO PROCESS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jericho Connections believe there are a number of **critical failings** in the **decision process, consultation and implementation** of the ETRO closing Walton Street to through traffic. These failings fall into two broad categories – constitutional/governance and equality/diversity as indicated by the **highlighted text** in the following documents:

- OCC Constitution
- OCC Achieving Good Corporate Governance
- Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) 2018
- Oxfordshire Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy (2018-2023)

³ Sent to Christian Mauz separately in February 2020

The consultation timeline suggests that key deadlines were **not met** both in terms of the decision-making process and the **submission of councillor proposals**, and that the public consultation was **inadequate**.

Equality Framework for Local Government: Organisations are expected to understand how the diversity within a local community describes the experiences of local communities, both individually and collectively, and to use this understanding to demonstrate **'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty**.

Jericho Connections believes that OCC have failed:

- **to understand our community**
- **to demonstrate leadership, partnership and organisational commitment with effective communication that fosters good relations**
- **to involve our community**

Jericho Connections believes that the ETRO directly opposes the guidelines set out in the Oxfordshire Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy in terms of **living and ageing well** and tackling the **wider issues that determine health**. The strategy acknowledges that society is getting older, that at-risk groups need to be identified, that care should be provided closer to home and. Jericho is not the gentrified area of public perception, with a higher than average % of both rented households and the elderly (as proven elsewhere within the submission).

Jericho Connection's evidence has been gathered from public websites and via FOI requests.

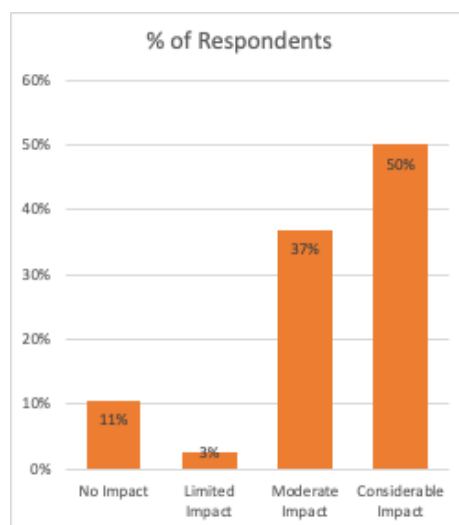
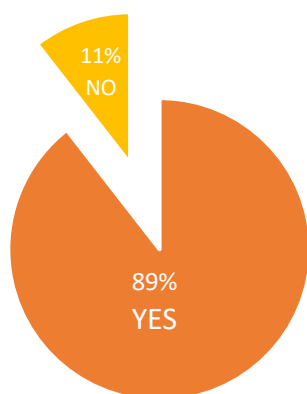
[Read the full Failures Report](#)

BUSINESS IMPACT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overwhelming **majority** of businesses in Jericho **do not support** Oxfordshire County Council's ETRO⁴ closing Walton Street to through traffic⁵. The closure is having a negative impact on trade and causing operational difficulties.

The **majority (84%)** of businesses **strongly disagreed** with the closure of Walton Street to through traffic, with **89%** of respondents stating that their business had been negatively impacted by the closure and ranking the impact as **moderate to considerable**.



82% businesses reported a **drop off** in trade, with **operational difficulties** also rating highly (**55%**). **45%** of respondents reported problems with deliveries. Almost a third of the sample were concerned about their staff's travel costs, safety and wellbeing, whilst a similar number were fielding customer complaints (**32%** and **30%** respectively).

94% of respondents felt that the **character** of Walton Street had **changed** to a greater or lesser extent. Only two respondents (6% of sample) felt that Walton Street was unchanged.

⁴ Ref: AK/12.6.320

⁵ Enforced on 18th November 2019

85% of Walton Street's 19+ hospitality outlets reported a negative impact on trade. This trend is echoed in the other small businesses in the area, but it is not just a loss of trade due to the closure that is the issue.

Whether you are a flower shop making deliveries as part of your core business, a pharmacy providing vital prescription medication to the housebound or a local electrician attending to a call out, the extra mileage required just to leave Jericho carries a cost, both in terms of fuel and time.

SAVE WALTON STREET | WHAT SOME OF THE BUSINESSES ARE SAYING ABOUT THE ETRO...

Branca Bar, Restaurant and Deli *"Blithely introduced with much sloganeering, the Walton Street closure is a blatant act of commercial vandalism. Whilst currently seeing a reduction in both planned and spontaneous visits as a direct result of the road closure, we will lose visibility and relevance over the longer term."*

Frog Orange Party *"We have seen a considerable drop in our turnover in our Jericho store since the road closed back in July 2019 whereas our Headington shop has kept steady. Every year we hate it when St Giles Fair happens. Our turnover is affected, and footfall is down, however we know it's just a couple of days and luckily, it's early in the week rather than the weekend. Closing Walton street feels like the fair is on permanently. It's eerily quiet. I've been involved in the independent retail scene in Oxford now for 20 years. I can tell the difference between a national or global trend and a local issue. This is a local issue which has happened without consultation and without regard for traders or residents. There has been a party shop in Jericho since 1980, in fact we are now the one - and only - party shop in Oxford. If this road stays closed, we too will be closed by the end of the year."*

Raoul's Bar, a Walton Street institution for more almost 40 years, responded that *"The closure of the end of Walton Street has prevented people coming through Jericho on their way home or visiting friends. I am convinced that it has created an 'out of sight, out of mind' situation for the businesses. People are forgetting about us!!! Trade has dropped SIGNIFICANTLY since the road closed and that is a fact."*

Likewise, **The Victoria Pub**, another Walton Street stalwart reports that *"There are some really good places to go out and have dinner or just a drink in Jericho and the bollards at the end of Walton St. have throttled that by looking like Walton Street is closed for business. Passing trade and even just people noting that you are there means that if they like the look of what's on offer they will pay you a visit. We have noticed a drop in trade since the road was closed."*

Daisies Flower Shop, *"To randomly close an important road leading to one of the last parts of Oxford still with independent businesses is an act of thoughtless cultural and commercial starvation."*

Jhoots Pharmacy *"We suddenly had far fewer customers when the road closed. It's affecting business massively. Orders are not arriving in time, so customers are going elsewhere. One of our Pharmacists regularly takes 20 minutes or so longer to drive from the barrier (approaching from Botley Road) to the shop. Her journey is no longer reliable, and she sometimes arrives late meaning we cannot open the shop. It adds around one and a half hours to her driving time each week."*

Robin Swailes Design *"Access to the city centre for my team is circuitous and delays works."*

Central has traded in Little Clarendon Street for over 20 years. *"In recent months since the Walton Street closure we have seen a significant drop in customers. We have a substantial shopfront which has always been important as a visible draw for customers. Since the closure obviously far more vehicles do not use the street to drive down, and consequently less views. The retail business has been a tough market and for us compounded by the lack of people that park in the street now to enjoy our unique street and am aware this has affected other traders. Surely there should have been discussion before this important roadway and access was closed"*.

Londis *“We could tell the difference as soon as the road closed – barely any customers coming in and sales dropped immensely during the summer when it’s usually busy. We close at 10.30 pm and we used to get lots of late-night customers (even coming in just as we were about to close) but now there are barely any people and the street is quiet and dark. It was previously really lively at night. When HGVs are delivering, they come only from one way and we have to keep retelling them. They have to reverse into the small roads to get out.*

Zheng Restaurant *“Food delivery is taking longer, and we are getting complaints from customers”.*

The Barefoot Café, another independent business on Walton Street, says *“We have seen a significant drop in customers since the road closure, in particular whole cake orders are down as customers can’t easily collect them. We also have a wholesale business with customers based all over Oxford. Time spent and miles travelled around the city centre have significantly increased”.*

CONCLUSIONS

Implementing an ETRO that has resulted in a downturn in trade is putting these businesses under mounting pressure and exacerbating operational difficulties. The anecdotal information provided in the Executive Summary shows a worrying pattern emerging since the closure of Walton Street to through traffic. Even long-established businesses, with a four-decade stake in Walton Street, are noticing the impact. The cost to businesses in Jericho cannot be quantified but it is likely to be significant. Not just in terms of loss of income, but also increased operational costs – greater petrol consumption, longer journey times, and fewer customer deliveries for example. This impact has been seen on High Streets for quite some time but the profile of Walton Street with a overwhelming majority of independent businesses have managed to hold forte. With Covid-19 in mind this is even more key to listen to the experience of the long standing businesses of an area who know their residents, their customers and staffs expectations and needs.

The statistics paint a grim enough picture on their own, but they are not the whole story here. Real people are being affected and there are human consequences to this closure. Livelihoods are at stake - people’s jobs - whole families are impacted and the closure is causing uncertainty and anxiety for all concerned.

[View the Business Impact Analysis Report](#)

JERICO TRADERS ASSOCIATION

The Jericho Traders Association was formed earlier this year as a direct result of the closure of the Walton Street to through traffic and the impact that this has had on Jericho businesses.

WALTON STREET CLOSURE

The businesses were not formally (or otherwise) consulted about the road closure at any point. Many did not know for some time why the road was closed.

We are a substantial wealth generator in Jericho and the lifeblood of our urban village. We should therefore be consulted as a major stakeholder and not treated with disdain, as it seems we have been.

Most businesses in Jericho were thriving prior to the road closure. A major access point was closed and predictably it suppressed trade on the street. Oxfordshire County Council has caused this *drop off in trade; they are responsible. Yet despite these facts being shared with them they choose to persist with this social experiment on our neighbourhood. Businesses who deliver or do business on Botley Road can find themselves taking 20 minutes longer each trip going ‘the long way around’ – therefore causing more emissions.

Long-established businesses find themselves struggling after the effects of seven months of the road being closed and as a result now find themselves in a weak position while attempting to survive during the coronavirus pandemic. Many Jericho businesses operate on a month by month basis – ie paying for the previous month's wages and stock etc with the current month's takings. There is just no buffer. We are aware of the grants which OCC has given some businesses and these will have been gratefully received but they are not enough to sustain them through this lengthy period of instability. These businesses would very likely have survived had it not been for the street closure but now their futures are uncertain.

When the decision was made to close the Walton Street, it is very clear that the businesses were entirely overlooked. Why would OCC proclaim that they want to support Jericho's independent businesses but at the same time deliberately (and knowingly) harm them by closing off one of the main access points? Many customers do what is easiest and do not want to take the detour into Jericho – businesses know this anecdotally but also it is proven in their year on year accounts. OCC should have been promoting and supporting us but instead they undermined us further by then installing signage on the Woodstock Road saying that Walton Street is closed and that only residents are allowed in. This had the effect of further damaging our businesses. The signs were not replaced for six vital weeks. One sign still remains on Observatory Street saying that it's open to residents only; this is an important road into Jericho with a number of parking spaces for customers and is continuing to cause confusion – particularly to those who do not know Oxford well. There is also a sign stating that shops and businesses are open, but it is only temporary. It is beyond belief that these signs were sanctioned by the very organisation, part of whose purpose is to safeguard our businesses.

Our businesses cannot survive without customers from outside Jericho, many of whom will arrive by car from far and wide. Many customers have busy schedules and therefore no time to use the park and ride and need to be able to 'pop' to our shops – quickly in and out without having to put aside a large chunk of their day for shopping for a few items in Jericho or meeting someone for lunch, before then going on to their next destination. Not encouraging this is fuelling the dominance of the likes of Amazon and Ocado. We hear also (from a good source) that the new Land Securities CEO is considering packaging the Westgate Centre to sell as early as next year. The ease with which customers can drive to Bicester Village and the new shopping centre next door means that is exactly what they will end up doing, while avoiding Oxford City Centre as it is made so difficult for them. OCC is on the back foot with regard to future planning: a tram system is planned – but not until 2040 and there are currently no electric charging points in Jericho ahead of the ZEZ being brought in (therefore no incentive to buy a hybrid / electric car).

OUR PROPOSAL

OCC and JTA need to move forwards together (and not towards pedestrianisation which is entirely wrong for Jericho for many reasons which we will not begin to go into here). OCC say they care about supporting our businesses so we must collaborate rather than traders having to second guess what is being planned for us or finding out via the Oxford Mail when a decision has already been made on our behalf. There are many, many exciting ways to invigorate our incredible Jericho neighbourhood (bicycle racks, the number 14 bus coming through, planting schemes, Christmas lights) and the JTA Committee would welcome the chance to work together with OCC as a team to work towards this. Many of us have decades of experience in retail (and we're actually very nice!). We could meet councillors at regular scheduled meetings to work together to achieve this.

We do not want to go back to the days when traffic cut through Walton Street to avoid the congestion on St Giles and Beaumont Street (although NO² emissions never came near to exceeding the EU allowable amount). We believe there are simple (and inexpensive) ways in which motorists can be 'retrained' not to use Walton Street for rat running: perhaps a 15 mph speed limit in all of Jericho (for cars and for cycles) and planters similar to Beechcroft Road to make Walton Street more arduous for cars to navigate. That

would mean that those entering and exiting using the southern end of Walton Street would be primarily those who live in Jericho itself and perhaps some from Walton Manor / Waterside etc plus customers to our businesses. Now that there have been improvements made in St Frideswide's we imagine that the traffic will now flow more freely along St Giles and Beaumont Street, meaning it would be unnecessary to cut through Jericho to beat the jams.

We hear that a bus gate is planned for Worcester Street. We very much hope that Jericho businesses are considered in this decision and at the very least it's 'only' a 12-hour bus gate, rather than 24 hour. We worry that Oxford will become a soul-less tourist city in the manner of Carcassonne. Many of the Jericho businesses' deliveries come by lorry from other businesses in Botley Road – huge deliveries on pallets too large to carry by bicycle or van – they would need a window to be able to deliver.

Jericho Connections have recently been provided with a copy of Don't Choke Jericho's latest proposal to re-open the Walton Street junction with Beaumont Street/Worcester Street and pedestrianise the central section of Walton Street and are currently evaluating its contents. Our initial concerns:

- All Jericho Traders Association need to agree and discuss things like deliveries, rubbish collection, recycling, customers, parking etc.
- A planned route for trucks and deliveries needs to be agreed beforehand, or we risk trucks going through the residential streets of Jericho.
- The northern extension of the pedestrianisation would put us in the same spot we are in now, except everyone leaving Jericho would have to drive south to get north.
- We suspect that changing the entrance of the health centre car park will not be acceptable nor as easy to change as suggested.
- The width of the street should be 3.7M minimum. No tables should be allowed in that area as it needs to be kept clear without blocking for Emergency service vehicles to travel through.
- Businesses that make multiple daily deliveries e.g. Daisies and the Barefoot Café will struggle with this pedestrianisation.
- Customers collecting from shops need to be able to park up and move their purchases into their car easily.
- The pedestrianisation scheme is likely to create new 'rat runs' through the backstreets of Jericho.
- There are concerns regarding the turning space at the mini roundabout for HGV to retrace their steps to leave Jericho and similarly that Adelaide Street would not be able to provide an adequate turning space.
- We still don't have acceptable traffic data, and it will be years before traffic is back to normal to collect this data.

In no way should this be enacted before the Council open the southern end of Walton Street as suggested. This sets a dangerous precedence with the potential to trap us in Jericho. Any **future proposed changes to the streets within Jericho must** be in consultation with local stakeholders.

LIVEABLE STREETS

We have been in contact with traders in Walthamstow and Columbia Road, Tower Hamlets about the 'liveable streets' schemes carried out there. It seems there is a predictable and unstoppable process of the businesses objecting, the councils casually ignoring their pleas (instead listening to the lobbying of activists who have little or no knowledge of commerce, many of whom don't even live in the area) and going ahead with it regardless. Older, long-established, less fashionable businesses (requiring customers arriving by

car) are pushed out (due to lack of custom caused by the schemes) in favour of ‘trendy’ restaurants and shops with so-called sustainable and green credentials which take their place. We need more ‘solid’ independent retailers on Walton Street – a cobblers/key cutter, a post office, a hardware store and a decent stationers etc – serving our elderly and vulnerable population in Jericho, who may not be able to leave by car. This needs to be done in conjunction with landlords who must be realistic about the rents they can now achieve post virus. Many landlords nationally are heading towards turnover related rent which is what must surely happen in Jericho. Will we find ourselves in five years’ time with Walton Street shops only selling beard oil, tofu and organic avocados?

Jericho commerce has evolved organically over the last 150 years without interference from the state.

SUMMARY

Remember our words ... if Walton Street remains closed OCC is hindering the recovery of our businesses. Thirty-two Jericho businesses believe that Walton Street should never have been closed. It has caused division and much unpleasantness between residents and palpable unease among business owners. We



request that it is reopened, traffic calming put in place and a **proper consultation carried out in collaboration with businesses and residents**. Jericho streets should be for all – there’s room for everyone (pedestrians, car drivers, motorcyclists and cyclists) to share the space harmoniously if we are respectful

of one another.

Jericho Traders Association Committee

*Thirty-four Jericho businesses (sadly reduced to 32 as two have since closed) have said that they are against the road closure as they have experienced a downturn in trade and footfall (82% of businesses said this) as a direct result of the road closure (pre Covid).

SUBMISSION PAPERS

This submission includes scientifically researched papers addressing OCC’s stated aims for the ETRO – improving Air Quality, reducing Congestion and improving conditions for Cyclists and Pedestrians.

Executive summaries for each point are below and links to the full scientific research and data are provided at the end of each summary.

AIR QUALITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Council and the pro-closure narrative are unequivocally erroneous in their assertions that air quality along Walton St has “improved” or that Lamppost 18 records/collates sufficient NO₂ data. **The data and other ignored factors highlight the unscientific nature of their flawed argument.** Only one “diffusion tube” has measured very basic NO₂ data for the whole of the wider Jericho/Walton St area, and only 12 readings for each of 2017 & 2018. Neither has there been any equally important comparative measure of ozone or particulate matter data.
- Key is also if overall Oxford’s emissions have been reduced or if it merely have moved to other parts, i.e. streets such as St Margaret’s and around Green Templeton College.
- Oxford City Council’s own *2018 Local Air Quality Annual Status Report* states that, at the 71 sites monitored using diffusion tubes in 2017-18, “the majority of the increases and decreases in air

pollution levels were within the margin of error of the monitoring method (between 1-2 µg/m³), which means that **the NO₂ levels measured at those locations in 2018 cannot be considered statistically significant**".

- **Lamppost 18's diffusion tube is in fact marked in the wrong location** on Oxford Air Quality's map. Its data is reflective of an entirely different section of Walton St, requiring entirely different interpretation. This means that Walton Street was doing very well with levels well under current WHO targets, without Local Authority intervention.
- Instead, **Local Authority intervention** has exacerbated and increased traffic and pollution emissions. The closure of the southern end of Walton Street has been an inappropriate and ill-thought out response based on zero scientific data.
- **The closure of the south end of Walton Street has only "cleared traffic" from one-fifth of the entire length of Walton Street.** It has left the remaining majority – four-fifths – of Walton Street under increased pressure from existing and *intensified chaotic traffic*.
- In other words, one-fifth of Walton Street will have significantly reduced air pollution; the majority four-fifths will have either the same or intensified air pollution. **Closing one-fifth of the closed end of Walton Street did not reduce, but maintained and possibly chaotically increased, traffic and emissions for four-fifths of the street ("driving the long way round").** There is no baseline data beyond the ATC on Walton Street in the vicinity of Richmond Road.
- Lamppost 18 only has 12 single data measure points for each of the 12 months of 2017-2018 – with **no correlating particulate matter data; no correlating comparative data from the year before or after; and no comparative data from across Walton St's arterial web** of capillary roads.
- **This is very, very basic data from just one single diffusion tube across a large socio-ecological area, not the detailed and reliable data from a properly considered survey.**
- This rudimentary data **does not carry enough scientific or statistical weight to draw any decisive conclusions** – there is no reliable, consistent, comparative or conclusive body of data *for* Jericho to determine the "true" pollution situation *about* Jericho.
- **A single diffusion tube can never capture a true scientific picture of this complex human ecology.**
- This very basic data invalidates the pro-closure argumentation – the 2017 & 2018 µg/m³ readings are **already well below the regulatory annual objective of 40 µg/m³ level.** The ill-thought out closure of one short stretch of Walton St also takes into no consideration many other emissions reducing/exacerbating factors or seasonal and ecological factors across the whole area, and those factors' nuanced significances to their correlate areas.

[View the full Air Quality Paper](#)

CONGESTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Very notably, in Section 14(1) of the Parliamentary Research Briefing (Standard Note: SN6013, last updated: 17 November 2014) drawing on the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, it states quite clearly: *"this is not a simple thing to make an Order and can often be expensive. A local authority is unlikely to make a TRO unless it has a significant problem and substantial local support"*;

- Oxford Council has a majority of residents who are against the road closure, yet it has refused to listen. Likewise, it has failed to provide evidence of any “*significant problem*” to justify closure because it has no evidence, yet it continued on its belligerent single-minded path to close Walton Street;
- There is no relevant traffic monitoring system or resulting data for the Jericho/Walton St wider area;
- There is no scientific evidence or data to justify or warrant the south-end road closure of Walton St;
- None of the ATCs appear in the vicinity of the wider Jericho/Walton St area. They therefore bear no direct relevance to traffic movement through Walton St or its capillary roads;
- Likewise, the “manual counting” data of 28 January 2020 is unusable in any scientific manner because there is no “before data” (“base-line data”), giving no car usage under “normal” conditions, prior to the road closure. This means it is not possible to say whether this manual count data taken on 28 January 2020 (“number of cars”) for these three streets is “normal” or higher. These numbers then became higher with the closure of the south end of Walton St forcing capillary roads to become the key exit-entry roads into Jericho/Walton St – forced down these one-way, narrow streets, turning these into high pressure-points;
- Therefore, any data post-closure only captures a snapshot of highly chaotic traffic movement and does not – cannot – form the basis for any sensible analysis. It simply records highly irregular traffic responding to confusion caused by the simultaneously chaotic road signs;
- Regarding the “road tube counting” conducted between 23 January and 11 February 2020, this data is scientifically useless because a) there was no “before data” (base-line data) to compare it to; and b) these “tube measurements” cannot prove “normal” road usage, because they reflect only chaotic traffic movement after the closure of Walton St, and the subsequent chaotic road signs activity by Council. These data are just too erratic and unreliable;
- The chaotic temporary roads signs have clearly been implemented by a Council team entirely unfamiliar with the local area, and the roads themselves; and with little engagement with the community...knee-jerk reactions from behind office desks. More permanent signs appearing have the same problem. These signs have introduced immense confusion and chaotic vehicular patterns, further exacerbating the already ill-thought road closure;
- There is simply no strong reliable traffic data to work with – and most certainly not in an informed scientific manner that can possibly back up the above Council “reasons” for road closure: there is no data to identify any “lack of safety”; the data does not identify any evidence for “adverse environmental impact”; the air quality and traffic data do not provide any scientific evidence of poor air quality, unsafe environments or rat-running; neither does the data provide any scientific evidence to justify how the road closure would “improve the environment”; nor any survey of “local residents and businesses” to understand their many different uses of the wider area and its roads, and their many different needs;
- The act of closing Walton Street has triggered innumerable negative impacts upon local residents and businesses, and these negative impacts are not being measured properly;
- The road closure has become nothing more than an instrument of abuse – of local authority “state-violence” by Councillors enforcing their power upon a community, which has the aggressive and belligerent effect of bulldozing over a community’s wishes and needs, and that community’s better understanding of its own environment and infrastructure;
- This is also a blatant abuse of “democracy” and its “due process” particularly in the meaning and application of the term “consultation” – the ETRO process and consultation has not enabled a democratic inclusion of the local community;

- The closure of Walton Street has achieved nothing other than considerable expense (at taxpayers' cost) and an out-and-out insult to the local population who are voting constituents and taxpayers;
- Council has been influenced by opinions and "influencers" that bear no relation to the majority (democratic) voices of the area under question and influenced by imagined assumptions and hidden agendas. The original (first) "consultation" lists "key stakeholders", of whom none are appropriate representatives of local residents and local traders. Instead, these "stakeholders" are not wholly resident or operating businesses within the local area;
- In direct opposition to Council's "strategic vision" online statement, in the closure of Walton St, Council has: failed to engage directly with residents; failed to consider "older and disabled people"; failed to "care for those in greatest need"; failed to consider road closure negative impacts on community safety and health; failed to "protect the local environment" by increasing traffic and pollution; failed to "support a thriving local economy"; failed to "improve transport links"; and done nothing to "create jobs and homes for the future";
- In direct opposition to Council's "Connecting Oxford" statement, in the closure of Walton St, Council has **dis-connected** the community and **dis-connected** the local traders' economic hub. Oxford Council has demonstrated with great clarity that it is **divorced** from reality;
- Council has triggered costs in the road closure, instead of allocating those costs more wisely to wider surveying and traffic calming measures that are in sync with the life and economy (the socio-economic ecology) of the Jericho/Walton St area;
- It has become very clear that Councillor Constance is likely intending – and has pre-determined - the ETRO on Walton St to be turned into a permanent order. This is a hard line, undemocratic and aggressive approach to any community;
- What is needed is a full comprehensive survey across the whole area of Walton St and its capillary roads. This survey would need to include stable long-term traffic measuring, and the surveying of different uses and needs of the whole-area-roads, such as residents, local businesses and their deliveries and visitors. Without such a comprehensive survey, it is impossible to base any correct decision on what the appropriate traffic calming measures could be and where.
- A full comprehensive survey and "consultation" in its true meaning would enable a community-led and community-agreed democratic process to determine the correct range of traffic calming measures for implementation across the whole area, thereby enabling the correct traffic calming and cleaner environment effects on local roads that have considerably different characteristics to each other.

RAT RUNNING

Due to the lack of traffic monitoring, it is extremely difficult to assess what level of 'Rat Running' occurred prior to the implementation of the ETRO and whether this has reduced. Any assertion that rat running has improved is anecdotal. A lot of the passing traffic came from residents in Jericho and Streets beyond such as Kingston Rd, Southmoor Road and Rutherway.

[View the full Congestion Paper](#)

CYCLISTS & PEDESTRIANS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Part of the stated benefits of the closure of the southern end of Walton Street was to improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians. Whilst traffic levels are notable reduced at the very southern end of Walton Street there have been several unintended consequences that are less desirable for the cyclist.

Junction with Walton Street, Beaumont Street and Worcester more dangerous when turning right (into Worcester Street):

- Additional traffic, particularly HGV, in side streets makes cycling and walking within the backstreets of Jericho more dangerous
- New access flow into Jericho via Little Clarendon Street negatively impacts Sustrans Cycle Route 5
- Increased traffic at northern end of Walton Street and at junction with St Bernard's Road
- The displacement of traffic is counter to the stated benefits that the closure of Walton Street/Beaumont Street would bring for pedestrians and cyclists
- Loss of Pick Me Up Bus Service negatively impacts on elderly and less able pedestrians, increasing sense of isolation and reducing ability to undertake normal activities

[View the full Pedestrians & Cyclists Paper](#)

OUR COMMUNITY | SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2011 Census found Jericho had a population of 1,400 residents living in households, with *"little change in the total number of residents since 2001"*. This shows that Jericho has been a stable residential community with the unique position of having some simple self-sufficiency adding to neighbourhood stability.

- This gives every reason to encourage a diversity of healthy local, entrepreneurial, business to serve both the community and the wider area, as well as encourage a vibrant community by attracting those outside to visit and use these services/amenities.
- The continued stability of the community is good reason to ensure that this healthy gender balance is not negatively impacted

At least one quarter of the total population fall into the vulnerable/dependent/non-working categories (not including other vulnerable variables emerging in the data such as ill health), giving another reason to protect and build a caring, self-sufficient community.

- The figures of 14.4% pensioner households and 38.3% as 'lone parent families' with dependent children are two other areas of socio-economic fragility that also need protecting against negative impacts.
- Poverty rates amongst children and older people are higher than the city average with 51% of all children & 65+ living below the poverty line.
- This shocking statistic gives every reason to fight against any negative impacts that could further increase internal fragility or isolate existing fragility, and protect the area's unique economic stability and character

Jericho became appreciably more **ethnically diverse** between 2001 and 2011. In 2001, 26% of residents were from a non-White British ethnic group compared and this **increased significantly to 38% by 2011**.

- This gives Jericho another much-valued characteristic of socio-cultural diversity that needs protecting against negative impacts.

The population of Jericho is well qualified, and the proportion of full-time employees is above average.

- People employed in “*higher managerial and professional occupations*” in 2011 was 34% of people aged 16 to 74 compared with 21% in Oxford. This again shows Jericho residentiality has good economic stability that should be protected from negative impacts.

[View the full Socio-Demographic Paper](#)

EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES – A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON TRAFFIC IN JERICHO

There is no doubt that the closure of the Walton Street Junction has caused a lot of upset in the Jericho area. However, there are very few people who wish to see a return to how things were before Summer 2019.

What there is, however, is a clear desire to see alternative proposals being made as to how to protect all that Jericho residents hold dear:

1. A connection to the rest of Oxford
2. A vibrant, independent retail and food offering
3. Easy access to local services for all residents
4. Roads that are as free of congestion as possible
5. A sound environment

The challenges that we face in looking at Jericho as a whole is that there are very few entry and exit points to the area and only a small number of those are suitable for larger vehicles. And it is necessary for larger vehicles to have access to Jericho in order to collect refuse, make deliveries and, in the worst-case scenarios, access a crisis such as a major fire. There is no need for coaches to regularly visit Walton Street – though occasionally the students at St Barnabas School may need one for educational/cultural trips. There has for years been a school bus servicing the area but this has now been cancelled and its unlikely it will be resumed.

The closure of the Walton Street Junction has severely restricted access by larger vehicles – meaning that when they do need to enter Jericho, they are causing greater obstructions and reversing down side streets in order to facilitate their egress. Neither of these are desirable outcomes.

It is also clear from the evidence uncovered by the survey of Jericho businesses carried out by Jericho Connections that businesses are suffering. Not all businesses – but more than 80% are reporting a drop in trade as a direct result of the Closure. This is not desirable and not sustainable.

Jericho Residents rely on their local shops. They love the independent retailers that have thrived here – some for many, many years. Jericho has a reputation for being one of the hippest areas in the UK. Its reputation is based on being a small town within a bigger town not merely a sleepy residential area. That is not something that will be sustained if the Closure goes unaltered.

One of the myths put around about Walton Street is that it was blighted by pollution. Now no one wants a polluted or congested Jericho. But the pollution levels on Walton Street (on the figures published for 2018) were well below legally acceptable levels. We should always strive for cleaner air, but it is a myth that this stretch of road was heavily polluted to dangerous levels. Its also not helpful for the air to merely redirect traffic from one street to others and make trips longer, solutions such as adding more growing trees etc should be considered.

Ensuring working from home solutions and enabling for local offices is another key factor in limiting traffic now more discussed than ever.

What will be outlined here are suggestions from a long-term resident of Jericho – not someone with town or traffic planning experience. But someone who has observed what has been going on for close to twenty

years and who is capable to imagining alternatives that might be worthy of further exploration and consideration.

REDUCING THE ACCESS POINTS TO JERICHO

The two biggest roads in the area are Walton Street and St Margaret's Road. Should these become the main entry/exit points for the area? We could create a one-way system that only allows vehicles to enter from the South (via the currently closed junction) and then leave via the North (St Margaret's Road). This would ensure access for emergency vehicles and delivery lorries but reduce the potential for rat running.

It may be possible, alongside this, to restrict traffic through roads such as Little Clarendon Street (a frequent pinch point) so that deliveries could be made before 10am (such as happens on Cornmarket already) thus protecting businesses and leave the street free to further develop the cafe culture that many crave.

We could also explore further restrictions on Leckford Road to ensure that it was not placed under undue additional pressure.

A natural entry point would also be the road between RAQ and the Mathematical institution, already paved and with no housing on either side.

These are not fully formed ideas – but could be developed into a traffic flow plan that allowed businesses and communities to thrive and for traffic to be more regulated, predictable and controllable.

REDESIGNING THE JUNCTION OF WALTON STREET AND BEAUMONT STREET

Whilst the junction of George Street and Worcester Street has received many redesigns in recent years (costing many hundreds of thousands of pounds), the junction now at the centre of the debate has not been touched in a long time.

Looking at the area, it is noticeable that there are some very large pavement areas there which might be altered to improve flow in the event of a partial or full reopening of the junction.

It could be possible to create a filter lane that only allowed vehicles to turn left out of Walton Street onto Beaumont Street. This would serve to reduce the temptation to rat-run – which has been one of the major complaints from some about the pre-2019 situation.

It may also be possible to redesign the whole junction with a roundabout in mind. Certainly, proper enforcement of the existing Box Junction would have an impact. But perhaps a roundabout might allow for better flow. It is worth exploring the options.

ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC CALMING

Some have suggested using planters and trees to further add to the traffic calming and 'liveable streets' feel to the area.

This could be applied in a number of places along the length of Walton Street to add to the charm of the area as well as helping slow traffic and to dissuade other road users entirely.

The essence of this document is to make the case that Jericho deserves to have a bespoke solution that addresses the needs and wants of the whole community. There are many more options than those suggested here. Jericho needs to be allowed to thrive. It is too important to be the subject of an experiment.

Let us pause, gather the data, develop a plan. Then carry out a full consultation with all stakeholders, businesses and residents. Refine that plan, implement it and then review it – always keeping an open mind to making it better.

This way forward will command the respect and support of most people and lead to a better Jericho for all – not for those with the loudest voices.

VIDEO SUBMISSION

A short video is provided illustrating some of the human stories resulting from the ETRO – the most vulnerable of whom describe the situation “*in prison without the key*”. Jericho Connections unfortunately had to halt collecting video commentary due to the Covid-19 social distancing guidelines introduced towards the end of March 2020.

Double-click on the image below to play this video... or view on YouTube using the link <https://youtu.be/V3NXYH5Cxew>



APPENDICES

[View the Appendices](#)