To: letters pages, Oxford Times

From: Hazel and Steve Dawe, Cowley Area Transport Group

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Dear Editor

Whilst it is understandable that city centre businesses are concerned about the introduction of bus gates, their claim that bus gates will mean ‘lost business and lost jobs’ is mistaken. Research evidence so far is that increased pedestrian footfall and increases in cycling increase local retail sales. Transport for London has identified that ‘LTNs tend to increase both walking and cycling, and there is ample evidence this leads to more use of local businesses.’ (1)

A study for Transport for London by the University of Westminster found that over 85 per cent of responding businesses said a good environment for walking, cycling, and spending time is important for business performance. (2) Experience of LTNs in Ealing showed that ‘with less traffic and safer, quieter streets, we also saw people of all ages and abilities experience the benefits of walking and cycling. This included spending more time in their local shops and connecting with their local community.’ (3)

Lots of studies in various cities have shown that business owners tend to overestimate the proportion of customers who arrive by car, and that they tend to do better when roads are safer for pedestrians and cyclists. (4)

A writer to your letters page (Oxford Times, 31/3) claims that the bus gates in Headington will cut Headington off completely from Cowley. Not so, pedestrians, cyclists and mobility scooters will finally be able to move freely between the two areas without choking on traffic fumes, being assaulted by noise and having to take care not to be run over by traffic. Both communities will be better connected for those walking and cycling, and those in mobility scooters.

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Yours faithfully

Hazel and Steve Dawe, Cowley Area Transport Group.

Notes:

1. <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/economic-benefits-of-walking-and-cycling>
2. [Healthy Streets: A Business View (tfl.gov.uk)](https://content.tfl.gov.uk/healthy-streets-a-business-view.pdf)
3. <https://www.ealing.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/15424/low_traffic_neighbourhoods_benefits_fact_sheet.pdf>
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/nov/16/mythbusters-eight-common-objections-to-ltns-and-why-they-are-wrong>