

Report of the Parking & Traffic Working Party: 28.11.16

The Working party met on meeting 14th. November 2016
Present: Cllr. Peter Cornford, Cllr. Peter Crathorne, Graham Hindley.
Apologies from Sue Osborne and Cllr. David Broadbent.

1. A general Recap on Presentation to Town on 31st. October

Over 100 residents gathered in the Memorial Hall and took part in a JPC led discussion about two crucial issues facing residents.

The majority of discussion arose from a presentation of the parish council's working party on Traffic and Parking. Nearly half of the attendees took the opportunity to record their views.

27 disagreed with a breach of the Greenbelt while 8 were in agreement. 24 people stated they were against a Multi-storey Car Park at the Medical Centre and 5 thought this was an idea worthy of investigation. A number of submissions were eliminated as being inconclusive. A copy of all comments and the straw poll have been kept and will be available at the meeting for inspection if requested.

Both Peter Cornford and I very much appreciated the attention given to these topics and were encouraged by the relaxed and friendly discussion that took place. Contributors had clearly thought a great deal about the issues that concerned them and many good suggestions worthy of further investigation were made.

Further comments were received by email are attached as an appendix.

3. The working party considered the results of 'Straw pole survey' and concluded that without exceptional measures the continuing car parking issues would not be resolved. They considered that piecemeal action at the Croft and Medical Centre Car parks would eventually reduce future business viability for Henley without additional car park provision. The WP recommend that the council continue to pursue the suggestion that, to resolve parking issues only, an exception be made to the breach of the green belt as there are no known acceptable solutions providing long term parking in sufficient numbers within the green belt. Given the challenge this will present the WP recommends that this idea is discussed for a further month and a decision made at the December meeting.

4. The WP is seeking authorization to continue discussions with the relevant authorities for better car park control and signing, many more yellow lines, Kerb Lines for no loading, full time traffic enforcement officers 6 days a week across all parking areas.

5. The WP seeks authorisation to arrange meetings with OneStop and Co-op senior management about how they see things and to encourage them to work with us on possible solutions.

6. The WP seeks authorisation for a meeting with WCC's Civil Enforcement People – Adrian Purchase and Gary Palmer and Peter Cornford, Bill and Gill to explore the legal position of enforcement.

7. The WP seeks authorization for a meeting with WCC Highways to suggest 20 mph speed limit, their view on the council purchasing and maintain their own speed cameras after speed check has taken place and reported.

8. The WP seeks authorization for a meeting with Vicky Mumford (WCC's Principal Transport Planner) and Govia and Abellio (franchise bidders – October 2107) the decision on the franchise will be made in June 2017.

9. The WP seeks authorization to write to all business who registered with us to form a Business Forum in Henley as a consulting agency for car parking to ensure that Henley remains an attractive place to businesses thus maintaining the delicate balance for local shops and services bringing ultimate benefit to residents.

10. Community Speedwatch was suggested and the WP recommend rejection as an unsustainable solution. The WP prefer installation of Speed cameras and a 20 MPH limit on the High Street.

11. Restaurant Parking project previously agreed should be delayed as the WP has taken on a huge workload of the above recommendations are approved.

12. Primary School Parking has raised a problem with an inexplicable change to the pupils' transport. For many years a minibus has been used to transport 4 children to outlying villages. This has been changed to a variety of coaches usually 40 seater. This is causing immense problems for traffic at the end and beginning of school. The School and parents have tried to resolve this but have had no satisfactory answer from the transport authorities. The parents and school have asked for our help to have a minibus to transport the children reducing the problem and danger for all concerned.

13. Make up of the Working Party ~ CLLR. Crathorne has indicated he wish to be relived of his duties to the WP therefore a new councillor will need to be appointed councilors should contact the chairman if they are prepared to join this WP.

It is resolved that the Reports of the T&PWP be received and reviewed until the next meeting of the council in December when decisions will be made. In addition it is resolved that the council will do all it can to obtain a safe and sensible resolution to the traffic problem outlined in this report at the primary schools.

APPENDICES:

Comments by R R

1. I totally agree with your comment that the car parking issue for the town must be considered in the whole rather than piecemeal - even if the overall plan takes a number of years to come to fruition.

2. You came up with a requirement for an extremely large number of additional spaces - over 150, I think. Before any further car parks are considered, especially one in the green belt, further detailed research needs to be undertaken, as suggested by Bob Morgan. This research needs to look at the usage of each car park together with the business and retail needs of the community.

A) The Croft - there are about 45 spaces plus those allocated to specific businesses. The first area of research should determine how many of those 45 should be allocated to short stay parking (e.g. Less than one hour) to allow shoppers to pop into any of the local shops. The rest could then be allocated to full long term parking which could be used by businesses. I notice that the Co-op have four spaces dedicated to staff - these are not always used. Perhaps the Co-op could consider reallocating some, or all, of them to their customers.

B) The Medical Centre. there appeared to be total opposition to converting that car park into a multi-storey car park. There is also opposition to such a plan from the Medical Centre itself. The allocation of a number of spaces to the Medical Centre shows how a single car park can be used for both short stay and long stay usage. One option for that car park could be to move the play area to behind the properties adjacent to the car park, thereby increasing the capacity by a few spaces.

C) The Railway Station Car Park. Over the past two weeks I have been observing the utilisation of that car park. Although on most work days it is heavily used, I have **never** seen it completely full. Last Friday it was only about 60% utilised. So I am struggling to understand why Network Rail think they want additional spaces.. I thought that the suggestion at the meeting to remove the station buildings and thereby increasing its capacity was extremely valid, despite being dismissed out of hand by Peter. The excuse that we would loose the canopy is not really valid, after all the north side platform does not have one. Erecting addition shelters would be more than adequate. By careful planning I'm sure Network Rail could get an extra 10-20 spaces in the existing car park. I also thought that as a commercial organisation it was completely wrong of Network Rail to say they wanted additional spaces to upgrade Henley to a 'mini-hub' and then say that has no money to give to such a project. After all they already have two Parkway Stations - Warwick and Stratford. That should be more than sufficient.

Ginny M

After your long and detailed report, which must have taken hours and hours to prepare, the Chairman did say we could make comments, but I felt the meeting was already very very long!! So here are just a couple of comments which I occurred to me. 20 mph was mentioned at one point, but as a resident of High Street and frequently being nearly dislodged by speeding vehicles, I would like to suggest concentrating on measures to make 30 mph, as this is ignored many times especially at the bottom and top of the High Street when motorists put their foot down after the natural slowing at the centre. I believe Hampton in Arden have trained volunteers to use speed guns and Wootton seem to have had some success slowing people as they approach the centre of the village. 20 mph would drive everyone mad!

In some way, heaven knows how, the Croft carpark should be mainly for shoppers as that was its function, not as an all day business carpark. When it becomes a pay park, perhaps shoppers should have 1 hour free. Of course some of the residents of High Street have to use it as when carpark was built, their ability to park behind was taken away.

On the High Street, parking should be free or we shall never have visitors and tourists dropping in, but could it be 3 hours instead of 2 before you have to move, as 2 hours is just not enough for long hair do or lunch! (A request from a Hairdresser, though now no market, there usually seem places on Prince Harry Road car park.

The Golf Car Park should be advertised on line on your website, everywhere possible. It seems far away, but I timed paying and walking to Market Cross, and it was only 10 minutes.

Finally, everyone fusses about the parking outside Co-op etc. But those of us who live nearby would love the wardens or whoever to concentrate on not parking on the pedestrian crossing. Now that is dangerous, when their rear wheels are over the zig zags and even over the actual studs of the crossing, and when they reverse to pull out, woe betide if you are actually crossing at the time!! I

believe 3 points on licence for parking on white zig zags but I have never seen with police or warden stopping them.

D) Northern Car Park. I have no idea why the council suggested car park charges for its usage.. It seems to me that rather than go to the expense of yet another car park all efforts, be it at Parish or District level, must be made to ensure that this car park is converted into a free car park to ensure its full utilisation.

E) the suggested Bear Lane car park. As was stated at the meeting the NDP clearly showed that over 90% of the residents DO NOT WANT THE GREEN BELT DEVELOPED. Your own straw poll at the meeting showed that over 80% of the people who put in a slip of paper did not want to develop the Green Belt. This is not the view of one or two people who may be directly affected, but it's the view of the entire town. So the sooner this idea, along with any other developments to the west of the railway line, is dropped the better for everyone.

One regular complaint with regard to the Northern Car Park is that its too far away, So I decided to walk from the proposed location of the Station Car Park to the High Street/Station Road junction and then from that junction to the Northern Car Park. The former is 0.28m and it took me 6 minutes and the later was 0.26m and took 5 minutes. You can question my decision for choosing that particular junction but it appears that the relative distances from each car park is marginal.

This exercise, I believe, just helps to emphasise the need to ensure full utilisation is made of the Northern Car Park.

F) On-street Parking - is it time to revisit the areas that are permit only parking zones. If any of these can be converted, or partially converted to all day parking, would this help.

G) Business Sharing Parking. I thought this was a great idea and should be explored further. Perhaps it could be extended to allow residents to park in the same areas overnight and at weekends.

Other traffic issues

A) the High Street. Can I suggest that the area from, say, the Heritage Centre to Station Road is reduced to 20 miles an hour. This should help to get people to slow down as they pass through the main shopping area. Perhaps speed display boards could be erected to flash at offending motorists. I agree with the point to prevent people from stopping outside One Stop and the Co-op, but this should be done at the same time as allocating short stay spaces in the Croft car park

B) Blackford Hill. Move the 30mph sign to the top of the hill by Edge Lane, to attempt to slow down the traffic at an earlier point as it approaches the town.. Again put up flash boards to highlight the speed of vehicles. Reduce the speed to 20mph at the start and end of the school day. One point for consideration is a scheme that used in Portugal. They use traffic lights to actual stop the traffic. So if a vehicle is going over the designated speed limit, the lights turn to red, everything stops and then they turn back to green. The drivers soon learn that if you keep below the speed limit the lights stay green! Just a thought.

C) Station Road. As everyone knows a number of people park their cars down the hill from the station. The vast majority are using this area as it is relatively close to the High Street. The number of cars parked on Station Road does not appear to relate to the number of spaces available in the Station Car Park. Can I suggest that double yellow lines are put on the bend near the Station entrance to prevent people parking on a dangerous area.

So I'm sorry to have gone on a bit. I will be forwarding these notes to the NDP Committee for our next meeting, which unfortunately I cannot make. Thanks for reading my notes, I hope they are of some use with your extremely difficult job.

Cllr. John Garner submitted these notes a copy of documents produced for Snitterfield.

*Please note: This document has been compiled by a Neighbourhood Watch Beat Chairman, based on personal experiences of putting together a **Community Speed Aware scheme** in his area. The content has been verified by the police and could be considered as best practice.*

There are many stages and activities in setting up a Community Speed Aware scheme in your area.

In the following pages, I have attempted to set out the key activities within each of their consecutive stages.

GATHER VOLUNTEERS

In order to run a scheme, each area needs at least six local volunteers but I would suggest you aim for a minimum of 10 (to allow for subsequent drop outs for various reasons). You should briefly explain the following processes they will have to go through in order to use the speed gun for monitoring speeding vehicles. Once you have confirmed your volunteers you can plan the next stage.

CONFIRM LOCATIONS

Your local PC should confirm appropriate locations nearby for

1. speed monitoring – appropriate local speed monitoring positions that have been checked and approved by the police
2. Signage – unlike operations carried out by the police, speed monitoring operations carried out under the Speed Aware scheme require that you erect specific signs some distance from the speed monitoring position in both directions warning drivers that Speed Aware monitoring is being carried out ahead. (Although this seems like you're giving the game away, the idea is to slow drivers down rather than catch them in the act of speeding – it certainly reduces speeders to those who are not taking due care and attention.)

3. Pre-monitoring speed gun calibration check – this is a fixed distance that is measured out (perhaps during the initial training session) and marked up with a yellow target spot, e.g. on a wall or tree across a local hall car park.

SECURITY VETTING AND AUTHORISATION

Before being allowed to attend formal speed gun training, each volunteer must first complete and submit a vetting form to the police (even if they already have other security clearance).

Police vetting forms are available from your local police or PCSO from the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

You may want to hand over the forms and get them completed and signed in a formal get together meeting as this will help your volunteers get to know one another and feel like they are part of a team that will be working together for a common goal. The meeting would ideally take place near to the target monitoring locations where possible.

Completed and signed vetting forms will need to be handed to your police contact to arrange sign off within their internal security approval process before volunteers can attend speed gun training.

CONFIRM TOOLS/EQUIPMENT/CLOTHING FOR TRAINING

The training team (or your local PC) should provide you with the following on or before the training day/s:

- A speed gun
- High visibility jackets
- Signage
- Advice on sign placement

SPEED GUN TRAINING

Where possible, it's best if your speed gun training takes place near to the speed gun calibration check point and key target location.

Speed training is carried out by a specialist police team. The team must be booked in good time because they train the police as well as volunteers so lead times may be long. Bear in mind that the trainers do not offer training sessions outside of normal working hours.

Speed training covers the technology, considerations, test and use of the speed gun, and speed reporting form completion, ending with a practical session where volunteers try out the speed gun distance check and vehicle speed monitoring under supervision until they are happy with the equipment and best practice.

It is advisable to ensure volunteers make notes throughout the training session because there will be a written test at the end of the theory sections. Volunteers that pass this test and show they can use the speed gun during the practical session will receive their own personal certificate confirming they have successfully completed the course.

A few weeks after all training sessions have been completed, certificates will be printed and sent to the organiser for onward distribution to the volunteers.

SCHEDULE MONITORING

Monitoring is best carried out with a minimum team of three and the photo on the first page of this document shows monitoring being carried out by a team with the following roles:

1. gun operator (checking speed of vehicles and telling team of speeders)
2. form filler (logging registration number and supporting details of speeders)
3. marshal (ensuring all of the team are safe and operating within police guidelines)

Volunteers can switch roles if they want to, even during the same monitoring session, however only volunteers that have had official training should operate the speed gun.

Before scheduling initial speed checks, you need to ask all of your volunteers to confirm the following:

1. Which of the above roles (one or more) would you be happy to fulfill in a team?
2. When would you be available to participate in a team?
3. If there is anyone you particularly want to (or don't want to) team up with?
4. (If there are multiple monitoring locations ...) Which locations are you happy to work from or prefer to work from?

PREPARE FOR A MONITORING SESSION

Before setting off:

Gather the team together and go through everything you need - speed gun, signage, pens, rigid form holder, Check Recording Sheets, monitoring advice sheets (in case a driver approaches you).

Discuss and agree/confirm which person within the team will (initially) carry out each of the three required roles – see earlier descriptions and photo on first page. Remember that volunteers can switch roles if they want to, even during the same monitoring session, (however those that have not yet had the speed gun training can only carry out the form filling role).

Put on your High Visibility jackets (and appropriate clothing so that you don't get too hot or cold).

Carry out a speed gun calibration check against the fixed distance (measured out and marked up with a yellow target spot during the initial training session).

Before monitoring commences, the Marshall should ensure

1. the weather is suitable (not too foggy or dark)
2. roles are established
3. all participants have the right equipment, forms, pens, folders, etc.
4. gun has been distance checked
5. approved speed monitoring location is being used
6. Speed Aware Signage has been safely erected in both directions at the appropriate distance from the speed monitoring location
7. all the team are standing in a safe place not too close to the road
8. gun operating position is correct
9. gun operators are using the correct angles in both directions.

START MONITORING!

AFTER EACH MONITORING SESSION

Marshall

1. thanks the team for their participation
2. collects all completed forms
3. takes any feedback, e.g. anything that could improve the process
4. gathers and puts away everything needed for a subsequent session - speed gun, signage, pens, rigid form holder, Check Recording Sheets, monitoring advice sheet, etc.
5. delivers to the police or arranges collection of all completed forms (and return of equipment if loaned)

Comments by G B

1 The very precise figure of 177 parking additional parking spaces requires considerable qualification – the methodology by which it was calculated, the time scale over which it applies, and the source and reliability of the data used.

2 I understand the need to ensure the Business community continues to thrive in Henley but should this be achieved to the detriment of Residents - there has to be some compromise which does not impinge on the quality of life for the people who have paid a premium to live here.

3 I am not sure that car parking on the other side of the railway track would ever be used - people will always park as near as they can to the place they work, live or wish to visit.

4 I am still not sure why Chiltern cannot be approached to remove the old derelict building - preserving the canopy - but providing the town with much needed additional parking to ensure parking on Brook End Drive is eliminated. The building won't be renovated because there is no parking - so what is the point of keeping it - all that will happen is that it will become even more derelict or maintained at its present condition at a cost to the owners. The problem will be exacerbated if Henley does become a small hub.

5 Non- rail users could be charged to park at the Railway Station. All other Railway Stations charge for parking - why not Henley?

6 The line of the railway is a very specific boundary for the Green Belt and any suggestion of breaching such a well defined limit is quite unacceptable, particularly for a use which would inevitably attract further development. Planning legislation makes it quite clear that any development within the Green Belt, however trivial, must be justified by "Very Special Circumstances" and it is generally acknowledged that a very high bar is set for this criteria to be reached – and there are many precedents where this high bar has not been reached, ever after Appeal or reference to the High Court. It is unthinkable that such a proposal from those responsible for Stewardship of the district should even contemplate such a proposal.

7 Railings outside One Stop, Co-op etc may prevent the odd car being parked but lazy people will always find a way round any obstructions. There must be an opening in the railings to permit deliveries and there is no conceivable mechanism by which those parking illegally can be prevented from using the same opening.

8 As an aside I am sure that One-Stop etc will object the proposals proceed. On the basis that the proposals are to assist Businesses, it seems strange that part of the overall proposal seems designed to inconvenience customers of such a Business.

9 Why can't you charge a nominal sum for parking in the town? Residents could be given "x" number of free parking tokens to allow them to park.

10 I believe that most people who live in Henley walk to the shops etc - they do not need car parking in the town.

11 The car parking sites in the town could be surveyed to see if they could be made more user- friendly and allow a few extra places - i.e. remove the brick walls in the Croft, make an egress point separate from the ingress point in the Medical car park, tidy-up the parking behind One -Stop. Are there any Skips etc that could be removed? - Sort out the issues with the parking at the Golf Club - you know there is a problem so tackle the issue. Look at parking behind the pubs to see if any of them will allow some parking during the day, Sort out the signage - don't just put up additional signs - make the signage work.

12 Will any decisions made by the JPC be accepted as Supplementary Planning by SDC - this did not happen with either the Village Design Statement or the Town Plan - both of which I was heavily involved with. So in the end will it have any value?