

**Oxford Waterside Residents Association**  
**Statement for Oxford County Council Cabinet 13/10/20**

Waterside comprises 199 households, accessed via Walton Well Road. We are already a committed “active travel” neighbourhood with most residents, where physically or logistically possible, cycling or walking for journeys to the city. We support measures to reduce carbon emissions and traffic in Oxford.

Since the idea of bus gates was introduced over the Summer, a majority of residents have expressed their concern. It has been a very worrying time for those whose daily lives would be turned upside down without 24/7 exemptions. The main issues are:

- The proposed installation of a bus gate around Worcester Street would result in a lengthy, inconvenient and polluting 10-16 mile detour to access essential services, such as the station, dentists, doctors, hardware stores and supermarkets. A 5-10 minute journey will become a 25-30 minute journey at best. Waterside is the furthest location from a bus stop west of the river Cherwell in the whole city and is generally poorly served by buses. It is over a mile to a bus stop which provides access to the Botley Road.
- A significant proportion of Waterside residents are vulnerable people who rely on carers and favours from friends. Many have expressed concerns about the impact on their lives. They may not be blue badge holders but walking to the doctor on Beaumont Street is not feasible for them. Whilst asking for a favour of a lift for a 5 minute journey each way is reasonable, a 25-30 minute journey each way via the A34 is not. One respondent to our survey said it would ruin her life overnight.
- Many residents work in areas south of the city and cannot rely on public transport given complex childcare and other caring responsibilities. Workplaces include Harwell, Abingdon, Wallingford and Milton Park. Forcing more traffic onto the A34 via Pear Tree at peak times, given existing congestion, seems dangerous, polluting and disruptive.
- A number of residents have children who attend schools in other areas of the city and county. Given the poor provision of bus services in general to Waterside, public transport is not an option. School operated bus services do not serve children who attend after school clubs. Cycling is impractical with sports equipment and musical instruments.
- All Waterside residents have off-road parking and so none of our cars are registered with the council. Any potential exemption or solution would require a bespoke solution for Waterside. We must not be forgotten in the council’s plans.

We conducted a survey of our residents in August. 70% of residents would support bus gates with appropriate exemptions. Off peak exemptions only would **not** work for our community. Vulnerable residents want to shop on the Botley Road between 8 and 10, when it’s quiet and safer. Working parents need to drop children and then commute between 8 and 9. If the bus gates do proceed, then we would petition that as city centre residents we are granted 24/7 exemptions. Without these 24/7 exemptions for many Waterside residents our daily lives would be made impossible.