



Charlbury
Town Council

Town centre parking restrictions: results of pre-consultation survey

As a result of concerns expressed by local residents, Charlbury Town Council is considering requesting a Traffic Regulation Order to modify parking restrictions in Charlbury town centre. The principal objectives would be:

- to improve road safety
- to support town centre businesses
- to support residents' parking needs

At the suggestion of Oxfordshire County Council, we carried out an informal pre-consultation survey, with the intention of identifying any objections from residents before the final scheme is drawn up.

This survey focused on the three locations of most concern: the Nine Acres Lane / Thames Street junction; Market Street; and Grammar School Hill. For each one, we asked whether residents supported our proposal, and for any comments they might have. We also asked if there were any other locations where residents would like to see parking changes.

A paper survey was distributed to residents of the affected streets. In addition, the survey was made available online, publicised through the Charlbury community website and the Charlbury Chronicle. As a result of pandemic restrictions, we kept the survey open throughout 2020.

56 paper responses were received and 61 online responses. This paper summarises the responses and a proposed way forward in each case.

1. Nine Acres Lane (junction with Thames Street)

Our proposal was:

Cars are often parked at the southern (Thames Street) end of Nine Acres Lane. This can complicate turning into/out of Nine Acres Lane, make it difficult for pedestrians to cross the road, and sometimes block the pavement for wheelchairs and buggies.

We propose adding double yellow lines on both sides of the road as far as New Barn Garage / Jeffs Terrace (southern end).

Paper responses were **51 support, 3 oppose**. Online responses were **55 support, 6 oppose**.

Many respondents cited this as a dangerous location for both car and pedestrian safety. Comments such as "very welcome" and "long overdue" were frequent. A response from New Barn Garage stated that they found the parking dangerous.

The principal objection was that parking here is valued by residents of adjacent streets (particularly Thames Street and Market Street), who often cannot find parking outside their own houses. Some objectors also pointed out that parked cars act to slow the speed of traffic on Nine Acres Lane.

Many respondents suggested that the parkers are mostly rail commuters. However, since there has continued to be extensive parking here in lockdown periods when the station has been little used, it would be unwise to assume this without on-the-ground evidence.

Some respondents, while supporting the proposal, suggested different combinations of double/single yellow lines to enable some parking to be retained.

Two respondents requested 'Keep Clear' markings at the entrance to Cotswold View (opposite the junction), which could be achieved without a TRO.

Recommendation

This restriction should be brought forward to a TRO.

Before the scheme is finalised, Charlbury Town Council should consider whether the double yellow lines should extend all the way to New Barn Garage, or whether a short unrestricted space should be retained for the benefit of residents in adjacent streets.

2. Market Street

Our proposal was:

Parking in central Charlbury can be difficult for residents and visitors wanting to use town-centre shops and the Corner House. For historical reasons, parking restrictions on Market Street are inconsistent.

We propose removing double yellow lines opposite the former Post Office/ Larcum's; allocating an equivalent length of currently unrestricted space outside the pharmacy for short-stay parking (e.g. 1 hour daytime, unrestricted evenings/ overnight); and rationalising Keep Clear markings near driveways along the full length of Market Street.

Paper responses were **51 support, 3 oppose**. Online responses were **54 support, 7 oppose**.

Generally this proposal was welcomed as it would result in an increase in overnight parking for residents, while improving the viability of town centre shops. Respondents noted that recent developments have increased parking pressure on Market Street and this is likely to continue (e.g. if an anticipated redevelopment at the former Post Office removes off-street parking).

The main objection was that the overall reduction in restricted space, particularly opposite the former PO, would be difficult for delivery drivers and other unloading traffic.

There were frequent comments about safety on the narrow parts of Market Street – in particular, the tendency for residents to park on the pavement to avoid damage from passing traffic, which in turn makes passage more difficult for those with pushchairs, wheelchairs or walking frames.

Again, there were numerous anecdotal comments about rail commuter parking, which would require more work to substantiate. Several residents wrote that they believed on-street parking was often taken up by people working in the town centre.

Recommendation

This restriction should be brought forward to a TRO.

Any rationalisation of 'Keep Clear' markings should take a pragmatic approach, retaining safety for driveway users in the context of a 20mph road, while providing informal space for loading/unloading.

Concerns about pavement safety and inappropriate through traffic should be taken forward as a separate project (see section 4).

3. Grammar School Hill

Our proposal was:

Parking on the bend outside Charlbury Pre-School causes safety issues for parents and children at the school, and for drivers and cyclists entering/leaving Charlbury. The narrow pavement on this popular walking route is frequently blocked by parked cars.

We propose double yellow lines outside Charlbury Pre-School and continuing past the bend.

Paper responses were **42 support, 5 oppose**. Online responses were **55 support, 6 oppose**.

Supportive comments included that it was extremely dangerous driving around a blind bend on the wrong side of the road, and that pedestrians often had to walk in the road on this stretch, particularly considering social distancing. The proposal was generally supported by Park Street residents.

Most objections were that the respondent did not see this location as a priority, but comments were also made that this was a convenient location for visitor/walkers' parking without impacting on the town centre.

Several comments noted that Pre-School parents and staff needed access to the site. The response from Charlbury Pre-School said "We would prefer double yellow lines to start after the Pre-School to allow staff to park safely directly outside; the double yellow lines would be very welcome on the bend."

Recommendation

Further informal consultation should take place with Charlbury Pre-School, and residents of properties immediately beside it. This should consider the most appropriate combination of single yellow lines (to provide restricted parking for drop-off/pick-up) and double yellow lines.

Once that has taken place, this restriction should be brought forward to a TRO.

4. Other locations and further comments

We also asked:

Do you have any other suggestions for yellow line changes within Charlbury? Please note that within the timeframe we're seeking for these changes and the budget available, the TRO cannot cover a residents' parking scheme, new car park or other major changes to parking arrangements.

There were no strong themes in the responses to this question, many of which were on matters other than parking restrictions.

A small number of respondents suggested changes to parking on Dyers Hill, such as moving all parking to one side to prevent weaving, or even removing all restrictions.

Sheep Street was mentioned a number of times but with no common thread as to what should be done. Parking outside Charlbury Primary School at pick-up/drop-off times was also mentioned, though issues here appear mostly generic to school parking rather than particular to Charlbury. Finally, there were some concerns for congestion and safety on Park Street when two-way traffic negotiates the parked cars.

Recommendations

No further locations should be included in this TRO.

Charlbury Town Council should work with Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police and Charlbury Primary School to improve safety on The Slade, particularly around school pick-up and drop-off times.

Given residents' comments about pavement safety concerns on Market Street (section 2), and in this section about Park Street and Sheep Street, Charlbury Town Council should work with the Speedwatch group to monitor patterns of traffic using the town centre, and consider proposals for signage and/or physical calming to dissuade through traffic from using these streets.

Richard Fairhurst, April 2021