



**SURVEY OF JERICO BUSINESSES
ON THE PROPOSAL TO PEDESTRIANISE WALTON STREET, OXFORD**

We spoke to forty Jericho business owners during August and September 2020 to ask them whether they supported or opposed the current JLTN pedestrianisation of Walton Street proposal.

“Not the time to experiment”

31	OPPOSE	(77%)
6	SUPPORT	(15%)
3	NO OPINION	(8%)

Raw data to support these findings can be supplied to relevant parties.

When questioned, five businesses had not heard about the proposal at all. All of the thirty one businesses who oppose pedestrianisation also want Walton Street to be reopened. The Council have been told that our businesses have been negatively impacted due to the road closure. The road was closed for seven months before Covid and 82% of businesses experienced a decrease in year on year turnover during this specific period. This is the wrong time for the Council to be carrying out experiments on our business community when the risk is so great. What would most certainly help us, though, is reopening the road. As has been said before, most of our businesses were doing well before the road closure, we all struggled as a result of it and we wonder why the Council has decided to continue with it.

Councillors and council officers – please do go and visit business owners and hear for yourselves – we can supply you with contact details. Each one has a story to tell.

We must ask ourselves – what is the problem which needs to be fixed?

A number of business owners have been working alongside Jericho Connections on an alternative Low / Calm Traffic Neighbourhood scheme. It does not include pedestrianisation and would have the support of the majority of the business owners and Jericho residents. We need a traffic solution which works for everyone across the area and shares out the destination-Jericho traffic fairly and makes us the long-way-round, not the rat run. The unwanted, fanciful and unaffordable pedestrianised vision doesn't achieve that and neither does the closure at the southern end.

What must be remembered is that the groups lobbying for pedestrianisation are very small in terms of supporter numbers (although highly organised and with great social capital). The vast, vast majority of Jericho residents and businesses do not support pedestrianisation and the restrictions it would bring, and we are far greater in number.

While collecting our data there was an opportunity for business owners to explain why they are opposed to the scheme – this was also recorded. The following statements are verbatim (and only one statement per business):

"What the hell?"

"It's simply anti business. If they really want to help they could use the money to reduce business rates."

"Seems to us that these people are sacrificing businesses for the sake of their quality of life."

"What about the people living in Jericho? That's so unfair on them".

"Gosh yes, we get loads of people coming in by car – they usually pull up outside."

"When we used to live outside Oxford, it was a lovely night out coming to Jericho And that's something people do by car – who on earth is going to use the Park and Ride for a night out? Not everyone lives in Oxford".

"I totally oppose it."

"They need to get this sorted. They've messed us around for too long. I want to get on with my life. I'm shattered with it all".

"We don't want Walton Street to be pedestrianised – that's ridiculous".

"Oh my God, we get over forty deliveries by lorry or van every week – how's that going to work?"

"Maybe these people don't want businesses at all in Jericho. Closing Walton Street has been a disaster so far"

"This is just so wrong. I wish they'd leave us alone".

"They should just reopen the road."

"Sorry, I'm trying not to laugh ... how often is it warm enough to sit outside?"

"We've got really well known and we get customers coming to us from all over and plenty want to come by car, of course they do – people are busy."

"All our businesses have been here way before them. I've been here since the 80s and it's always been a busy street."

"I've definitely noticed that customers are parking up and buying a few bits and bobs and then going back to their cars – a bit like when you go shopping to your local town."

"I've got to say it's been really great that there's been more parking in Jericho during lockdown – it's made it easier for people to come and get takeaways from us."

"I have no idea how we'd get north of Jericho to deliver."

"Does that mean we'd lose all the parking on that part of Walton Street?"

"As if we don't have enough to deal with already. This is mad."

"What, even mopeds wouldn't be allowed through to pick up takeaway deliveries?"

"Why don't they make Cornmarket the street with all the café culture – there are enough empty shops down there. We just don't have enough footfall in Jericho."

"There's already not enough parking for customers in Jericho – would they give us more parking to replace the lost spaces? It'd be pretty bad for people living in Observatory Street and Adelaide Street to lose those spaces too."

"Loads of our customers come from outside Oxford – especially in the evenings. They're just going to start going somewhere that they feel welcome. I've stopped going to the Cowley Road to eat out because it's such a nightmare if you have to go by car. They think everyone lives in Oxford – what about people in the sticks?"

"They can't know how bad it is for us with the road closed – this isn't ****ing Waltham Forest. We don't want our street pedestrianising. I'm sick of this."

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