

Parking Issues & Possible Solutions

1. ISSUES

For the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is important to base any policies on robust evidence. Stow on the Wold Town Council has commissioned several surveys in recent years which provide such evidence in relation to parking issues.

In 2017 the following facts were reported in relation to car parking in central Stow.

34% of all car parking spaces were vacant on the Quiet Day audit, 1% lower than the National Small Towns average. On the Busy Day, 19% of all car parking was vacant which is 5% lower than the National figure.

On Street Parking:-

Interestingly, only 2% of on street parking spaces were vacant during the Busy Day audit, noticeably lower than the National figure of 14%, whilst on the Quiet Day the vacancy rate increased to 11%.

79% of Businesses felt that Car Parking was a negative aspect of trading in the town centre, 25% higher than the National average. 62% of Town Centre users reported Car Parking as a negative, 19% higher than the National Small Towns average

Improving the Car Parking, specifically in the Square was a key theme to emerge from the qualitative suggestions.

Source: People & Places Stow Benchmarking Report 2017

When a further study was undertaken in central Stow in July 2019 the situation had deteriorated

Car Parking (71%) was classed as the most negative aspect of Stow on the Wold by Town Centre Users, 28% higher than the National Small Towns average. 66% of Businesses felt that Car Parking was a negative aspect of trading in the town centre, 15% higher than the National average. Car Parking was the key theme to emerge when both Businesses and Town Centre Users were asked to make suggestions for improvements to Stow on the Wold.

Only 1% of on street parking spaces was vacant during the October audit, noticeably lower than the National figure of 15% and 1% lower than the 2017 figure. When the August Car Parking figures were reviewed only 7% of the off-street car parking spaces were available with just 1% of on street (parking

available) providing an overall average of 4%. Further analysis, with the removal of the Tesco Car Park figures revealed a further reduction in available parking space with 2% vacancy in the August audit and 10% vacancy in the October audit.

Source: People & Places Stow Car Parking Study July 2019

The pressure on parking on residential streets outside the central area, is exacerbated by many older houses having no off street parking. Further demand can come from builders' lorries, holiday lets, businesses and visitors.

Swells Parish Council is aware of on street parking problems in Lower Swell, where some older properties also have no off street parking and there is pressure from multiple cars at holiday lets with no off street parking.

2. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Stow on the Wold Town Council is not responsible for the provision of car parking. Gloucestershire County Council is responsible for on street parking and Cotswold District Council is responsible for off street parking i.e. car parks.

A comprehensive parking plan is needed to address Stow's parking issues, taking account of the needs of residents, visitors and businesses.

Gloucestershire County Council has initiated a review of car parking across the county and will work with Cotswold District Council and Stow Town Council to produce such a comprehensive plan.

The household questionnaire asks you about how many cars you have and how many off street car parking spaces you have. This will give us a broad brush feel of the pressure for parking by residents on residential streets.

In the meantime, we can consider some of the options that might require development and land use proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan. For example, if we were able to provide more off street parking a short walk from the Square, this might release the under used Mangersbury Road car park for affordable housing. If we were able to provide permit controlled parking for businesses, within an easy walk to the town centre, this would release on street parking places in the central area of Stow and in residential streets.

In considering options, it is important to consider the impact that climate change may have on the use of personal vehicles, so that we do not make permanent provision that could be obsolete within the next 30 years.

Swells Parish Council has included a question in the household questionnaire about whether off street car parking should be provided in Lower Swell for the benefit of residents who do not have their own off street car parking.