

Abingdon Town Council

Submission to Oxfordshire County Council in relation to temporary measures to make streets more pedestrian and cyclist friendly to assist in social distancing in response to the Covid 19 pandemic and creating safer public spaces

The town council understands that the county council is considering measures to make temporary “pop-up” improvements for pedestrians and cyclists following a government announcement that funding would be available for this purpose.

We understand that the county council is on a very tight timescale in considering potential measures and that parish councils have not been consulted. However we consider that parish councillors have a very good knowledge of their area and therefore we have consulted with our members and produced the following for consideration.

Whilst it is understood that the measures are of a temporary “pop-up” nature there are some which would merit consideration for longer-term implementation.

Abingdon Town Centre

By town centre we are referring to the whole town centre area – Bridge St, High St, Stert St, Ock St, Bath St, Vineyard, East St Helen St, West St Helen St, Lombard St, Stratton Way, Abbey Close, Market Place, Broad St and Queen St.

20 mph limit in the town centre. This will need temporary barriers at entry points and barriered cycle lanes. There is currently a huge increase in pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre but many pavements are narrow and traffic is going faster.

Most people do not need to drive through the town centre and keeping speeds down will make it safer for everyone, discourage unnecessary car travel and encourage traffic onto the peripheral road.

In most cases the provision of temporary separate cycle lanes will in itself be enough to reduce the road width and slow traffic, but in some places, like Abingdon Bridge, additional barriers might be needed to restrict road width.

Longer-term we should revisit the AbITS work and could use the ideas and modelling conducted to look to see what parts of AbITS could now be implemented.

The installation of speed humps may be considered in the longer term but these would clearly not be “pop up” measures. If they were considered then we would consider that these would not be suitable in the historic/ residential part of Abbey Close due to noise and vibration considerations in relation to the houses.

High Street and Stert Street

These are both are one-way streets where there is room to put pop up-cycle lanes with a view to assessing whether this can be made a permanent measure. We would like a long-term plan to design this area to be a modern, pleasant pedestrian friendly shopping area with raised crossing points and measures to slow motor vehicles and cyclists and would like to use this opportunity to trial this.

Lombard Street

This is part of Sustrans route 5. It is suggested that this become one-way (west to east only) for vehicles but remain two-way for cyclists. If there is space we suggest that cycle lanes are installed on both side of the street or as a contraflow if there is only space on one side. This would mean further restriction of parking on one or both sides.

Bath Street (town centre, south of Stratton Way, High Street to Stratton Way) and the Square

This is heavily used by pedestrians and cyclists. It is suggested that this section of Bath Street access is restricted for vehicles and becomes access only for vehicles and disabled parking. It is mainly used by car drivers for short stay parking and it is suggested that they could use the car parks.

It is suggested that bollards are placed on the area around war memorial to stop cars and taxis mounting the pavement and causing damage.

East St Helen St – junction with the Wharf

Suggested that vehicles are prohibited from turning left from East St Helen St towards the Wharf. At present vehicles are permitted to turn left at this location for access only but most of the people using this turn drive the wrong way over the Iron Bridge which is particularly dangerous for cyclists coming the other way. This is part of Sustrans Route 5 and is an incredibly narrow road for two-way traffic.

This restriction on vehicular traffic is also needed to enable safer social distancing in the iron bridge/Wharf area and where there is sufficient width it would allow for the creation of a cycle contraflow lane.

East St Helen St.

It is recommended that on-street parking is prohibited between Bridge Street and Lombard Street in order to create a pop up cycle contra flow for Sustrans route 5 to encourage cyclists to use the one-way system correctly and take away the official directive that on a national cycle, routes cyclists dismount and walk this stretch. This is with a view to this being a high priority to be made permanent as we are regularly contacted about this.

Once this is in place then it is suggested that the junction of Bridge Street, Stert Street, High Street and East St Helen Street is assessed with a view to implementing safety improvements. As part of this work it is suggested that a marked crossing point is created for cyclists from Abbey arch into High Street including the following signage:

1. Beware of pedestrians (for cyclists coming under the arch);
2. Beware of cycles crossing (for vehicles coming along Stert Street towards the junction).

Stratton Way

There should be a segregated cycle lane both sides to provide easier social distancing and safer cycling. There is room for this to become permanent if popular.

The Wharf and area around St Helen's churchyard

Create a one-way system for pedestrians along the wharf and around the churchyard as a temporary measure whilst social distancing is needed.

Peripheral (inner ring) Road

Pop up cycle lane Twelve Acre Drive, Abingdon There is a cycle path along this road, but it is so narrow in places that it is impossible to socially distance when either overtaking walkers or passing other cyclists coming the other way. It needs to be made wider.

Pop up cycle lane Audlett Drive, Abingdon

The shared cycle footpath is not working well; many cyclists use the road which can be dangerous due to traffic speeds but also pedestrians are intimidated by cycling on shared path. It is suggested that a proper cycle lane is created on the highway by reducing car lane width. Long term a separate cycle path is needed, there is sufficient width between road, pavement and verges to create a very suitable one.

Road and streets in the vicinity of schools

Long term we would like 20mph zones on roads with schools and all parking restrictions close to schools to be strictly enforced.

Northcourt Road Abingdon, whole length.

Dunmore, Fitzharrys schools and *Abingdon & Witney College* are all on Northcourt Road. Cars should be restricted to access only from Northcourt Road during school drop off and pick up times in order to prevent "rat running" and to make it safer for children to walk and cycle to school. Heavy vehicles should be prohibited at all times, except deliveries to the businesses.

There should be improvements to Oxford Road junction to allow safe crossing from Appleford Drive into Northcourt Road at school start/finish times.

It is suggested that there is a modal filter part way along Northcourt Road to encourage traffic to use the Dunmore Road and also a modal filter on Northcourt Lane to restrict motor vehicles to access only.

Radley Road

All parking near to *Thomas Reade, Kingfisher* and *St Edmund's* schools should be prohibited at drop off/ pick up times.

Caldecott Road

Caldecott Primary School is on this street and there is a problem with dangerous parking, vehicles blocking driveways, parking on pavements and on grass verges and people using the service road as a “rat run.” It is recommended that the following measures are implemented:

1. Restrict parking entirely from Drayton Road to Blacknall Road during school start and end periods.
2. Put bollards/fencing round all the grass verge areas so these cannot be used for parking.
3. Block access on the service roads next to the school entrance so that cars cannot use it as a rat run. Residents will be able to access it via other entry points.

Cotman Close

Thameside Primary School is on this street.

It is recommended that the following measures are implemented:

1. Restrict parking entirely during school start and end periods
2. Close off the on-street parking bay (near Preston Road) to discourage parents driving students to school. (Note that nearly all pupils live close to the school).
3. Put bollards/fencing round all the recreation area, it gets used as a car park even when children are playing there.

Conduit Road

Entrance to *Carswell Community Primary School* is on this street.

It is recommended that the following measures are implemented:

1. Place barriers to stop cars parking on the pavements.
2. Restrict parking between Ock Street and Bostock Road at school drop off and pick up times.

Faringdon Road (from the junction with Spring Road to the junction to Barrow Road).

Larkmead School and *St Helens and St Katherines* are on this stretch of road

It is recommended that parking is prohibited during school start and end periods.

Wootton Road (from Faringdon Road to Northcourt Road)

John Mason School & part of *Abingdon and Witney College* are on this stretch of road

It is recommended that parking is prohibited during school start and end periods.

St Johns Road

Our Lady's is on this stretch of road

It is recommended that parking is prohibited other than for residents during school start and end periods.

Other parts of town

Pop Up Cycle Lane, Bath Street, Abingdon

It is recommended that a pop-up cycle lane is created in Bath Street from its junctions with Stratton Way to Wootton Road. This is a key route for cycling to John Mason & Fitzharrys Schools and to Abingdon & Witney College & Abingdon School Sports Centre. It is a busy road and on the number 4 bus route but has plenty of space for a completely separate cycle lane. Narrowing road should help reduce speed.

This would mean removing parking which is normally used by visitors to the town centre who could use the town centre car parks. At present there is far less parking required than usual.

Popup Cycle Lane, Wootton Road, Whole length

It is recommended that a pop - up cycle track is created on Wootton Road from its junctions with Bath Street to the Wootton Road Roundabout, leading on to a Pop-up cycle track or barriers to widen the foot path from the Wootton Road Roundabout, Abingdon, along Wootton Road to Wootton Village.

This is a key route to schools and college as well as the Town Centre and there have been several serious accidents on this route. It requires a permanent segregated cycle track, but a temporary solution is a good opportunity to trial this.

Pop up cycle lanes Oxford Road

It is recommended that pop-up cycle lanes are created along this road. This is a main route into Abingdon centre from the north and Oxford. It is wide enough for cycle lanes and there are substantial sections with narrow footpaths making social distancing impossible. Long term there is scope to create a separate cycle way by joining up service roads.

Pop up cycle lanes Vineyard (Ab North)

There should be a segregated cycle lane both sides to provide easier social distancing and safer cycling. This will need the on street car parking in front of the garage and shops to be stopped and the road width kept narrow to reduce speeds.

Pop up cycle lanes Ock Street

This is one of the most difficult roads for cyclists within Abingdon and there should be a segregated cycle lane both sides to provide easier social distancing and safer cycling. This will require on street car parking to cease and the road width kept narrow to reduce speeds. Note that the current dashed line cycle lane is ineffective due to parked cars.

Pop up cycle lanes, Wilsham Road

This is a national cycle route, and already well used as the main cycle route from south Abingdon but very unsafe due to parked cars down the length of the river side of the road.

If the parking were stopped there could be a separate cycle lane down each side. This would be a major improvement for cyclists. Residents have complained that the parking is people going to the town centre who could use the car parks.

Create footway Caldecott Road (between St Amand Drive and Turberville Close)

One stretch of the north side of Caldecott Road has no pavement. This is problematic as to cross the road and cross back again involves going up and down a grass bank which can get very slippery. A footway would improve visibility at the junction of Turberville Close and Caldecott Road which at present causes problems and would help slow traffic approaching the blind bend on Caldecott Road close to Manor Road. The alternative would be to create safe walks up and down the grass bank which would help pedestrians but not help with problem of junction visibility or slow traffic close to a dangerous bend.

Modal filter Spring Road

This road is heavily used by school children going to the secondary schools from south Abingdon. It is recommended that the County Council look at blocking through traffic at some point on the road to make it access to the residential properties only. Has the potential to be a great walking/cycling route. The through traffic could instead use the ring road.

Pop up cycle lane Marcham Road

The cycle path ends abruptly (as so many do). Could barriers be used to lengthen it past the roundabout?

Pop up cycle lanes, Drayton Road

Drayton Road is much used by pedestrians and cyclists to and from south Abingdon. A pop-up cycle lane is recommended as it would help social distancing and reduce speeds.

Pop up cycle lanes Faringdon Road This is a key route for secondary school and college students walking and cycling between schools so should be considered a high priority. There is already a painted line cycle path each side which would be much safer with barriers. A pop-up cycle lane would be relatively straightforward to implement.

Improve cycle route North Quay

This is part of the national cycle route but the area between Wilsham Road and North Quay needs to be level. It is used by a lot of cyclists but needs improving.

Other priorities that could be done quickly.

Resurface Sustrans route 5 between Lambrick Way and Drayton Rd/ High St.
Resurface Sustrans route 5 between Abbey Meadow and Thrupp Lane. Prioritise shared Sustrans 5/footway along Abbey stream to make it safe for cyclists, pushchairs and wheelchair users.

Create safer cycle routes to Oxford, the Science area and Didcot by use of pop up cycle lanes to assess long term travel plans. Also see if any are feasible from Wootton Road, Foxcombe Road, Abingdon Road A415, Kennington Road) Bring all of Sustrans route up to a usable standard.
Clear exiting walkways and cycle ways of excess foliage and overhanging buses.
Resurface cycle ways as needed.

Additional bike racks

Suggested locations are as follows:

Replace the bike racks on High Street which were damaged and protect with a crash barrier.

More by open air pool in Abbey Meadow

Far more racks are needed on Stratton Way

All bus stops on Oxford Road to have a second rack

Bath St

Old Station Yard

Queen Street

Abingdon Town Council
22nd May 2020.