

Charlbury Town Council

TRAFFIC COMMITTEE MEETING held on Wednesday 17th January 2024 at 8pm in the Green Room, Memorial Hall, Charlbury

Present: Cllrs Gareth Epps (in the chair), Frances Mortimer, James Styring, Liz Reason (late arrival), County Cllr Liz Leffman (late arrival), District Councillor Andy Graham, **Town Clerk:** Lisa Wilkinson, 18 members of public.

Gareth Epps explained rules for committee meetings:

- members of the public may only speak during public time.
- the traffic committee makes recommendations (see in **bold** below) to the Town Council rather than decisions in its own right.

1. To receive Apologies for Absence

None were received.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest

None were received.

3. Public time

This was taken in two parts to enable Liz Leffman to be present for item 8:

Public time part 1:

Park Street is unprotected from speeding traffic which affects walkers and pre-school children. Poor quality of pavement is also an issue.

4. Update on Speedwatch initiative

No data has been received from the Speedwatch co-ordinator.

Recommend: volunteers are recruited to help with this initiative

5. To note installation of Zebra crossing from 5th February

Measures put in place to help reduce delays and stop access through Crawborough:

- Site visit with OCC has been requested.
- All neighbours in the immediate vicinity have received a notice through their door.
- 'No Through Traffic Residents Only' signs to be placed at each end of Crawborough.

6. Speeds on Park Street

A request for a build-out/speed calming has been received. Vehicle counting software is currently being used there as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) being drawn up in conjunction with the County Council. The Speed Indicator Device will be located there to further monitor speeds before any decision is made about speed calming.

Recommend: to seek suggestions for traffic calming from residents and bus companies amongst others.

7. Fawler Road speed limit

Gareth Epps raised concern about the 30mph speed limit not being implemented on Fawler Road (after the 20mph limit which is 135 metres long). OCC has stated that traffic management officers did not consider that the predominately rural and open environment beyond this point would be suitable for either an extended 20-mph or a 30-mph speed limit and the Cabinet Member agreed with this decision. OCC has offered to install reflective bollards on the bend instead.

Recommend: to accept the installation of bollards and to keep the matter of a 30mph limit under review.

8. To consider town centre parking issues

Public time part 2:

Members of public requested a residents' parking scheme; predominantly needed on Dyers Hill/Church Lane and Church Street.

Issues that reduce parking for residents include:

- Station users are parking in town instead of in the station car park.
- Opening of two new restaurants and re-opening of two pubs has resulted in increase of visitors to Charlbury.
- Lack of alternative visitor car parks
- Informal parking arrangement on Dyers Hill is not working.

Other members of public spoke about the lack of parking available in Charlbury.

Concern was raised about:

- not being able to park anywhere near homes.
- possibility of losing parking spaces especially during tourist season e.g. at the Bull.
- the Bell car park not being signposted or used by its staff.
- Police called to inconsiderate parking at the Bull.

Suggestions to solve the parking issue included:

- Residents' parking scheme (or zone).
- Creating a car park in town
- Diagonal parking in some places
- Residents' parking but in tandem with two hours visitors' parking (whilst the space may be empty during the day).
- Reconfiguring Spendlove car park to create more spaces.

Several items of correspondence have also been received from residents about parking issues in town (including a request not to implement a parking zone). These were summarised by Gareth Epps. See Appendix 1 for full text of correspondence.

Public time closed.

District Councillor Andy Graham was asked to speak as WODC is responsible for the majority of Spendlove car park and planning issues (such as the Bull car park). He reported:

- He has spoken to manager of the Bell and asked him to flag their car park on the website.
- Summer will cause more parking problems when the Bull are holding outdoor activities.
- He and an enforcement officer have met with The Bull management. WODC will facilitate and support the Bull as a business but it is essential that the Bull applies for planning permission correctly, as has not been done previously.
- Spendlove car park can be reviewed and data collected to decide how to reconfigure the car park.

County Councillor Liz Leffman was asked to speak as the County Council is responsible for parking enforcement and Highways. She reported:

- The contract for parking enforcement has been transferred to OCC (from WODC). Unfortunately, information about the informal parking agreement on Dyers Hill was not transferred with the result that some residents' cars were ticketed.
- A whole town discussion is needed to look at a residents' parking scheme.
- A meeting is being held with GWR on 25th January as part of the Community Rail Partnership with the aim to work out what is best for local stations. Cllr Leffman can ask if there is any possibility of another layer of parking at the station.

- She has previously been told that a shuttle bus will not be considered by GWR but she will request it again.

Cllr James Styring summarised his paper and talked about longer-term measures to reduce car use such as:

- using car sharing schemes such as Hiyacar
- businesses could be marketing themselves as near a train station.

Cllr Frances Mortimer explained how the Journeys team has been working on reducing the need for households to have a second car by giving people other options (improved cycling and walking routes, borrow the e-bike scheme, car sharing schemes, promotion of bus travel).

County Cllr Liz Leffman also encouraged people to travel in different ways i.e. cycling to the station.

Summary by the chair of the committee:

Clear change is necessary. We need to reduce demand where we can and get cars where they should be i.e. in private car parks. We need to look at how to provide the town with options such as how to create a parking zone, where does it cover, what the problems with boundaries of a zone would be etc.

Next steps:

A Working Group to be set up to:

- start gathering data and form a holistic plan.
- work with businesses to promote public transport especially during the summer.

Liz Leffman will request regular visits by a traffic enforcement officer to the centre of town.

Recommendations:

- Engage with businesses to encourage active travel and car sharing.
- Engage with the surgery.
- Research viability of station shuttle bus if funding can be identified.
- Talk to cricket club and bowls club about use of their car parking space during the tourist season.
- Review of Spendlove Centre parking.
- Set up a working party to investigate if there is demand for a controlled parking zone.
- Request any available (traffic) data from the active travel officer working on the LCWIP.
- Investigate potential car park sites.

All **recommendations** to be taken to Town Council meeting on 24th January.

Meeting closed: 21.30.

Appendix 1

Correspondence

1. Dyers Hill resident:

Parking in Charlbury is not a new concern but it was raised again recently by myself with support from my fellow residents on Dyers Hill. The situation has significantly worsened since the hand over to OCC and following recent developments in Charlbury.

Residents of Dyers Hill are not alone in their parking difficulties but as the residential road closest to the station and a direct route into Charlbury, it is most definitely a problem area.

Causes of increased traffic / parking issues on Dyers Hill:

- The OCC 'are unable' to operate the parking scheme that was put in place c. 20 years ago, following full resident consultation.
- The train station car park is costly and has an inadequate capacity.
- There is a distinct lack of alternative visitor car parks in Charlbury. (The Co-op car park is also hugely insufficient)
- With the Bell and Bull reopening, (both with significant media coverage) and two new restaurants opening in Charlbury centre, an increase in visitors has resulted.
- There are other possible contributing factors such as an increase in multi vehicle households, an increase in home working by residents and an increase in holiday rentals which may all contribute to more cars parked on our streets which require better management.
 - It has also been noted by residents that the visibility of the yellow lines and the clearance of gutters/gullies (where fallen leaves cover the lines) is not well managed causing further parking issues.

Consequences:

- Available parking is used by visitors, (often vehicles are left for long periods) without any management.
- There is no parking available for residents, particularly at peak times and in good weather.
- Residents are forced to either park far away from their house, exacerbating issues in other roads in Charlbury. Or they may have no choice but to park wholly or partly on a double yellow, incurring parking fines from the OCC.
- Residents are reluctant to use their vehicles to go out for fear of not being able to park on their return.

History

- c. 20 years ago, residents on Dyers Hill and surrounding roads, campaigned heavily for something to be done to address the parking situation for residents.
- Following full consultation with all residents, a scheme was implemented whereby the WOCC would prevent visitors from parking on the single yellow lines by enforcing the 12-1pm no parking restriction and collected residents registration numbers to ensure they were not affected by this enforcement.
- The scheme was never reviewed (as planned) and since the handover to OCC it has been abandoned without alternative.
- Charlbury town council has no power to provide residents parking and the OCC is only empowered to enforce, not manage, parking restrictions. This leaves the responsibility with WOCC whom historically said they did not support residents parking schemes 'as policy' but this appears to have changed in recent years.

Clearly some management of the road needs to be implemented that is both enforceable and beneficial to residents. Parking permits have been suggested with support from the majority of residents on Dyers Hill that have joined the recent conversation on the understanding there would be additional permit costs. The original scheme put back in place would also be better than the current situation but it is likely to still be an insufficient deterrent as visitors can still use the road to park during most of the day.

2. Dyers Hill resident:

I have some experience of implementing RPZs. People are typically very split, with some liking the idea of additional restrictions and some wanting to preserve the status quo. Local businesses, tradepeople and station users will also have a voice in any consultation, so it's not just down to what residents want to happen. Whilst people tend to complain about the additional cost, in reality it's minimal – in Woodstock it's just £65/year, or less than 18p/day. An RPZ won't guarantee a parking space, but it significantly increases the chance of being able to get one. The

permit and PCN revenue also provides welcome additional funding for the local authority.

There are approx. 42 on street parking spaces on Dyers Hill and Church Lane for (I think) 18 households without any form of garage or off-street parking space. This equates to just under 2.5 spaces per household, in line with national averages for households in rural areas. Factoring in commuters to local businesses, visitors and tradespeople (who will all also be eligible for some form of permit), there should still be plenty of spaces for everyone if station users are 'pushed' back down to the car park.

Bear in mind however that most RPZs are limited to two permits per household, so larger households may lose out. And households with garages and off-street parking spaces who currently prefer the ease of parking on street may receive fewer/no permits (although they will be able to park on any Keep Clear markings in front of their driveways).

I would also like to understand what OCC are doing to improve their currently poor record for maintaining the lining and signing, gullies, verges, etc. And what the plan is for on-street electric vehicle charging (or implementing approved methods for cables to cross footways), as EV adoption rates are already approaching one in five of all new cars sold.

3. Dyers Hill resident:

I would like to just reiterate that the key concern is not necessarily the ticketing of residents by the OCC, but the lack of available parking for residents due the lack of management on the road/in Charlbury.

On Dyers Hill residents are being forced to park slightly, partially or wholly on double yellow lines which is a ticketable offence under any formal or informal parking arrangements that have been put in place. I completely understand that double yellow lines are there to highlight hazardous zones, however if you are left with no choice because all the single yellow line areas are full from visitor parking, what can you do?

This is why a sensible parking scheme for residents needs to be put in place, and why the non-ticketing of residents on single yellow lines is not a sufficient solution.

4. Church Street resident:

He wanted to express his views, as he did not want it to be thought that all Church Street residents want parking permits. He certainly does not.

He has lived in Church Street for 25 years. He has a car. He has, and is, flexible re parking and parks where he can find a space.

BUT he is firmly against the idea of residents permits or other parking restrictions as he believes that any such scheme would create more problems than it solves.

Depending on how any scheme evolved, he is of the view that it would not enhance Church Street which is a beautiful street as:

- 1 It would involve more signage - and there is more than enough signage already, and
- 2 Depending on the scheme - if potentially it involved diagonal parking spaces (to ensure maximum use of space) then that would narrow the street and create other issues.

He also believes that any scheme would result in an increase in arguments between residents and others e.g. visitors.

5. Church St resident:

Some issues regarding parking / traffic:

- We have lived at Market House, Church Street for 11 years and never has it been so difficult to park, and we have only one car. 9 times out of 10 (or worse) we can't park on any nearby streets let alone on Church Street.
- We regularly have to park on Sandford Rise - 1/3 mile from our home - due to zero spaces being available
- Since the Bell and Bull have changed hands it has become a lot worse:
 - Bell staff and guests regularly park on the street outside our house when their car park is mostly empty, v frustrating and just unnecessary
 - Some clear signage for guests to know there is large car park at the rear would help a lot - there is no signage at present
 - Staff shouldn't be parking on church street if there is ample space in their car park
 - The Bull customers (mainly) park on the double yellows at the top of Church Street every day, it's terrible in the evenings and especially at weekends. This blocks buses, traffic and just shows little concern for residents - the Bull's car park is mainly used for function purposes, they should provide at least some parking for their customers and take some responsibility for this issue
 - Blocked buses - they often hold their horns for minutes at a time and late at night - very loud and wakes us / our son up.
 - Emergency vehicles - double yellow parking can also block emergency vehicle access to the centre of Charlbury
- Train users park on church street to avoid station car park fees
- Speeding - I regularly have to ask cars to slow down on Park Street and Church Street, some traffic calming measures are much needed

This is all a real concern, there clearly is far from adequate parking for residents of the centre of Charlbury, especially considering all the great new businesses opening up (which we fully support! Chloes etc) and growing popularity of our town.