

PUBLIC MEETING

Notes of the meeting held Thursday, 10th January 2019 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall, Watlington

Present:

Norfolk County Councillor / Leader of the BCKL&WN
BCKL&WN Borough Councillor
Norfolk County Council Highways
Watlington Parish Council

CLlr Brian Long
CLlr Peter Hodson
Mr Andy Wallace, Highways Engineer
CLlr Jean Golding, Chairman
CLlr Brenda Leedell, Vice Chairman
CLlr Theresa Bradley
CLlr Tim Palmer
CLlr Andy Prior
CLlr Philippa Sillis
Mrs Sara Porter, Parish Clerk
PC Lee Anderton, Community Engagement Officer
PC Ryan Williams, Beat Manager
70

Norfolk Constabulary

Member(s) of Public

Purpose of Meeting

For residents to discuss issues arising from the Railway Station commuter parking in John Davis Way, Stone Close, Paige Close, Britton Close and surrounding areas.

Notes of Meeting

Comments made and responses given have been summarised and sectioned for ease of reference.

Residents' comments:

- Junctions are completely blind and extremely hazardous for road users because vehicles are parking too close to them
- Parking on both sides of John Davis Way causes a danger to road users and an obstruction for service/emergency vehicles
- Parents taking and picking up their children from a childminding business in John Davis Way cannot park outside that house
- An accident took place at the John Davis Way/Station Road junction because of parked cars obstructing the visual splay
- The school bus reverses into John Davis Way from Station Road and parks on that junction to pick students up; this is very dangerous for the children and other road users
- People park on the pavements causing an obstruction to pedestrians, and in certain places pedestrians have to walk on the road which is extremely dangerous with the continuous flowing traffic
- People park inconsiderately and way too close to dropped kerbs which means people cannot enter or leave their driveways safely
- Some people leave their vehicles parked for a number of days
- Damage has been caused to cars which have been parked inconsiderately
- A car which had no MOT or TAX stood in John Davis Way for 2-3 weeks before being removed
- A member of public (unknown) placed cones in John Davis Way which alleviated the parking issues for a few days and was bliss to the residents
- A neighbourhood Scheme could be considered by residents living near the Station
- John Davis Way is the only access into the estate, which has grown in size considerably over the years, and a second access should now be considered
- It seems that action will only be taken if someone is injured or killed in this area
- Many people have lived in the village for years and put up with the parking but the situation has become intolerable over the past two years, made worse by the increased implementation of car park charges which Network Rail has introduced
- Representatives from Network Rail should be invited to attend the next meeting
- The BCKL&WN can be contacted by phone and does take immediate action on illegal parking; a fixed penalty notice was issued recently by them when a vehicle parked on the small green in Station Road

Parish Councillors' comments/responses:

- Watlington Station is a busy one but the size of the car park is still not sufficient for the amount of commuters using it
- A planning application for extended car parking has been submitted to the BCKL&WN Planning Department
- Network Rail will be invited to the next Public meeting.

Norfolk Constabulary comments/responses:

- Under the Road Traffic Act it is not an offence to park near a junction
- On-street parking has been decriminalised although officers will investigate issues if they are available
- There are 3 officers and 1 beat officer covering 425sq miles so availability is limited
- The police cannot remove vehicles from the highway – this is carried out by the County Council and lawful procedures must be adhered to before a tow can take place. As an example, a Constabulary in another county had a large coach parked on a junction for months, eventually had it towed away and the matter went to court. The court ruled in favour of the coach owner in that it had not caused an obstruction, just an inconvenience to other road users, and that Constabulary was subsequently ordered to pay the court fees
- Damage to cars, including egg throwing which is categorised as criminal damage, is an offence and anyone caught doing this could be charged
- There is no Traffic Regulation Order for parking on pavements (only in London and London Boroughs)

Norfolk County Council Councillor comments/responses:

- The car park was completely refurbished in September 2018 and Network Rail is undoubtedly charging more to recoup the development costs
- Residents living close to King's Lynn Station have had a residential parking scheme introduced to stop commuters parking in their streets for long periods. Orders had to be made for this scheme through Norfolk County Council
- Several years ago Norfolk County Council proposed a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to force the sale of land on the landowner's site adjacent to the Station to convert it to parking. A CPO cannot be pursued if a landowner then chooses to run their site for the purpose the CPO would have been made, and in this instance that's what the landowner did. The charges are £1.00 in and £1.00 out so theoretically people can park there for days on end at a cost of just £2.00
- The Chairman of the Railway Policy Group attends County Hall meetings every 6 months; the next meeting is due within the next two months and this matter will be raised with them
- Each County Councillor has a budget of £6K per annum to spend in their parishes; enquiries will be made to ascertain whether this budget could be spent on a project such as this
- Network Rail may be able to help fund a scheme if one is proceeded

Residents' suggestions for solutions:

1. Single yellow lines with a 1 or 2 hour restricted parking time during the day in John Davis Way, Stone Close and Paige Close
2. Limited double yellow lines on the junctions only
3. Double yellow lines in John Davis Way, Paige Close and Stone Close
4. Double yellow lines in John Davis Way, Paige Close, Stone Close and Britton Close
5. Traffic calming via a chicane method
6. Permit / residential parking (at cost to residents and not usually approved outside Towns)
7. Parking meters (not usually approved outside Towns)
8. H bars as a deterrent (at cost to individual residents and not enforceable)

Norfolk County Council Highways comments and responses:

- Norfolk County Council controls civil parking; the BCKL&WN manages this on its behalf with wardens patrolling on-street parking and ticketing illegally parked vehicles
- In previous years Watlington residents objected to double yellow lines in John Davis Way and surrounding roads which is why it did not proceed

- Some Downham Market residents living near the railway station have had H bars painted across their driveways (at their cost) and feedback has been very positive. These are not enforceable but are a good deterrent
- All railway stations charge parking fees and it is the choice of commuters to use those facilities or walk a distance to park free in residential roads
- Although it may be upsetting for residents to see people parking outside their homes, the highway is for everyone and is not owned by the adjacent landowner
- Norfolk County Council can contact the coach companies running the school buses asking them to park in a safer location
- The cones recently placed in John Davis Way were removed by Highways – cones can only be placed on highways for safety measures
- Each suggested scheme would need to be costed and a further public meeting held for an absolute vote on a single preferred option
- Permit / residential parking is at cost to residents (approximately £40.00 per year per permit)
- For a scheme to be achieved a Legal Order must be advertised in the newspaper and online providing a 28-day public consultation period; if a certain number of objections are received, it then has to go to a Public Enquiry, after which it may then still not proceed
- Norfolk County Council has a limited budget across the county; a Legal Order costs in the region of £10-£20K and a Public Enquiry a further £70K.
- Areas with confirmed deaths or severe injuries (3 or more in 5 years) take absolute priority over other areas of no reported incidents of injury or death

A show of hands took place by residents on their suggested schemes:

1. Single yellow lines with a 1 or 2 hour restricted parking time during the day in John Davis Way, Stone Close and Paige Close (around 20 votes in favour)
2. Limited double yellow lines on the junctions only (around 20 votes in favour)
3. Double yellow lines in John Davis Way, Paige Close and Stone Close (least preferred - no vote)
4. Double yellow lines in John Davis Way, Paige Close, Stone Close and Britton Close (around 20 votes in favour)
5. Traffic calming via a chicane method (least preferred - no vote)
6. Permit / residential parking (at cost to residents and not usually approved outside Towns) (around 25 votes in favour)
7. Parking meters (not usually approved outside Towns) (least preferred - no vote)
8. H bars as a deterrent (at cost to individual residents and not enforceable) (no vote as Order not required)

Norfolk County Council Highways actions to be taken:

- Each scheme will be taken to County Hall for consideration and costing – this will take 4-8 weeks.
- Parish Council to be informed of whether any of the schemes are viable or have been dismissed in part or whole.

Parish Council actions to be taken:

- Public meeting to inform residents of outcome.

Closing Stages (following conclusion of above two items):

- *Norfolk County Council Cabinet approval will need to be sought and resolved.*
- *The legal process can then begin.*

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.