

Subject:	Parking strategy
From:	Liz Reason
Date:	23 August 2024
For action : comment upon and approve in principle OCC's draft residents' parking scheme so that it can be consulted upon in September.	
Summary of decisions or actions requested (including timing): To accept OCC's proposed residents' parking scheme so that it can go to consultation in September. To comment upon and agree other proposed elements of the parking strategy	
Financial implications: [please explain any costs associated with decisions or actions, and whether these have already been budgeted for]	

The council held a meeting for the public to raise their concerns about parking in the town centre on 17th January 2024. The council agreed to develop a parking strategy with the aim of improving the situation for residents' parking as the first priority.

Developing the strategy has involved a range of different activities:

- i) Engaging with OCC to draft proposals for a residents' parking scheme similar to the one introduced recently in Woodstock.
- ii) Interviewing local businesses whom we know or suspect generate significant demand for parking, either from their own staff, or for their customers.
- iii) Establishing whether there are alternative car parks which could be used by those who work in town, those who are customers for local services such as the pubs and nursery, or those who meet in Charlbury as the setting off point for walks.
- iv) Talking to WODC about how the current car park is used and whether changes could be made to the existing 12-hour parking limit.

OCC residents' parking proposals

These cover Dyers Hill, Market Street, Church Lane, Church Street, Park Street, Thames Street, Nine Acres Lane and Sheep Street.

Councillors have been invited to comment on these draft proposals and if there are questions, it would be useful if Lisa could seek answers in the meantime. If members approve these proposals at the August meeting, OCC will launch a consultation during September. Those could lead to changes in the proposals, with implementation in January 2025. There will be a few months of review and adjustments should they be required before full enforcement comes into effect.

Note that residents will pay a charge of £70/year per car with two cars allowed per household and scratch card additional permits for visitors. Carers and similar will be given the equivalent of a visitor's permit. The funds created from charges are sufficient to run the compliance scheme which will issue penalty tickets to those parking without permits or outstaying the permitted parking period.

We asked James Whiting (OCC) to check whether the LCWIP might contain proposals that would potentially conflict with the parking scheme. He checked with the LCWIP team who told him that the LCWIP are plans are at the early stages at the moment so it's unlikely to be

impacted by our parking scheme. This came as a surprise as members of the Journeys team met earlier in the year to review the what they were told was the near-final draft of the LCWIP proposals.

Proposals to install bollards outside the Rose & Crown have prompted me to suggest that councillors undertake a guided visual impairment walk by the Sight Loss Council or RNIB – not just in the town centre.

Local businesses

Almost all the local businesses were happy to talk to councillors about their parking issues and strategies. The number of staff working in the centre for the different food and drink establishments, the doctors, vets, dentists, hairdressers, pharmacy, insurance company and a few others easily amount to 150 or more. Some are on shift patterns but, for example, the dentist has 10 staff on at any one time, and the nursery 17, the vets four staff and 2-4 clients.

The business which has given parking real thought is The Bell which has double parking at the bottom of their car park for staff, and a policy of collecting staff from the station as required. They are also usually able to accommodate all of their customers, with pressure only created by visitors to other parts of town using their car park as if it were public, and sometimes local residents using it without having asked permission.

A few of the businesses asked if they would consider use of an alternative car park were willing to consider it, including perhaps with an accompanying shuttle service of some sort – for customers rather than staff. Staff might be expected to walk.

Alternative car parks

Two possible sites for additional car parking have been under consideration. The Cricket Club has room for at least 20 cars in its outer car park. The land is owned by Cornbury Park who have agreed to running a pilot scheme to use that as an overflow car park, and the Cricket Club is also happy. However, arrangements would have to be made to ensure that the gate to the car park is open at the times we might plan to use it.

We also considered the Bowls Club car park which we lease from OCC but it has conditions on it about its use only for users of the club.

Spendlove car parks

We have to be clear that the Spendlove has four separate car parks – for the medical centre, the vets/ dentists/ Lycetts, and the Community Centre, as well as the main WODC car park. Clearly the private car parks are not our business, but those of the medical centre and the landowners of the business centre and it is for them to use their own enforcement decisions. However, car park users don't necessarily make those distinctions, and particularly between the main car park and the community centre which has no additional visual barrier like hedges.

The anecdotal evidence has been that the car park is often full and users of the different services have to park on nearby streets to find a space. It is widely believed that train users park all day at the Spendlove to avoid station parking charges. The Community Centre has developed a number of strategies for dealing with people parking on the traders' spaces, including contacting The Bull, whose customers are often the culprit.

James Whiting arranged a joint call with Maria Wheatley who is responsible for car parks at WODC to discuss the Spendlove car park. For WODC, the Spendlove is not one of their problem car parks but we discussed the fact that the new residents' parking scheme is likely to have knock-on effects on parking elsewhere in town and that the town council is keen to understand how the car park is used currently so that we can try and think through why and how some changes may have to be made.

WODC would normally only make changes to the parking arrangements if they had conducted their own lengthy and resource-intensive survey. Maria did help us with the questions that their surveyors use, and we decided to proceed with our own survey to provide us with a better understanding of how the car park is used. Lisa organised surveying by councillors and other volunteers on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 20-22 August (i.e. over the holiday period) and will organise another three-day stint in September when the schools are back. Maria agreed that if we had concrete proposals to put to WODC based on our thinking through of the interconnectedness of the different parking regimes in Charlbury, then she would be willing to propose changes to WODC councillors early in 2025.

Once the second round of survey have been undertaken, we will provide a summary of what we have learned for the September meeting.

The vets, dentists and the community centre have all agreed to survey their own clients to ask them where they have parked. This has not yet been arranged.

Conclusions

Once we have further information, we can start trying to think through possible displacement issues to make some preliminary suggestions about changes that might help resolve them.

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