

Waterside residents' comments on impact of bus gates on daily living.

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Waterside is an estate of 199 houses built in 1996-9, all houses have an off-road parking space and none of our cars are registered with the council.

Located between the canal and the railway line, local public transport is a mile away, and even the discontinued PickYouUp service did not cover the estate.

Active residents are habitual walkers and users of bikes for local journeys. We would never consider using a car to go into central Oxford, but use our local shops on the Botley Road for bulky and heavy items, where the generous parking makes the short local journey very quick and easy.

We have a relatively large proportion of elderly and vulnerable residents, many cannot walk or cycle far, but on a good day can manage a 50 metre walk (so cannot qualify for a Blue Badge).

Railway journeys are facilitated by neighbourly lifts (2miles via Woodstock Road) to the station.

If a bus gate prevents access to the station and Botley road, we shall quadruple the pollution and carbon footprint as we go from 2 to 8 miles to reach our destination.

IMPACT OF CLOSURE ON OLD and VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Many residents take advantage of the quiet period between 8 and 10am to shop on the Botley Road, reducing exposure to Covid-19, while maintaining independence. Waitrose has special 8-9am opening Mon/Wed/Fri for this group. For these people every shop is heavy and bulky, as many cannot safely carry shopping by foot or on a bike.

Anxiety about catching trains would be intense, a 'lift' totalling 16 miles is a big ask of friends and neighbours, and uncertainty over journey time would add to the already fraught prospect of public travel.

Carers and other personal service providers cover several people spread across the city; it will be difficult to hang onto these low paid workers if they have to travel for longer and further between clients.

To qualify for a Blue Badge you need to be unable to walk 50metres (1/30mile).

CHILDREN

Many parents take advantage of the excellent public schools in Oxford, Abingdon and Culham. Living in central Oxford we encourage our children to walk or cycle and do not often need to use a car but, when essential, it is a quick and easy journey across town. Bus gate would add at least 12 miles to a daily drop off.

School buses are provided for some pupils, but after school clubs have no transport provision and require parents to collect.

Pupils at local schools would always walk or cycle, but on days where gym kit, musical instruments and weighty school work make walking or cycling impractical parents must collect. As we are a mile from public transport links, living in Waterside places an even heavier burden on these children.

LOCAL TRADE

The Botley Road is our local shopping destination for food, drink, building & DIY supplies, home furnishing, electronics, car accessories and much else.

We can walk and cycle to Botley for small/light materials, but heavy and bulky items require a car, this includes the regular family shopping.

There is not a single trade supplier in North Oxford, so any tradesmen working at our homes must go to the Botley Road for supplies.

If we need a 16mile round trip to get to our local shops we shall go elsewhere and the excellent retail hub will vanish.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

It is 1 mile to the nearest bus stop serving the Botley Road. Even the fittest among us cannot be expected to carry heavy shopping for one mile.

The objective of the bus gate is to encourage people to walk and cycle. We are already keen walkers and cyclists, but we are being victimised because we need a car for some of our journeys.

Give us access 24/7 to all bus gates and we will continue to walk and cycle, but will not waste Council officers' time complaining about this absurd restriction.

URGENT ACTION

Register our car registration numbers. What info do you need and how can we facilitate collection?