

Crawley Parish Council
Mrs SM Derry (Parish Clerk)
Fairview, Farm Lane
Crawley, OX29 9TL

Cllr Duncan Enright

Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy
85 Newland
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Oxon
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13 July 2021

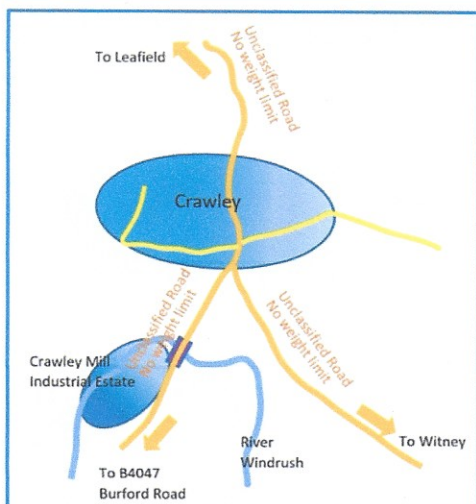
Dear Cllr Enright

Ending the Burford Experimental Traffic Restriction Order

The Parish Council in Crawley wishes to record our continuing objection to the current traffic restriction in Burford and the detrimental effects that this is having on our community in Crawley. We wrote initially to Cllr Sudbury, who was the Cabinet member with responsibility for the Burford ETRO, but we have now been advised that this matter has been transferred to your portfolio and that you will be leading the County's response at the Cabinet review of the Burford scheme on 29 July 2021. This letter has therefore been re-addressed to you; the reasons for our appeal and the contents of the letter remain unchanged. You will have an option to rescind approval of the scheme immediately and we strongly urge you to take this decisive action to stop the problems now being suffered by our community.

The grounds for our appeal are threefold:

1. Increase in HGV numbers through Crawley along roads that are inappropriate for these large vehicles.
2. Damage to the road infrastructure in Crawley.
3. Danger to Crawley residents and to visiting members of the public.



The roads in Crawley are narrow, many are single-lane with passing places, generally there are no footpaths (apart from a narrow footpath along the Dry Lane causeway from the river bridge to the centre of the village), and all have restrictions at some points that require drivers to give way to oncoming vehicles. There are no weight restrictions on the main routes through the village –

- Dry Lane – from centre to Burford Road
- Leafield Road – from centre towards Leafield
- Witney Hill – from centre to Witney.

1. Increase in HGV Numbers

The existence of a river crossing and absence of weight restrictions encourages HGV drivers to choose Crawley as their nearest alternative route when they are diverted from the A361 through Burford, despite the narrowness of the roads. We are experiencing a notable increase in HGV numbers along village roads. It was a problem that we foresaw and, when the introduction of the Burford weight restriction was being considered, Crawley PC arranged for full automated traffic counts to be carried out. We wanted to have a full set of good quality traffic data to record the traffic levels 'before Burford'. The Burford scheme specified that traffic counts should be carried out at key points to monitor the changes in HGV movements. All the chosen monitoring sites were on major roads in the region, with none in smaller communities such as Crawley. However, OCC agreed to add three more sites (Crawley, Leaffield and Swinbrook) when they carried out the monitoring exercise after the first six months of the Burford scheme. We therefore have automated traffic counts in Crawley both before and during the operation of the Burford restriction. 'Before Burford' the proportion of HGVs in traffic counts through Crawley was 2.6%. After 6 months it had increased to 4.6% - an increase of 77%. The comment in OCC's review report was:

"It is the officer's opinion that the volume of HGV vehicles at 58 per day in Leaffield and 111 in Crawley seems high for locations of this type."

The same report also notes that:

"When referring to the success criteria the data shows that overall HGV volumes at Burford when comparing 2019 with 2021 do not meet the 50% reduction criteria. The HGV traffic volume data collected in April 2019 at Burford before the ETRO was implemented showed a total volume of 542 vehicles ADT. Data collected in February 2021, after the ETRO was implemented, recorded 541 HGVs ADT. This data appears to show the ETRO has made no difference to the total volume of HGVs traversing Burford High Street."

The OCC 6-month review confirmed that there have been changes in HGV numbers around the county. The makeup of HGVs in Burford High Street has altered (more smaller and fewer large vehicles) but the overall numbers have not reduced. It appears that some of the heaviest vehicles have diverted from Burford and are using inappropriate routes such as those through Crawley. It looks like a 'lose/lose' outcome – Burford have not got what they wanted and villages like Crawley are suffering adverse consequences.



2. Damage to Road Infrastructure

Crawley's roads are being damaged by the frequent use of HGVs. The most notable areas of damage are along Dry Lane between the river bridge and the centre of the village. This section crosses the River Windrush flood plain. The road is on a slightly elevated causeway (above flood plain level) and acts as a flood retaining structure.



In wet conditions, the fields to the west of this causeway become flooded. The retained water gradually discharges back to the river through three stone culverts running under the road. The road is wide enough to allow cars to pass in opposite directions but HGVs often have to drive onto the footpath on one side, or onto the verge on the other side, to allow cars to pass. This is causing gradual degradation of the footpath and damage to the verge.



The most alarming damage is to the headwalls on the flood relief culvert, which are starting to collapse. It is likely that the culverts under the road will also be suffering damage and could collapse. This would close Dry Lane completely until emergency repairs are carried out. We believe there is a very real risk of this happening and we have alerted the County through Fix-my-Street. County Officers have visited the site and have since confirmed that repairs are now being planned. We hope that this problem can be rectified before an emergency develops.

One immediate action that could be taken would be to halt the Burford ETRO which, in our opinion, is the principal cause of the increase in HGV numbers through Crawley.

3. Danger to Pedestrians

There are no footways on Crawley's roads other than the footway across Dry Lane causeway. Residents therefore must take great care when walking around the village. Bends and narrow roads limit forward visibility adding to concerns of danger for pedestrians. The single length of footway that does exist forms part of the circular walk from Crawley to Minster Lovell. This walking route is one of the listed walks recommended by OCC and should therefore be kept in a condition that is safe for both residents and visitors.

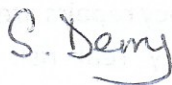
The increase in HGV numbers is alarming for walkers – cars and lorries often ride up onto the footway and walkers have to stop until safe to move on. This situation is particularly worrying for parents with children or pushchairs, and for dog walkers. We recognise that HGV drivers are skilful and act professionally and, thankfully, no-one has been hurt. But the perceived danger is great, and the situation is something that could be prevented.

For these reasons, Crawley PC believes that there is a strong case for bringing the Burford ETRO to an end. We are writing this appeal on behalf of our small community but recognise that similar problems must be happening in the whole region around Burford.

We are unable to quantify the costs associated with the detrimental effects of the Burford ETRO but, if the infrastructure damage that we can see in Crawley is typical of the damage that is being caused to other communities, the budget impact on highway maintenance in Oxfordshire must be significant. With limited funds it is likely that much of the infrastructure damage will remain and small communities will be expected to accept a degradation of their highway assets.

Trying to produce a benefit for Burford at the expense of exacerbating problems elsewhere fails to consider the overall effect of the policy outside the narrow area it is designed to benefit. That is not a fair or rational approach. We believe that Crawley is one of the communities that is suffering negative effects and we would ask you to act by revoking OCC's approval of the Burford ETRO at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



Sheena Derry, Clerk for Crawley PC

On behalf of Crawley Parish Councillors:

Colin Dingwall – Chairman

Mark McCappin

Sue Bremner-Milne

Graham Howkins

Tony Connell