To: letters pages, Oxford Times

From: Hazel and Steve Dawe, Cowley Area Transport Group – [www.catg.org.uk](http://www.catg.org.uk)

23rd April 2023

Dear Editor,

**RETHINKING TRAFFIC**

We should rethink traffic in Oxford (Oxford Times, 13.4.2023). Traffic, from within the City or outside, blights Oxford and is part of national traffic increases which this city cannot accommodate on its existing road network. We have no choice about reducing traffic. But there is some good news: it does seem most people do not use vehicles to access shops. A thorough, recent survey of Templars Square in Cowley revealed over 70% of its users did not drive there: 50% walked; over 11% cycled; over 9% used a bus(1). This suggests a lower traffic City may well be possible with further improvements in these encouraging figures. About 30% of Oxford’s households do not have access to a car(2). Many UK cities are engaged in traffic reduction through pedestrianisation in particular (3).

Concerning commuting, using the Census: “of those who were commuting to work, 38.8% of Oxford residents aged 16 and over used active travel to do so, including 17.2% who commuted by bicycle and 21.6% by foot.”(4) Also, since the national figures suggest 17% of car journeys are under 2 miles, it is difficult to see why any able-bodied person might not walk or cycle such a distance. Small traffic reductions can make a huge difference to Oxford’s junctions which are all at or over capacity in the rush hour/school run twice each school day.

We suggest that traffic filters and more pedestrianisation should occur as quickly as possible to cut congestion, air pollution and noise. Pedestrianisation increases footfall in shopping areas; better walking and cycling routes promote health; and local businesses do deliver to homes.

Yours sincerely

Hazel and Steve Dawe

53 Bulan Road Oxford OX3 7HU – 07747 036192

Notes:

1. A recent survey concerning Templars Square re-development may be found in full at: <https://futuretemplarssquare.co.uk/what-you-told-us/>
2. See full response of County and City councils to misleading information about traffic filters: <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/2332/joint_statement_from_oxfordshire_county_council_and_oxford_city_council_on_oxford_s_traffic_filters>
3. Such as Canterbury, Norwich and York which are also places with historic central areas. See: <https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/car-free-cities-pedestrianisation-cycling-driverless-vehicles-york-oslo-birmingham-a9299856.html>
4. See: <https://oxfordnewspaper.co.uk/census-shows-most-oxford-commuters-cycle-walk-or-take-bus/#:~:text=The%20new%20Census%20data%20shows%20that%2C%20of%20those,who%20commuted%20by%20bicycle%20and%2021.6%25%20by%20foot>.