

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 11 OCTOBER 2018

REVIEW OF ON-STREET PARKING IN
CORN STREET AND CHURCH GREEN, WITNEY

REPORT OF THE GROUP MANAGER COUNCIL ADVISORY SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE

To inform the Committee of the responses to the public consultation on parking in Corn Street and Church Green, highlight the implications of these responses and the recommendations that are proposed to be made to the County Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee provides any comments that it wishes to be included within the report to Cabinet, and in that context considers the recommendations in paragraphs 3.22 and 3.32 below relating respectively to Church Green and Corn Street.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The District Council is responsible for parking in the off-street car parks that it owns or manages and the County Council is responsible for on-street parking throughout the district. The District Council carries out enforcement on-street on behalf of the County under an agreement but Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), which set out the parking rules, are still the responsibility of the County.
- 3.2. The District Council adopted a Parking Strategy in 2016 which identified two key issues; a growing demand for additional parking capacity and a need for changes to parking regulations on-street in a few key locations. The County Council has limited resources available to undertake on-street reviews so WODC Cabinet previously agreed to allocate funding of £35,000 to support the delivery of reviews in its district. WODC have taken a lead in driving these reviews forward, organising and delivering the public consultation but working in partnership with the County. There is a statutory process for changing a TRO and following consultation, a detailed proposal would be formulated and the TRO process followed. This stage has to be processed by the County Council's highways and legal teams.
- 3.3. A review of Corn Street was prioritised as there had been health and safety concerns raised by the Police. As Church Green is a neighbouring location and changes to parking in one street may affect parking in the neighbouring street it made sense to undertake on-street reviews of both Corn Street and Church Green at the same time.
- 3.4. Public consultation was carried out in May 2018 and the results have been analysed so that some conclusions can be drawn. On online survey was advertised, letters were delivered to all residents and businesses in both locations and paper copies were available for anyone who could not access the online version. The survey received an excellent response with 709 people completing it.
- 3.5. The contextual information on parking issues in the two locations was provided as part of the public survey and is attached as [Appendix A \(page 8\)](#) to this report. The survey has shown that Corn Street and Church Green actually have some differences in demands and

issues and therefore need to be treated separately. The information below therefore takes each site in turn setting out the survey responses and the recommendations that result.

Church Green

- 3.6. Of the 709 people who responded to the survey, 444 stated that they parked in Church Green.
- 3.7. Many respondents use Church Green for more than one purpose therefore the following percentages reflect the total number of options chosen. The majority of people; 45% park there for shopping, 15% for appointments at the dentists, 9% work there, 8% attend church, 7.5% live there, 7% visiting and 7% taking or collecting from the schools and 1% park as a carer.
- 3.8. Clearly Church Greens close proximity to the Market Square and High street mean motorists are seeking to park here, so they are close to the shops or restaurants they wish to visit.
- 3.9. The greatest pressure for parking was between Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm, followed closely by Saturdays. This reflects the fact that the majority of people are parking in Church Green to shop.
- 3.10. If parking was not available in Church Green the majority of respondents (62%) said they would park in nearby car parks, with only 24% stating they would try and park in surrounding streets.
- 3.11. This suggests that controlling parking in Church Green is likely to move most motorists into the Woolgate car park, rather than cause further congestion on surrounding streets such as Corn Street; although it must be acknowledged there would still be some impact.
- 3.12. Respondents were asked if they would support any changes to on-street restrictions in Church Green. There was a difference in responses from those who were answering the survey and those who stated they park on Church Green. The data here reflects the total responses, as some may not currently park there, perhaps because of existing restrictions or pressure for parking but would park there if the restrictions were changed. The detail is presented in [Appendix B \(page 9\)](#), so that Members can see the difference in responses. The majority (80%) did not want more yellow line restrictions and a total of 64% would not support a reduction in yellow line restrictions with 36% saying yes to reductions. Again the majority (74%) did not support more bays being designated for blue badge holders, with 26% in support of a change. The only change to restrictions that was supported was the introduction of resident and business permits with 57% of respondents supporting this parking management approach.
- 3.13. For those people parking on Church Green the survey shows the majority of people would like to see two hour parking restrictions and the least popular was one hour.
- 3.14. The Council needs to consider who is supporting the permit scheme to take a view on who may be impacted by its introduction. The table below shows an analysis of data reviewing the reason for parking there cross matched with the response to a permit scheme. It shows that, as we would expect, the majority of those who support the introduction of a permit scheme are those that live there (86%). There is fractionally more support from those that work there too. Whilst the survey did not break this information down we could assume that those who responded that they work there and would support a permit scheme would be those that own a business there and would

therefore be entitled to a permit themselves. We could also assume a number of those who work there but do not support a permit scheme are employees who would not be entitled to a permit. The majority of carers also support the scheme – we would suggest carers are able to receive some form of visitors permit so there is no impact on their ability to park whilst visiting a resident to care for them.

- 3.15. Those that park in Church Green to shop, attend church etc. who would not be entitled to a resident or business permit did not support the scheme.

I park on Church Green and.....	Support permit scheme	Opposed to a permit scheme
I live there	86% (32)	14% (5)
I work there	51% (23)	49% (22)
I visit friends & family	44% (16)	55% (20)
I go to church	32% (13)	68% (28)
I shop & spend leisure time	24% (38)	76% (123)
I attend Medical appointments	33% (24)	67% (49)
School drop off ,pick up	39% (13)	61% (20)
I am a carer	80% (4)	20% (1)

N.B. Percentages of for responses to that question – note not all 709 survey respondents answered all questions.

- 3.16. It is worth noting that 14% of those that supported a permit scheme said they would not be prepared to pay for it. A permit scheme would normally incur a permit charge which is not a charge for parking but a charge for administering the scheme and the increased enforcement that is necessary. It is clear from this that if a permit scheme was introduced with the costs recovered through the scheme the level of support would reduce further to just below 50%.

Enforcement Issues

- 3.17. The parking team are aware that there would be some benefit from simplifying the existing limited waiting bays which currently allow motorists to park for 2 hours or 4 hours depending on which side of church green you park. This is confusing, particularly for anyone who is visiting the area. In addition there are some areas and bays with no restrictions where it is likely cars are parked all day.
- 3.18. The school zig zag markings aren't currently enforceable due to an absence of signs (there must be appropriate lines and signs in place). This means cars are often parked across them at school drop off and pick up times placing the safety of children at risk.

Conclusions

- 3.19. Whilst support is marginal a permit scheme for residents and businesses may improve provision for those motorists without having a significant detrimental impact on those in neighbouring streets as motorists seeking parking for shopping or other reasons are most likely to be displaced into nearby car parks. Residents with disabled blue badges would still be able to park in areas with restrictions i.e. for medical appointments, so there would be no negative impact on disabled persons.
- 3.20. For those people parking in Church Green the survey shows the majority of people would like to see two hour parking restrictions and the least popular was one hour.
- 3.21. There is an option to increase parking capacity in Church Green by imposing a one way system, and allowing diagonal parking to the kerb, as the highway would naturally suit that

arrangement. This could free up some space which could be used for additional parking however this area is in a Conservation area so additional parking may not be considered desirable.

Recommendations (Church Green)

3.22. The Committee is invited to consider recommending that Cabinet:

- (i) Requests the County Council to install signage to enable the zigzag lines to be enforced outside the school;
- (ii) Requests the County Council to seek to amend the TRO to simplify the limited waiting bays to 8 am – 6pm for 2 hours limited waiting (to allow residents, or others, to park unrestricted overnight, with the two hours permitted parking motorists could park from 4pm or until 10 am in the limited waiting bays). Some parking should remain unrestricted, to allow residents to park all day, but these would be first come first served so anyone could park there;
- (iii) Agrees that a Permit scheme should not be introduced, because there was insufficient support to warrant its introduction and a risk that it could make parking worse in surrounding streets; and
- (iv) To encourage the County Council to consider the viability of a one-way system around Church Green which may then facilitate additional parking (whilst noting that it is a Conservation area which could affect the feasibility of this option).

Corn Street

3.23. Of the total 709 respondents to the survey 315 people stated that they parked in Corn Street, with 44% parking there for shopping, 16% for medical appointments, 14% live there, 12% visiting, 7% work there, 4% taking or collecting from the school, 2% attending church and 1% as a carer. If parking was not available in Corn Street the majority of respondents (62%) said they would park in nearby residential streets, with only 24% stating they would try and park in an off-street car park.

3.24. The following streets were named by more than one respondent and are therefore likely to see some impact if parking is not available on Corn Street:

Corn Bar	The Crofts	Church Green
Swingburn Place	Saxon Way	Weavers Close
Corndell Gardens	Holloway Road	

3.25. The responses to a change in restrictions were a similar picture to Church Green, the majority did not support more yellow lines (73%), or a reduction in yellow lines (66%), or more disabled bays (77%). There were marginally more people in favour of a permit scheme (54%) than those against it. However 6% of those that supported a permit scheme would not be prepared to pay for it reducing the support for a chargeable permit scheme to less than 51%. Again the majority of those who supported the permit scheme were residents, there was a mixed response from those that work there, there was support for those visiting family and friends (despite the fact these people would not be entitled to a permit) and it was not supported by those that visit for other reasons and would not be entitled to a permit.

I park on Corn Street and.....	Support permit scheme	Opposed to a permit scheme
I live there	86% (54)	14% (9)
I work there	58% (18)	42% (13)
I visit friends & family	54% (28)	46% (24)
I go to church	14% (1)	86% (6)
I shop & spend leisure time	36% (65)	64% (116)
I attend Medical appointments	28% (19)	72% (48)
School drop off ,pick up	28% (5)	72% (13)
I am a carer	67% (2)	33% (1)

3.26. The greatest pressure for parking was on Saturdays followed by Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm again suggesting shopping is a major factor.

3.27. For those people parking on Corn Street the majority of people would like to see two hour parking restrictions and the least popular was three hour, however the figures are close, 114 (two hour), 100 (one hour) and 82 (three hour).

Enforcement Issues

3.28. As the contextual information in [Appendix A](#) shows, there is a high demand for parking in this area and it suffers from congestion which is exacerbated by the very high number of bus journeys. Anecdotally traffic calming that was introduced historically to reduce traffic speeds actually causes significant congestion at peak times but does not necessarily impact greatly on the speed of traffic.

3.29. Concerns have been raised by the Police regarding safety due to motorists parking in the no stopping area outside the takeaways at the end of Corn Street.

Conclusions

3.30. There are a variety of restrictions on this busy street which reflect the variety of driver needs. A permit scheme for residents and businesses may improve provision for those motorists however this would definitely have a detrimental impact on those in neighbouring streets as motorists seeking parking for shopping, etc. are most likely to be displaced into residential streets. If a permit scheme was introduced into Corn Street it may also need to be implemented in the adjacent streets. Those that park, work and live in the surrounding streets have not been consulted regarding changes to their streets and therefore a further consultation would need to be carried out. Residents with disabled blue badges would still be able to park in areas with restrictions so there would be no negative impact on disabled persons.

3.31. There is an option to increase parking capacity in Corn Street by creating diagonal bays half on the wide pavements in this street. This would require ground works at an additional cost.

Recommendations (Corn Street)

3.32. The Committee is invited to consider recommending that Cabinet:

- (i) Agrees that a Permit scheme should not be introduced, because there was insufficient support to warrant its introduction and a risk that it could make parking worse in surrounding streets;

- (ii) Encourages the County Council to review the effectiveness of the traffic calming measures and specifically the sections at the far end outside the takeaways (where there is a no stopping restriction) as the design effectively creates a bay, which may give the visual impression it is acceptable to stop there. The addition of railings on the corner of the pavement in this area may deter parking and improve pedestrian safety;
- (iii) Requests the County Council to seek an amendment to the TRO to provide a loading bay located as close as possible to the no stopping area, to make provision for deliveries to commercial premises and deter delivery drivers from parking in the no stopping area;
- (iv) Discusses with the bus companies the impact buses which are travelling through but not stopping, are having on Corn Street, whilst noting that bus travel is to be encouraged;
- (v) Supports the recommended TRO changes and consideration of improvements to traffic management, in both Church Green and Corn Street, and agrees that (a) the District Council will offer the County Council up to £10,000 to facilitate the delivery of these changes; and (b) Witney Town Council will also be encouraged to contribute to the cost of improvements.

4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

- 4.1. The Council may choose to (i) make clear recommendations to the County Council based on its interpretation of the survey data and local enforcement knowledge, or (ii) provide the survey data to the County Council but not make any recommendations.
- 4.2. If making specific recommendations, the Committee may vary or add to those included in paragraphs 3.22 and 3.32 above relating respectively to Church Green and Corn Street.

5. RISKS

Consideration needs to be given to the following key risks:

- Failure to make clear recommendations may impede progress with this work
- By making recommendations the Council is supporting specific changes. Making any changes and specifically introducing a permit scheme in Church Green carries significant risks that a large number of people will be aggrieved by this change. The survey shows that there is not a strong majority supporting this change, the support is marginal based on the total number of respondents but would be strongly supported by residents, but not necessarily all residents. However failure to introduce a permit scheme would also generate complaints particularly as a number of residents in this location have been seeking a permit scheme for some years.
- The Council has set aside some funding but has a number of on-street reviews which it wishes to support, notably Woodstock Town centre, which will be considered next. The funding would not fund significant highways changes, such as the introduction of a one way system in Church Green or changes to pavements/kerbs on Corn Street.
- There is a risk that OCC consider there is insufficient need or support to carry forward any changes.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The financial implications of the recommendations are not yet known but would be considered by the County Council once the district has provided it with the information contained within this report.
- 6.2. The £10,000 proposed to be offered to the County Council to facilitate the changes (referred to in paragraph 3.32(v) above) would be funded from the existing allocation of £35,000 to support the delivery of on-street parking reviews in the district.

7. REASONS

To tackle long standing concerns regarding parking provision in Corn Street and Church Green, Witney, with the aim of improving these locations as a place to live, work and visit.

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Background Papers
Survey and survey responses

Review of parking restrictions for Church Green and Corn Street, including the possibility of parking permits.

In 2016 we carried out a parking survey across the District. This highlighted a number of problem areas - including Church Green and Corn Street in Witney.

There are a variety of restrictions on both these streets and the needs of residents, businesses, shoppers, visitors and workers may conflict. One of the solutions which will be considered is the introduction of a permit scheme for residents and businesses to allow them to park all day.

Not all parking issues can be resolved, competing needs for the spaces will always be a problem within some towns and villages. Due to the high demand but limited space for parking, there are limited options which could improve parking provision.

Before making any changes, we want to hear the views of all those who will be directly and indirectly impacted.

The issues

Both Church Green and Corn Street are:

- Busy residential areas with the number of properties outstripping parking spaces.
- Home to businesses, retailers, schools and a church - many of these organisations are likely to benefit from time restrictions as this creates a faster turnover of parking spaces.

Corn Street: is a main town centre route and has a number of known issues with parking that have been reported to the Police and the Council.

The facts are:

- There is capacity for approximately 85 vehicles in parking spaces, with some being time limited.
- It has approximately 82 commercial premises and 155 residential properties.
- Over 100 bus journeys are made along the street each day.

Church Green: has busy school drop off and pick up times and any parking restrictions have to take the flow of traffic into account.

The facts are:

- There is capacity for approximately 98 vehicles in parking spaces with the majority being time limited.
- It has approximately 61 commercial premises and 38 residential premises.
- There are two zigzag areas outside the schools.

The possible solution – parking permits

If permits are introduced, parking would not be restricted to permit holders only as this may result in many spaces sitting empty during the day. Instead limited waiting bays would be provided allowing anyone to park for a short period of time but permit holders could stay for as long as they want.

If a permit scheme is introduced, it will not guarantee a parking space and the initial proposal will be limited to one permit per address due to the relatively small number of spaces available on Corn Street and Church Green.

Residents and businesses with more than one vehicle would still be able to park in the limited waiting areas but only for the restricted time.

There would be a charge for each permit to cover the cost of administration and increased enforcement.

What happens next?

Once our review is complete it will be forwarded to Oxfordshire County Council – they are the highways authority and set the current on-street parking restrictions. Any changes proposed by the County Council will then be subject to public consultation.

Differences in responses regarding restrictions from those who responded to the survey and those who had stated they lived in each location:

CHURCH GREEN

I answered the survey and	Yes % (is yes no split)	No
More yellow lines	20% (101)	80% (410)
Less yellow lines	36% (185)	64% (328)
More disabled bays	26% (136)	74% (389)
Permit scheme	57% (296)	43% (221)
I park on Church Green	Yes	No
More yellow lines	15% (49)	85% (286)
Less yellow lines	42% (141)	58% (195)
More disabled bays	23% (81)	77% (269)
Permit scheme	50% (168)	50% (171)

N.B this shows some people answered the question even though they don't park on Church Green

CORN STREET

I answered the survey and	Yes	No
More yellow lines	27% (140)	73% (377)
Less yellow lines	34% (180)	66% (344)
More disabled bays	23% (124)	77% (405)
Permit scheme	54% (287)	46% (244)
I park on Corn street....	Yes	No
More yellow lines	16% (47)	84% (249)
Less yellow lines	47% (141)	53% (157)
More disabled bays	24% (71)	76% (230)
Permit scheme	51% (153)	49% (149)

N.B this shows some people answered the question even though they don't park on Corn Street