

Kidlington Parish Council

Chair's report: September 2022

The Council has spent some time in the last month on the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan consultation. See

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/central-oxon-travel-plan>.

Its most specific proposal so far is the introduction of traffic filters in the City. While these will prevent Kidlington residents from driving through the centre of Oxford, the only one we thought we could reasonably object to was that proposed for the Marston Ferry Road. This is likely to significantly increase traffic on the Ring Road between the Cutteslowe Roundabout and the Marston exit, possibly up to the Headington roundabout, creating difficulties for Kidlington residents wanting to access the hospitals as well as further afield.

Otherwise the Council is in sympathy with the long-term aims of the Travel Plan, which centre on replacing private car traffic with buses, cycling and walking: what's not to like about this with the increasing menace of climate change? But the success of the Plan depends very much on badly needed improvements to bus services. The relatively new 2/2A timetable is quite good, but there have been serious reliability issues. The 700 to Headington and the hospitals has been a vital addition since it started, but the service could be better. As regards cycling and walking, the Council has worked with Cherwell District Council to produce a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan which has been adopted by the County Council, but awaits central government funding. We need more dedicated and safe cycling lanes both within the Village and on the main road to Oxford.

Thus whilst the Council supports the long-term objectives of the Travel Term, we are concerned about the likelihood of increased congestion in the short-to-medium term, bearing in mind particularly that when the planned 4,400 new houses have been completed the population of Kidlington and adjacent parishes will increase by about 50%. The County's plans for dealing with this seem largely limited to reducing the use of private cars, but it is far from clear that this will occur sufficiently soon, and to a sufficient extent, before the population increase.

We have also received revised County plans for the Sainsburys roundabout, and are currently working on our response. At first sight these seem reasonable, with improved provision for cyclists and pedestrians, but no loss of the central island's green features.

On other green matters, we continue with our projects to increase biodiversity in our green spaces, particularly on Lyne Road Green, where there are new trees and hedging and areas set aside as a wild flower meadow. Fifteen new trees are proposed for Ron Groves Park. We are working with Cherwell and Wild Oxfordshire on educational activities, all within the framework of the Kidlington Eco Group (KEG), which acts as a source of information and signposting to a range of environmental initiatives across Kidlington. See their website at <https://kidlingtonecogroup.co.uk/>.