

Appendix C

Fact sheet produced by Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council

STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARKING – COPING WITH PROBLEMS ON AND OFF STREET INFORMATION TO BE ISSUED TO ALL RESIDENTS

Apart from traffic (speed, volume and delays caused) parking issues produce more complaints and tensions than any other issue! In this report a number of problems are identified and possible solutions are discussed. Before considering specific issues or locations five preliminary points are worth making:

- There are too many vehicles, and the number continues to grow, for the parking space available.
- Too many residents with off-street parking still tend to leave their cars on the road, or use their garages for other purposes.
- Commuter and airport parking on-street is growing with an increasing number of people leaving cars legally on-street to avoid parking charges.
- Parking restrictions can be introduced and may benefit one group of residents. However, their gain has to be set against the risks of moving their problem to other parishioners living nearby.
- The introduction of residents' parking or parking restrictions will only work if enforcement is effective.

Parking restrictions in residential areas

The common complaints are the inability to park outside/near my house/flat and cars being parked in whole or in part on the footpath.

- Parking in the vicinity of your home – provided there are no parking restrictions you cannot legally prevent any person parking a vehicle (provided it is taxed and insured) even for a long period. Any obstructions such as cones put out to reserve space carry no weight and can be moved.
- Parking on the footpath is not in itself an offence. The police will only act if the parked vehicle sufficiently blocks the footpath so as to prevent the passage of a wheelchair or double buggy.

What actions could be taken to eliminate or reduce problems?

- *Residents' parking covering a specified area* can be pursued provided a number of conditions are met.
 - The number of parking spaces available on the designated roads ideally aims to permit one for any dwelling which does not have off-street parking. There is never a guarantee that a space will be available.
 - Any proposed scheme must be supported by a clear majority of those affected.
 - Residents who wish to have a permit will have to pay an annual fee. The scheme operating in Lower Street and part of Grove Hill has an annual fee of £70. In addition permits for visitor parking also have to be bought. These fees are not fixed by and do not accrue to the Parish Council.
 - The hours of operation will need to be agreed and will require the consent of the Parking Partnership which will be responsible for enforcement.

Finally and very importantly in winning support from the Parish Council or overcoming parishioner objections will be the displacement or knock-on effect. If making life easier for one section of parishioners only makes it harder for others this would not be equitable.

- *Limited parking restrictions* – where the problem is one of commuter or airport parking ie outsiders taking up spaces as a convenience or to save money, then the simple and cost effective solution is to have a no waiting restriction for one hour a day e.g. 10 – 11 am. This is easy to enforce. However, although the benefits are welcome and the scheme carries no direct cost to householders, there is a sting in the tail. According to Essex Highways and the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) the restriction on parking for that hour would apply to residents. For many people this may not be an issue but for others it could be very inconvenient. **The Parish Council is investigating whether there is an option to exempt residents. However, the same caveat applies as in residents' parking – the knock-on effect has to be considered and overcome.**
- *Regulating parking on footpaths to reduce the impact.* As sensible parking on footpaths cannot be prevented, it would be better to control it. On standard estate roads parking on both sides of the highway may make it difficult or even impossible for some vehicles – ambulances, fire engines and dustcarts to pass. It may, therefore, be a sensible compromise to mark-up the footpath with a white line. Up to that point parking is permitted whilst still leaving sufficient room for pedestrians – over the line and drivers would commit an offence. **This proposal may not, however, win support from the NEPP.**

Safety issues and bus routes

- Parking up to and around junctions may either be dangerous or make it unduly difficult for drivers. Double yellow lines may be the way forward.
- Bus routes need special attention and three areas may be identified – Walson Way [510] (as well as Bentley Drive), Mountfitchet Estate particularly on Maitland Road [7 and 7A] and Bentfield [7A]. Additional restrictions will need to be considered.

Commercial areas pose some different issues

- *Cambridge Road* – A number of initiatives are under way:
 - Double yellow lines at the junction of Clarence Road have improved sight lines to the pedestrian crossing while those on the west side of Cambridge Road between Clarence Road and Croasdaile Road should prevent parking on both sides of the busy B1383.
 - **Adjustments to yellow lines in the shopping area may modestly increase the number of parking spaces while the 30 minute limit (an experiment) may make finding a space easier (but poses problems for some businesses).**
 - Tackling the delivery issue is more difficult and could be longer term. Discussions are to be held (we hope) with Tesco and the Co-op to limit the number and timing of deliveries. Tesco Express in Stortford apparently has two deliveries a day, why not in Cambridge Road?
Longer term it is hoped to create an unloading bay behind Tesco thus removing the articulated vehicles from the road. Such a solution depends on negotiations with owners, developers and planning.

In addition whatever scheme is eventually agreed for the land behind 14 Cambridge Road, the Parish Council is pressing (and has had agreement) for a footpath linking Cambridge Road to the Crafton Green car park and possibly a road linking with Chapel Hill.

- *Lower Street* – Action in this area is targeted at increasing the amount of short-term on-street car parking. This would be achieved by amending the times at which residents' parking beyond the Grove Hill junction operates. However, it should be stressed that

public limited waiting should be available only between 9.00 am and 4.30 pm. **The proposal for 9 pm is opposed.**

Other improvements depend upon public car park developments (see below).

Maximising the use of car parks

- *Crafton Green* – After a period of low use this has reversed and increasingly the number of vacant spaces is small. **Some businesses have indicated that parking problems are limiting their opportunities (affects both employees and customers). The Parish Council is considering ways to increase the capacity of the car park.**
- *Lower Street* – The issues here are more difficult to resolve until the new development incorporating the health centre is built and operating. The re-organisation of the car park and the increased demands will need to be assessed.
Meantime action is being taken to analyse the usage of the car park and to consider ways of increasing the capacity.
- District Councillor Iris Evans has been appointed to lead a Task Group looking at all aspects of the car parks within Uttlesford District. Surveys are being undertaken with residents, businesses and visitors. A survey will be included in Uttlesford Life magazine which is due to be delivered to every home over the Summer, or access the website link through our own website (www.stansted.net). If you have any particular comments to make regarding the public car parks, please contact Iris direct at clleevans@uttlesford.gov.uk or on 01279 815848.

Who enforces parking restrictions?

Before concluding this report, it may help to clarify who has the responsibility for enforcing parking restrictions.

- *The North Essex Parking Partnership* is responsible for tackling parking offences committed on yellow lines and monitoring residents' parking.
No new restrictions will be introduced unless approved by the NEPP. All requests for additional restrictions need to be made through the Parish Council.
- *Police* – Offences relating to obstruction or breaches of zigzag lines adjacent to pedestrian crossings are matters which fall to the police to enforce. To stress yellow line offences do not fall in their remit.

Summary

- The District Council with the support of the Parish Council is investigating a more effective use of car parks.
- Amendments to the time of operation of the Residents' Parking Scheme in Lower Street are being sought.
- Changes to restrictions are being made on Cambridge Road and a link to Crafton Green car park is being sought.
- Restrictions are under consideration to improve safety on bus routes on Foresthall Park, Mountfitchet Estate and Bentfield.
- Any restrictions or parking schemes will only be considered if the knock-on effects are not material.

Any comments or ideas – please contact the Parish Council.