

NEWSLETTER #22

The Future of Arbury Road

We are pleased to take this opportunity to bring you up to date with some recent discussions about the future of Arbury Road.

Background

When the cycle paths currently under construction on Arbury Rd are completed later this summer, they will terminate at the eastern boundary of North Cambridge Academy near Arbury Court. They will join up with the new shared-use cycle path at the side of the Arbury Court Play Area leading to Leys Ave.

The Arbury Road East Residents' Association (ARERA) represents residents living in the south-east section of the road towards the junction with Milton Rd. Although the new paths are still under construction, and there is no data available on the actual usage of the route, they are not satisfied that the dual-use path will actually prove attractive to cyclists looking for a safe route to Milton Road via the Hurst Park Estate.

The congestion due to two-way motor traffic at the south-east end is perceived to present dangers for cyclists, and since this sometimes encourages them to cycle on the pavement, then this in turn presents dangers for pedestrians. And idling engines also cause poor air quality at the junction, which makes it unattractive for cyclists and pedestrians.

ARERA have made representations to local councillors and county officers asking them to consider ways that the cycle paths could be continued down the remaining length of Arbury Road to the junction with Milton Road.

Constraints

There are technical problems to overcome. Firstly, Arbury Road at the south-east end is very narrow and there are cars parked on the

side where the shops are. Secondly, there is no frontage space for houses on that side to allow for dropped kerbs and off-road parking, so residents of those houses have no option but to park on the street.

Proposal

ARERA's proposal is to make Arbury Rd one-way for motor traffic in the north-west direction from Milton Rd junction as far as the south-east entrance to North Cambridge Academy. They claim the main benefits would be:

- more road space to permit construction of separate cycle paths and footpaths on both sides of the road to ensure safer cycling and walking.
- no changes for north-bound motor traffic going up Arbury Rd.
- no disruption to deliveries to Budgens, North Cambridge Academy, or the shops on Campkin Rd and Carlton Way.
- no disruption to the availability of car parking for the shop-side residents of Arbury Rd (although the cycle lane may need to be adjacent to the pavement with parked cars on the road side of the cycle-path).
- no 'rat-running' through the Hurst Park Estate from inbound vehicles trying to avoid the Milton Road traffic lights.

Other implications would be:

- no right turn out of Leys Rd for motor vehicles. Any south- or east-bound traffic from the estate would have to exit via Hurst Park Avenue or go north along Arbury Rd and head east via Campkin Rd and Kings Hedges Road.

ARERA have discussed these proposals with local councillors, and our County Councillor Ian Manning has taken up the task of investigating viability and whether residents have other views or proposals.

NEWSLETTER #22

Some other ideas:

Cllr Manning has also floated the idea of closing Arbury Rd entirely to motor traffic. If this were at the Milton Rd junction, it would definitely go against existing GCP plans for the re-modelling of Milton Road after more than three years of detailed consultations and design work. It remains unclear to us where this idea came from, but it would have consequences for other stakeholders and the wider traffic network. It is worth noting that this idea was not proposed by ARERA and is not currently one of their objectives.

Another alternative which has come from a HPERA committee member is to close Arbury Road to motor traffic in the vicinity of North Cambridge Academy. This would also eliminate rat-runs whilst maintaining access to Milton Road.

Parking

The problems caused by the large number of vehicles parked in Hurst Park Avenue are clear for all to see. On weekdays it has become a single carriageway street, posing access and safety issues for both cyclists and drivers and those trying to get vehicles into and out of driveways. This has been exacerbated by implementation of residents' parking in the Ascham zone and permit parking with ANPR cameras at St. Laurence's Church, and is likely to get worse still when the parking spaces on Milton Road disappear following redevelopment of the road.

We outlined some FAQs on parking schemes in a previous Newsletter #10 (March 2017) <https://hpera.co.uk/newsletters/hpera-newsletter-10.pdf>

Over to you:

Initiatives such as the ARERA one have a habit of taking root and then rapidly becoming official policy, especially if there is no reaction from residents. Therefore, it is very important that you find time to express your views.

County Councillor Ian Manning is hosting two meetings, the first an information session about potential parking schemes, and the second to discuss the ARERA proposal and parking. We strongly urge you to go along if you can, or at least to make us aware of your views.

Wednesday 17th July 18:30 - 20:00:

Drop-in session on parking schemes.

Tuesday 23rd July 18:30 - 20:00:

Arbury Road proposals and parking schemes.

Both sessions at St. Laurence's Church Hall

If you are unable to attend, please let us have your views in writing either by emailing secretary@hpera.co.uk or c/o 65 Hurst Park Avenue.

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