

# Appendix b: Windmill Drive Experimental Traffic Order

1 Objection received.

## **Objection**

I refer to the Experimental Order, made 21 August, that will shut Windmill Drive to through traffic as from 31 August. Windmill Drive has in practice been shut to traffic on a “temporary basis” since May this year, supposedly in reaction to the Covid-19 crisis. The reason given in the Experimental Order for the closure is stated to be:

“The Orders are necessary because of an increase in pedestrians and pedal cyclists using Clapham Common and Windmill Drive following restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to allow for appropriate social distancing between those pedestrians and cyclists and thereby increase general safety.”

I make the following points:

1. The closure of Windmill Drive to vehicle traffic has been proposed a number of times in the past, most recently as part of the “Quietways 5” proposal in 2015 to install new cycle routes across Clapham Common. A public consultation was held, there were a number of objections, and nothing further was heard about it until now.

**Borough Response – Local authorities were instructed to install measures, at pace, to create better conditions for social distancing, walking and cycling when the Covid-19 pandemic began. As a result, Lambeth brought forward schemes that had already been developed which were aimed at achieving the aforementioned objectives.**

## **(Objection point set aside)**

2. What public consultation was held prior to the temporary closure of Windmill Drive?

**Borough Response – All emergency services were consulted along with street notices.**

## **(Objection point set aside)**

3. What public consultation has been held prior to the introduction of the Experimental Order for the closure of Windmill Drive?

**Borough Response – The activation of the experimental traffic order is an instrument to allow for the trial to act as the consultation. Lambeth provided a dedicated email inbox for all correspondence. In addition, Lambeth commissioned community engagement specialists Street Space to conduct on the ground events as well as online meetings to gather feedback on the trial and the potential for the scheme to go permanent. You can read the full report of this work [here](#)**

## **(Objection point set aside)**

4. What public consultation will be held prior to any decision to make the Experimental closure permanent?

See response to point 3

**(Objection point set aside)**

5. What evidence have you gathered to support the contention that there are an increasing number of pedestrians and cyclists using Clapham Common and Windmill Drive as a result of Covid-19 restrictions?

Borough response – In 2021 Cycle Mode share has doubled in London – you can read the full report [here](#). Windmill Drive is a key strategic walking and cycling route and from evidence gathered in neighbouring areas we have seen increases in walking and cycling where measures have been installed to reduce local traffic during the pandemic. Lambeth will be conducting monitoring in the new year to assess the impact of the scheme.

**(Objection point set aside)**

6. Clapham Common is a relatively large area, notwithstanding the large (but not necessarily increasing) number of people who use it. The area of Windmill Drive itself will be a tiny part of the surface area of Clapham Common. On what basis do you contend that the closure of Windmill Drive will help with appropriate social distancing? Are you maintaining that people using Clapham Common now have trouble keeping 2 metres apart but that this will be solved by closing Windmill Drive? Walk down Clapham High Street and you will see people with far less distance between them than you will on Clapham Common, yet you aren't proposing to close the High Street.

Borough response - Local authorities were instructed to install measures, at pace, to create better conditions for social distancing, walking and cycling when the Covid-19 pandemic began. As a result, Lambeth brought forward schemes that had already been developed which were aimed at achieving the aforementioned objectives.

**(Objection point set aside)**

7. The reason for closing Windmill Drive (whether temporarily, experimentally or potentially permanently) is stated very clearly as being due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet we must all fervently hope that this pandemic is transient as all pandemics in the past have been. I can point you to the Black Death in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, the Great Plague of London of 1665, the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918-19, the Asian flu pandemic of 1968-69, SARS in 2003, MERS in 2013-14 and others. All eventually died out, mutated or otherwise went away. So what is the reason for closing a road in response to a temporary phenomenon?

Borough response – as we enter the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic we are still some way off exiting it. Therefore, the borough still considers the COVID-19 pandemic element of this scheme a pertinent one.

**(Objection point set aside)**

8. You adduce a subsidiary reason for closing Windmill Drive, or rather state it is a corollary “thereby increase[ing] general safety.” If your real reason for seeking to close Windmill Drive is a contention that road traffic is dangerous and that safety will be enhanced by closing roads, why stop at Windmill Drive? Surely you should be seeking to close roads that carry a far higher number of vehicles, like say the South Circular Road? When the last attempt was made to close Windmill Drive in 2015, it was described as a “rat run” which is a pejorative misnomer. Motorists seeking the quickest or shortest route between two points will use the shortest or least busy roads. What is gained by forcing them to use longer or more congested

routes, with their engines pumping out more emissions than if they can get where they want to go more quickly?

Borough response – Windmill Drive is a key strategic walking and cycling route and from evidence gathered in neighbouring areas we have seen increases in walking and cycling where measures have been installed to reduce local traffic. Lambeth will be conducting monitoring in the new year to assess the impact of the scheme on local traffic.

**(Objection point set aside)**

9. I put it to you that Lambeth Council has a long-standing ambition to close Windmill Drive, dispense with the free parking along it (probably the only such in the whole of the borough) and deprive residents who don't live close enough to walk or cycle there (or who are physically impaired) the opportunity to drive there and enjoy the wonderful open spaces of the Common. To use Covid-19 as the rationale for doing it is completely incoherent.

**Noted**

10. May I suggest that if Lambeth Council wants to put forward a proposal to close Windmill Drive permanently that it states its real reason(s) and then conducts a wide-ranging and objective consultation to see what the residents of the borough actually think about it.

**Noted**