



July 2020

PARKING POLICY

During the Covid-19 lockdown there has been a significant increase in visitors to the village, particularly during the prolonged spells of fine weather. Articles in national newspapers highlighting the attractions of the Meon Valley for walking and river access resulted in a notable influx in most local villages. In all cases, this has resulted in increased pressure on public parking spaces. It is anticipated that as the number of alternative outdoor leisure activities increase as restrictions are eased, we will see a return to more normal visitor levels. The Parish Council has monitored the situation and reviewed measures that could potentially be introduced to reduce the adverse impact upon residents. The following points reflect both the Parish Council's discussions and suggestions proposed by residents.

1. Is there sufficient public parking in the village?

It is important to draw a distinction between the adequacy of parking for residents and the availability of parking for visitors. A survey of all properties within the Parish was conducted in October 2016 to establish the number of residents regularly requiring the use of public parking spaces and this was compared against the existing number of spaces. This proved that the number of parking spaces was more than sufficient to meet residents' needs. The survey also asked users of public parking spaces to rank their preferred location for parking. Unsurprisingly, the space closest to their residence was the first choice for all respondents but the fact remains that there will always be occasions when the most convenient location is fully occupied, either by other residents or visitors.

The demand for public parking increases at certain known times: during school drop-off/pick-up; events at the Village Hall; services at the church attracting greater than average attendance. In 2017 the Parish Council identified that parking capacity could be increased at the Recreation Ground and created additional parking space. In addition, in certain circumstances, the Parish Council is able to provide additional temporary parking at the Recreation Ground by raising the barrier and allowing parking within the grassed area.

It already appears that current visitor numbers are lower than those of May/early June. If the 'lockdown increase' in day visitors proves to be a relatively short-term issue rather than a trend, it is likely that current levels of public parking will be adequate to meet the needs of visitors.

2. Is there anywhere in the village where further public parking could be created?

There have periodically been suggestions to the Parish Council that the Parish Green (the area between the low wall in The Square and the Church owned land which begins at the first line of graves in the churchyard) should be considered for the creation of additional parking spaces. Each time it has been debated the Council has concluded that it would urbanise an area at the heart of the Conservation Area. This rationale is fully supported by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). The SDNPA Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan report of 2015 identified The Square and green areas abounding it to the north and east as being suitable for a well defined enhancement scheme to provide separation from the A32 that bisects the village. The Parish Council is actively working to deliver such a scheme with the support of SDNPA, starting with the resurfacing of The Square. There are no other areas known to be both suitable and available for the creation of additional parking.

3. Is there evidence that existing parking spaces are at capacity?

The areas with the largest number of public parking spaces are The Square, Union Lane and the Recreation Ground. The number of spaces is not definitive as only the Union Lane car park has marked bays and it is therefore dependent upon the size of vehicles and whether they are parked sensibly, with consideration for other users, but a reasonable indication of capacity is given in the table at the appendix. Whilst the information shown is based on a very rudimentary survey of the number of vehicles parked within those areas at random times, it indicates that at no time in the 14 day period between 24th June and 7th July was there insufficient parking for residents and the average number of unoccupied spaces across the 3 main public areas represents 42% spare capacity.

The dates of the survey cover a period of adjustment from full lockdown to easing of restrictions. If similar statistics had been gathered pre-Covid-19 it is likely that the numbers of vehicles at 0900 would have been significantly higher when children in all year groups were attending school. It is also likely that there would have been a corresponding reduction in the number of residents' vehicles occupying parking spaces during the working day as ordinarily a higher number of these would have left the village for employment purposes.

4. Can a system of Residents' Parking Permits be considered?

Residents' Parking must be self-financing and the cost of the permits should cover the administration, management and enforcement of the scheme through the employment of a Civil Enforcement Officer. This would not be viable in the village and is one of a number of reasons why such schemes are generally found in towns and cities where the relative cost per permit is shared amongst a much greater populous. Furthermore, it would require the demarcation of parking bays (an urban characteristic), be available to all residents (ie including those with garages/parking spaces within their own properties who may wish to park their own vehicles in a public space to make their private parking available for their visitors), would not

guarantee a defined parking space and certainly not in front of the resident's own home and such schemes can often cause worse parking problems in adjacent areas.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. As a result of government measures introduced to reduce the spread of Covid-19, the number of visitors to the village at times increased to levels not previously experienced and pressure on parking was temporarily overloaded.
2. It is known that there were additional vehicles permanently parked in the village during the lockdown, but there is no evidence to suggest that there are a greater number of resident owned vehicles requiring parking spaces on a permanent basis than there were when a previous survey was conducted in 2016.
3. The gradual easing of restrictions, combined with an increase in alternative leisure time activities are already resulting in a reduction in visitor numbers and less pressure on parking during the day.
4. Current evidence does not indicate a need for any new parking areas to accommodate the needs of residents and it would be imprudent at this stage for the Parish Council to endanger the rural character of the village and create parking spaces for which the future requirement may be questionable.

APPENDIX TO DROXFORD PARISH COUNCIL PARKING POLICY DATED JULY 2020

Droxford Parking Survey - Two weeks commencing 24/6/20

			The Square Capacity 30	Recreation Ground Capacity 18	Union Lane Capacity 20	Total Capacity 68
Numbers of cars parked						
Wed	24-Jun	21:00	14	-	-	14
Thurs	25-Jun	21:30	14	7	17	38
Fri	26-Jun	18:30	21	2	12	35
		21:30	18	-	-	18
Sat	27-Jun	09:00	16	-	-	16
		12:30	24	-	-	24
		19:00	18	2	16	36
Sun	28-Jun	10:00	31	5	18	54
		13:00	30	7	17	54
		18:00	15	-	-	15
Mon	29-Jun	15:30	32	8	13	53
		21:00	17	4	17	38
Tues	30-Jun	09:00	18	12	16	46
		13:30	16	11	14	41
		20:30	23	3	18	44
Wed	01-Jul	09:00	28	14	12	54
		18:30	32	1	19	52
Thurs	02-Jul	09:00	22	17	13	52
		18:30	21	5	13	39
Fri	03-Jul	11:00	22	9	12	43
		18:00	18	-	-	18
Sat	04-Jul	10:30	24	13	16	53
		13:30	21	5	17	43
		18:00	17	3	17	37
Sun	05-Jul	14:00	27	18	11	56
Mon	06-Jul	16:00	19	8	13	40
Tues	07-Jul	17:15	19	8	18	45
Average number of cars parked			21	8	15	39
Average number of spaces available			9	10	5	29

Times marked  were not counted