



CHURCHGATE AREA ASSOCIATION

February 2015 Parking Survey Results and Analysis

It is clear from the results of our survey that in general the respondents do not think that the current parking arrangements are working and it is having a detrimental effect on their quality of life.

Background

The CAA membership currently has 174 households and 18 businesses, 271 individual members.

The issue of parking in the mediaeval grid has been a constant area of concern to the CAA members and has regularly been raised at our members meetings. In fact the CAA commissioned a report to specifically address this issue in light of the Vision 2031 plan and the impact that would have on increased traffic and parking in the mediaeval grid. This report was submitted to the Vision 2031 Planning Inspector.

Given the inevitable increasing pressure on parking in the mediaeval grid as the town grows, it was felt by the CAA committee that it would be very worthwhile to get a comprehensive view on the parking issues that the residents and businesses in the CAA area feel are important to them.

A survey form was printed and distributed to all the premises within the CAA area in January 2015. 600 forms were distributed. To date we have had 217 forms returned, 36%.

Specific questions were asked of the respondents plus they were encouraged to voice their own views on the situation. The questions asked reflected the issues that had been raised on a regular basis by the CAA members.

Recommendations

- All parking enforcement should be taken over by the Borough Council.
- There should be more stringent checks made when issuing permits to ensure that only residents are issued permits and for their own household and legitimate visitors use. If permits are passed on to others to use and this is discovered those permits should be cancelled/confiscated.
- There must be more enforcement of illegal parking in the area. It is obvious that at the present time enforcement is almost non-existent with constant flouting of the regulations. This situation cannot be allowed to continue as it favours those who can choose to ignore the regulations with almost no fear of a penalty.
- There should be close consultation with the local schools by the police and the council to ensure that parents are educated about the consequences of their actions when they choose to blatantly illegally park causing upset and aggravation to local residents and a danger to people forced to walk in the road. Parents of children who drive into the area to use the local schools cannot be allowed to impact on the quality of life of the residents of the area.
- There should be more residents-only parking bays made available, with a reduction in pay and display and time limited spaces. This could be done for instance in Hatter Street and Guildhall Street, North.
- Allow resident permit holders to use the Angel Hill car park.
- The ratio of residents-only parking spaces must be more closely aligned with the number of permits issued.
- Resident-only bay hours should be extended to 8pm to allow workers to park their cars on their return home.
- The planning department must take more account of the availability of parking when making their planning decisions to avoid aggravating the problem of parking.

Results – Summary

(note that “no opinion” responses are not included in these figures))

190 households and 27 businesses responded.	88% / 12%
180 regularly park a vehicle in the grid, 31 do not.	85% / 15%
140 park in the street and 89 in a garage.	61% / 39%
146 purchase a parking permit, 32 do not.	68% / 32%
	AGREE/DISAGREE
175 agree illegal parking is a problem in the grid, 15 do not.	81% / 7%
68 think that parking enforcement is adequate, 114 do not.	31% / 52%
152 think it is difficult to find an empty residents bay, 8 do not.	72% / 4%
139 think it more difficult to find an empty bay in the evening, 16 do not.	65% / 7%
166 think there should be more resident-only parking bays, 21 do not.	73% / 9%
155 think residents-only hours should be extended i.e. until 8pm, 26 do not.	70% / 12%
98 would pay more for a permit if residents parking was improved, 42 would not.	45% / 19%
123 think the Borough Council should take over all parking arrangements, 14 do not.	57% / 6%
134 think the mediaeval grid should be residents-only parking, 60 do not.	60% / 27%
160 think parking during school drop off/pick up should be better controlled, 7 do not.	74% / 3%
167 think there should be checks that only eligible residents are using permits, 5 do not.	77% / 2%

Illegal parking

When 81% think that illegal parking is a problem this cannot be ignored.

52% think that parking enforcement is not adequate both by the council and the police.

57% think that the council should take responsibility for all illegal parking enforcement. In October 2005 Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) came into force in Ipswich giving Ipswich Borough Council the power to enforce all parking restrictions within the borough. Officers patrol streets with Pay & Display parking, double yellow lines, residents' parking and other parking restrictions, as well as the Ipswich Borough Council off-street car parks. They check whether cars are parked appropriately and issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to vehicles parked in contravention of the traffic regulations. This must be a more integrated and effective regulatory system rather than relying on two different enforcement teams to monitor the situation.

At the Safer Neighbourhood Team meeting held on the 10th October 2014 it was agreed that illegal parking would be a police priority for the following 3 months. During that period 309 parking tickets were issued, an average of 3.4 per day. This is a very low figure given that at the time of editing this report (3pm Monday 23/2/2015) there are 12 cars illegally parked in Bridewell Lane alone.

Difficulty in finding a residents-only parking space

72% think that it is difficult to find an empty residents bay. £76 p.a is a lot to pay for no guarantee of a parking place. 65% think that it is also a problem finding an empty bay in the evening as the current time limit for residents-only parking expires at 6pm, which is too early for a lot of people returning from work.

There is also a perception that permits are not controlled adequately to ensure that only residents are using them as per the “General Conditions of Use Zone D - 19. The permit or visitor parking voucher is for use by members of the household and their legitimate visitors only.”

Bury St Edmunds is very well served with 3,324 car parking spaces, many more than Ipswich for instance which only has 1,153, though it does have a Park & Ride scheme (Car Parking Charges Review Group Report October 2012). As the area covered by the CAA is primarily a residential area there needs to be more consideration given to the resident's ability to park their cars. Shoppers have many more options available to them and local businesses do not need to have car parking on their doorsteps. According to the figures provided to us when putting together our Traffic Report for Vision 31 we were told that the multi story car park in Bury St Edmunds is only ever full on a few shopping days near Christmas. Illegal parking is therefore a lost revenue generating opportunity for the council.

Illegal, inconsiderate and dangerous parking during school drop-off and pick-up times

Illegal, inconsiderate and dangerous parking by parents during school drop off and pick up times is a particular area of concern with 74% agreeing this should be better controlled and only 3% disagreeing. This situation will only get worse with the expansion of Guildhall Feoffment School to a full primary school in September 2016.

The ratio of permits issued to spaces available

It is also iniquitous to issue more permits than spaces available as this can only be seen as a revenue raising measure rather than one which has the best interests of the residents at heart to ensure that every resident who purchases a permit has a reasonable chance of finding a parking space. It is quite obvious that when planning permission is granted for conversion of buildings to residential use that generally planning approval is not subject to additional parking being made available. The recent conversion of the former Masonic Hall in Churchgate Street is a good example as there were no additional residents parking spaces made available in the area for the residents of the 4 new flats putting further pressure on an already highly unsatisfactory situation.

There are currently pay and display spaces available in the grid which could be made into residents-only spaces alleviating some of the problems with lack of spaces. 60% think that the mediaeval grid should be made residents only parking.

NOTE: A number of Comments have been extracted from forms returned and are listed on the subsequent pages.

Survey comments

The following are just a small selection of the comments made by respondents to our survey. There are some common themes which emerge. It is sad that this situation is affecting people's quality of life and something must be done about it.

Chequer Square should be residents only parking.

Illegal parking in Crown Street is rampant particularly in the evenings with cars parked until the early hours. There appears to be no enforcement of this with police cars regularly driving past these illegally parked cars.

Why can't the Angel Hill car park be used by residents?

Resident-only times should be extended so that visitors to town centre events such as the Theatre and Cinema do not take all the residents bays. When I return from work after 6pm I often cannot find a space.

The issuing of more permits than there are spaces available is questionable.

Is it not fraudulent to sell twice as many permits as there are parking spaces?

I understand that the council has sold twice the number of permits than there are spaces - a nice little earner.

Parking in Bridewell Lane during school pick up and drop off times is appalling with parking everywhere and not just for a short time. Lazy parents park on double yellow lines and on the pavement ½ hour ahead of their children coming out of school just so they don't have to park in a car park. They also block access to Church Walks and garages in Bridewell Lane. I've reported this to the school headmistress and the police on several occasions and have seen no change.

Parking by parents at school times for ½ hour or more on the double yellow lines and the pavement prevent me from stepping out of my front door to go to work. The perpetrators when challenged deliver verbal abuse. I don't mind telling you it is making me ill.

Why does dropping a child at school carry the right to flout the law regarding illegal parking?

Illegal parking, restricting access into Church Walks, is becoming a major problem at school time.

SEBC should not allow any new residential development without developers or the council also providing additional parking spaces.

We pay to park and can never find a space.

The scarcity of enforcement encourages illegal parking. Cars are always illegally parked.

I have seen police officers walk past cars on double yellow lines with no action taken.

Double yellow lines at the western end of Westgate Street seem only to be a waste of yellow paint.

I object to paying for a permit because nobody patrols Westgate Street. People regularly park on the double yellow lines in front of my house.

There are cars parked illegally in Guildhall St for weeks on end. It took me 3 months of persistent calling to 101 to get one removed and since then my car has been vandalised.

Cars parked on pavements are a hazard forcing wheelchair users and mothers with pushchairs into the road and they are not penalised.

I do not purchase a permit as it does not improve my chances of finding a space.

I approached the council to see if the disabled bay near the theatre could be made a blue badge bay as it is only an advisory one and quite often workers at the theatre park in it all day. My mother is 90 and needs a disabled bay so she can get to her house. The council were not very helpful.

I have lived in Westgate Street for 62 years. We have a blue badge but have no space reserved for the disabled.

We pay about £5 extra a week for pay and display parking due to the shortage of Zone D parking spaces.

Some people with resident's permits do not live in the Zone.

We think Guildhall Street South should be only residents parking as it is almost 100% residential. If I go out in my car in the evening I cannot park on my return. Residents parking should be 24 hours.

We pay £76 pa and we frequently cannot find a space, and enforcement of illegal parking is inadequate.

I think resident parking should be 24 hour. There are several car parks for non residents to use around town.

Bury is lucky in having a number of car parks located within easy walking distance of its centre and that is where visitors to the town should be parked not outside our house.