

Residents Parking and Pedestrian Safety Plan for the High Street approved by the Parish Council

The Parish Council passed a motion to proceed with a Residents Parking and Pedestrian Safety plan for the village at their November meeting. The Traffic and Parking Working Group (TAPWG) working in consultation with the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Highways Department developed four options based on the findings from the village-wide survey carried out in September 2021. The key objectives of the recommendations were to secure dedicated parking spots on the High Street for residents of the village and to ensure that there is clear visibility for pedestrians crossing the High Street near the Greyhound, especially for parents and children on the school run. The plan would have additional benefits in terms of reduced congestion and pollution in the village.

The options presented by TAPWG to the PC were:

1. A “virtual” crossing in the High Street just north of Eastfield Lane with the necessary adjacent parking restrictions.
2. A “virtual” crossing in the High Street just north of Eastfield Lane with the necessary adjacent parking restrictions and heritage double yellow lines at the Eastfield Lane, Manor Road and Hardwick Road junctions to enforce the Highway Code.
3. The 2022 Oxford County Council Highways approved Residents’ Parking Plan.
4. The 2022 Oxford County Council Highways approved Residents’ Parking Plan plus the “virtual crossing in the High Street”.

The PC voted to approve Option 4. **Please scroll down to see detailed maps of the parking plan** for the High Street. Although not on the map, it includes space for a “virtual pedestrian crossing” to be placed just north of Eastfield Lane.

OCC’s Parking and Traffic Officer attended the meeting and answered questions from Councillors. Some of the questions answered in the discussion were:

- The plan included 4 banks of parking bays on the High Street with a total of 19 residents parking spaces. The OCC Officer confirmed that this was the maximum number of spaces that could be approved for the parking plan due to sight lines of traffic. There are currently a large number of parking spaces used by non-resident commuters during the day that would be freed up for residents in the plan.
- Residents on the High Street will be able to purchase annual parking permits for about £100. Residents can purchase permits for up to 2 cars per household. Visitor passes will be included in the permit fee.
- An amendment to the plan was approved that made use of single yellow lines in some locations south of Manor Road that would allow for approximately 10 additional car parking spaces for those without parking permits to use after hours.
- There will be single or double yellow lines between each of the 4 banks of parking bays. OCC requires double lines between the upper and lower narrows and the first bank of parking bays to keep traffic clear. The OCC Officer was clear that the Residents Parking scheme could only be approved if yellow lines were implemented on the High Street to ensure it can be enforced. The plan is to use Heritage Area versions of the lines which would be thinner and paler.
- The “virtual pedestrian crossing” to be placed just north of Eastfield Lane is proposed instead of a Zebra crossing because of costs and to avoid the use of belisha beacons which

could be a source of light pollution to nearby residents. Although there will be no road markings, the virtual crossing will provide for 20 metres visibility in either direction which is significantly improved from the current situation. The virtual crossing will run from the dropped kerb on the west side of the High Street to a newly surfaced area on the east side which will be marked by white lines guiding pedestrians safely into Eastfield Lane.

The next steps:

- PC to approve initial parking restriction **details** for the consultation. We have the option of making each of the four banks of parking bays on the High Street either “Residents Parking only” or “shared bays” that non-residents could park in for up to 2 hours. The PC also needs to agree which times to allow parking on the proposed single yellow lines. A motion will be presented to the Parish Council Meeting on 12th January for a choice to be made about times and parking bank usage to send to OCC.
- Once these details are agreed, OCC will then start the process to obtain the Traffic Regulation Order which will allow them to begin a public consultation. We understand that consultation letters will be sent to all properties in the High Street and notices will be put in local newspapers, on lampposts and on the OCC website. This is a similar process that happened before the 20mph was agreed.
- After the consultation, OCC will make the final decision on whether to proceed with the changes, including any alterations resulting from the consultation.
- If the changes are agreed and implemented there would be a review by OCC after it has run for a year. We are told that it is possible to make changes to the scheme at this time should they be necessary.

Two papers which were presented to the Parish Council at the November meeting explaining how the parking options were arrived at are provided below. The results of the September 2021 traffic survey can be seen by **scrolling down to the report at the end of this document**.

Cllrs Donahue, Smith, and Parkes
December 18, 2022

Background Paper 1 for the Motion on Options proposed to the Parish Council, November 2022

For many years there have been growing concerns about traffic and parking in the Village focused on the High Street. The first group to consider parking and traffic flows as well as pavements and verges was TAPAG which was formed after the residents were consulted about Village issues in 2016.

The current Village Plan was published in 2019 after a survey which was completed by 143 residents. The questions about traffic and parking produced this statement, on page 7:

“Traffic - particularly parking and pedestrian safety – is of increasing concern. Respondents would support both 20mph speed limit (90% approval) and also parking restrictions to stop commuters parking all day on the High Street.” We have done the first and now need to work on the second.

After a 2017 survey of High Street residents and using traffic consultants and advice from OCC Highways TAPAG produced the 2019 Plan. This was put into abeyance during the Covid lockdown. In 2021 a new group TAPWG was formed with terms of reference given by the Parish Council. A new Village wide survey was conducted in September 2021 which was returned by 178 residents from 164 households. The options presented today are based on the results of this survey.

The Covid lockdown gave us a glimpse of times long gone with a virtually traffic free High Street. Now the traffic is back to 80% of pre-Covid volumes. Commuters are back, as are non-residents parking on the High Street for shopping and leisure. We all know the historic and geographical factors which make our Village a difficult place for the hosting of 21st Century traffic volumes and parking. We cannot do anything about the traffic volume and there is nowhere that can be used for extra off-street parking. An added factor is that it is highly likely within the next 18 to 24 months that pavement parking will be made illegal. This may change the present parking pattern at the top of the High Street.

The only thing we can do is to control parking. This should produce two results. One to improve sight lines in the High Street, and at junctions and drives. Two, and equally important, stop commuter parking and non-residents parking for long periods.

Uncontrolled the problem could get worse as neighbouring villages impose their own parking restrictions and more housing is built north of Whitchurch.

In 2019 a residents parking scheme was not possible, now it is and the County wide scheme is up and running. We are aware of the possible consequences of adopting the parking plan. On-road parking may increase in Manor Road, Hardwick Road and Eastfield Lane, exacerbated in the latter by developments of Eastfield House. These possible knock-on effects will have to be dealt with if and when they arise.

Diana Smith, TAPWG
10.11.22

Background Paper 2 for the Motion on Options proposed to the Parish Council, November 2022 – Methodology for Development of TAPWG Options.

The results from the survey done in September 2021 have guided TAPWG decision making in what we believe is a transparent and objective way. Survey data has driven our suggestions, but we have kept in mind other factors such as:

- Traffic in the village now being at 80% of pre-pandemic levels (confirmed by the toll booth data in early November)
- Known future housing development in Woodcote in the future (50-60 houses) (available for all to see on: <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/12/Housing-Need-Assessment.pdf>)
- Decisions other villages are taking with these issues: Streatley have voted to have all day resident parking on Streatley High Street – this is currently with W. Berks for approval.

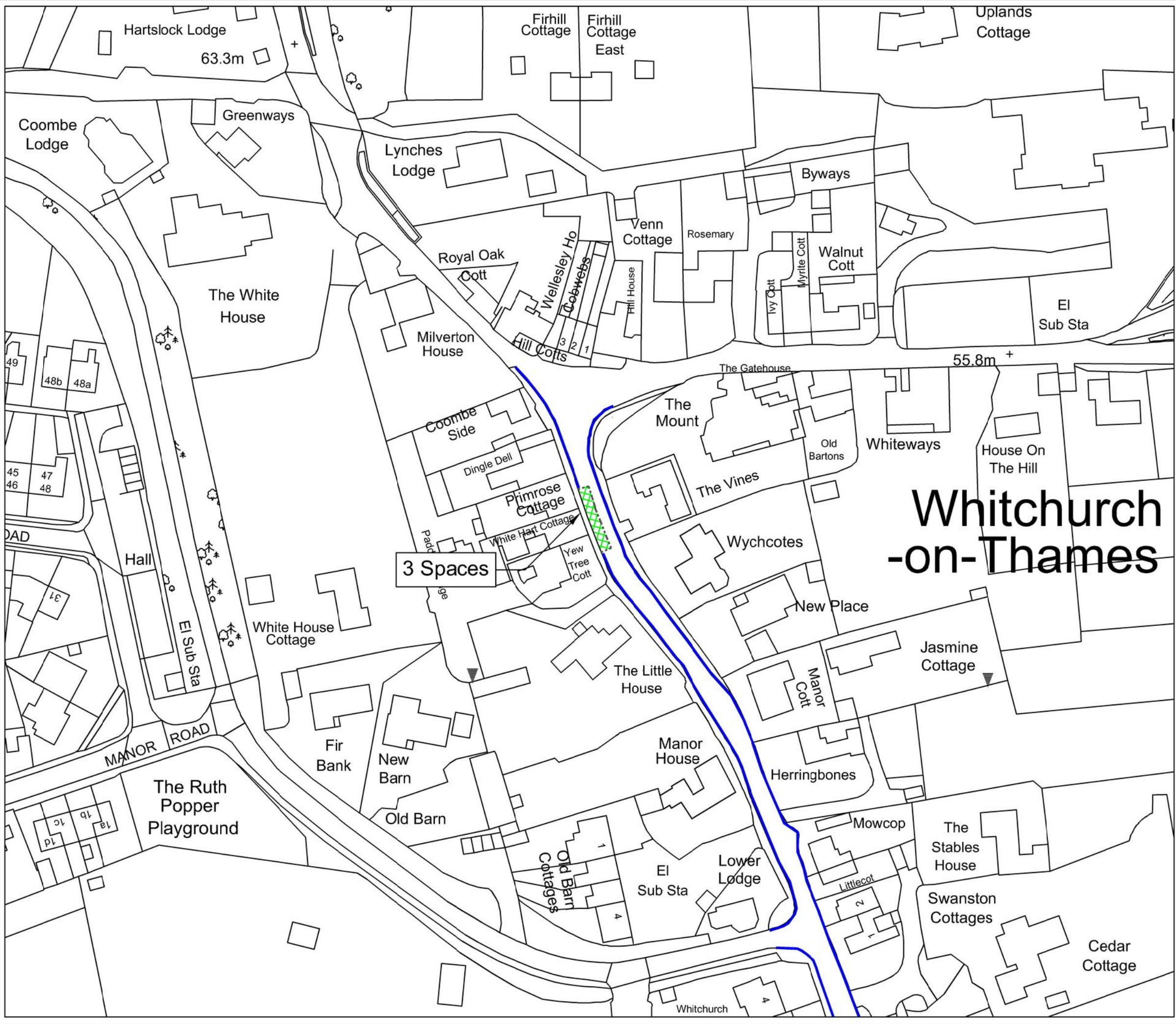
You will probably be wondering how we arrived at these options.

- These options were extrapolated from the survey data (i.e. the issues which meant most to survey respondents).
- The 7 TAPWG members were then asked to independently score the issues. Despite difference of opinions there was a clear difference in the scores between the various options.

Finally, many people in the village already compromise in terms of traffic and parking, whether it is lack of parking, accessibility of parking, being a pedestrian or regular driver in the High Street. Our options will still require compromise, but we believe that they do so with added benefits of basic adherence to the Highway Code and enhanced safety (for both pedestrians and drivers), as well as improved traffic flow, lower congestion and attendant pollution.

Despite an option having been voted for by the Parish Council, the whole plan will be subject to a consultation conducted by OCC and they will have the final say on whether or not that plan can be implemented.

Frances Parkes, TAPWG
10.11.2022



Drawing No.

Revision 0

Proposed Parking Restrictions - Key

Proposed No Waiting At Any Time

Proposed Shared Use Permit Holders only

For all line painting conservation width and colour to be used. Signs to be located on existing street furniture where possible. Boundary walls can be used for signs subject to property owner permission.

SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

IN ADDITION TO THE HAZARDS/RISKS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE TYPES OF WORK DETAILED ON THIS DRAWING, NOTE THE FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT RESIDUAL RISKS

CONSTRUCTION

(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)

MAINTENANCE/CLEANING

(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)

USE

(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)

DECOMMISSIONING/DEMOLITION

(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved

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Project title

Proposed Parking Restrictions
Whitchurch on Thames

Drawing title

Map 2
Shared Use Bays
and No Waiting at Any Time

Drawing Status

Draft

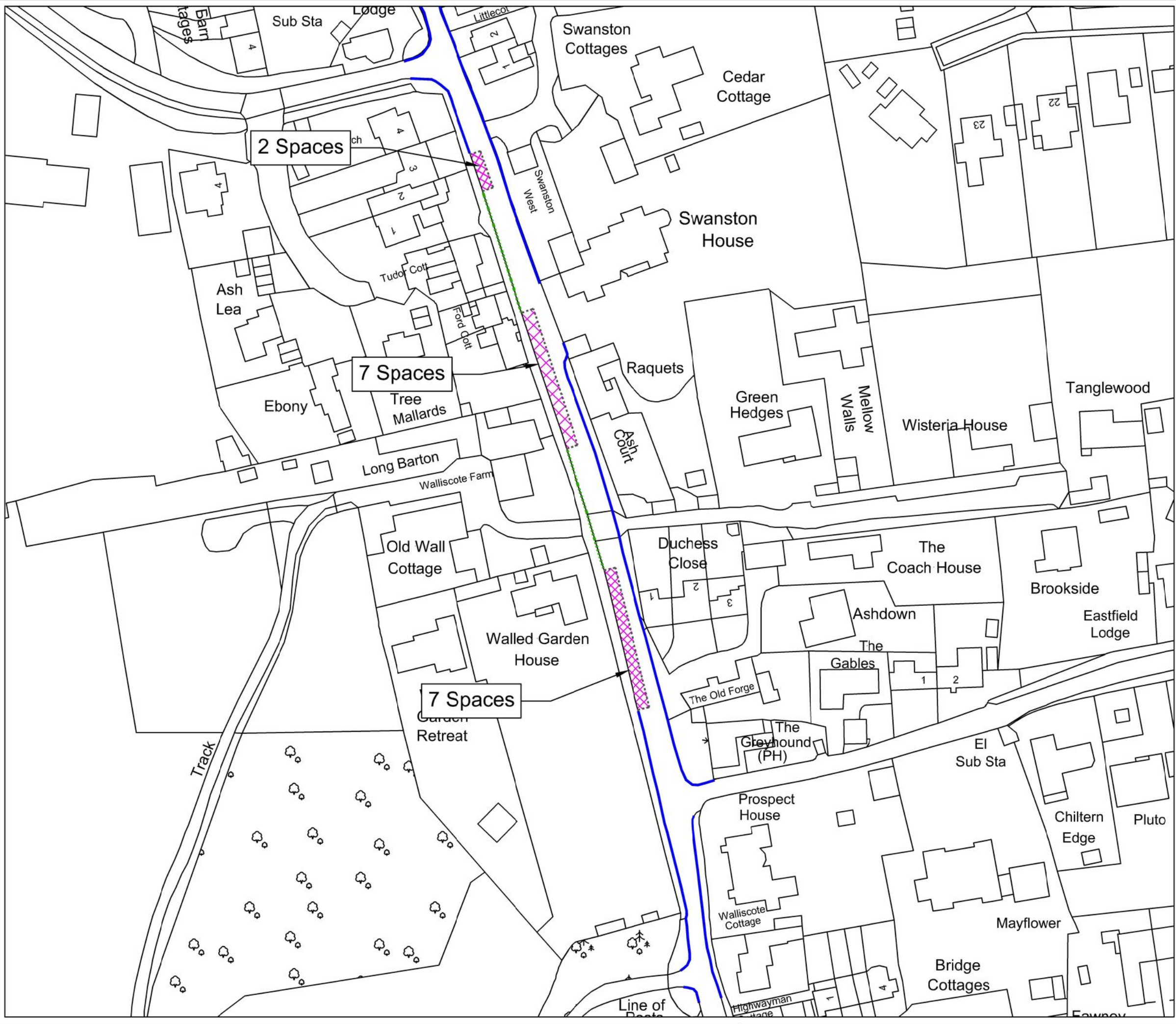
Scale @ A3	Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
1:1000	JC	JW	JW
	Date drawn 7 Jun 2022	Date checked 7 Jun 2022	Date approved 7 Jun 2022

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

Drawing No.

Revision 0

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Drawing No.

Revision 0

Proposed Parking Restrictions - Key

Proposed
No Waiting
At Any Time

Propose
No Waiting
Mon-Sat
8am to 5pm

Proposed
Shared Use
Permit Holders or
Limited Waiting 2 hours
and no return for 1 hour

For all line painting conservation width and colour to be used. Signs to be located on existing street furniture where possible. Boundary walls can be used for signs subject to property owner permission.

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Project title

Proposed Parking Restrictions
Whitchurch on Thames

Drawing title

Map 1
Shared Use Parking Bays
and No Waiting at Any Time

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Draft

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JW

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Revision 0

Whitchurch-on-Thames Traffic and Parking Survey, September 2021

Report of Findings

The 2021 Whitchurch-on-Thames Traffic and Parking Survey was commissioned, developed and delivered by the Traffic and Parking Working Group (TAPWG) on behalf of Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council in September 2021.

Hard copies of the survey were delivered by hand to every address in the Parish in the first week of September. An online version of the survey (using Google Forms) was made available on the village website on 4th September 2021. All households were encouraged to respond, and multiple responses were permitted from individual households. Completed paper questionnaires were returned to one of seven village addresses. The survey closed on 30th September 2021.

The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions, many of which were multi-part. Respondents were asked to supply their name and address. Several questions elicited attitudes towards issues and potential solutions relating to traffic and parking in the village using a five-point Likert scale. Free text comments were encouraged at the end of the questionnaire.

All paper questionnaires were collated, and data were inputted by three members of TAPWG using the online version of the questionnaire, creating one central database.

Data cleaning and analysis was undertaken by one member of TAPWG, and preliminary analysis of the dataset was presented at the TAPWG meeting on 28th October 2021. Several lines of enquiry were developed at this meeting, and further analyses were undertaken of the data set.

All data have been processed in line with GDPR requirements.

Responses were received from 178 unique respondents, from 164 unique residences. The crude response rate is 51%.

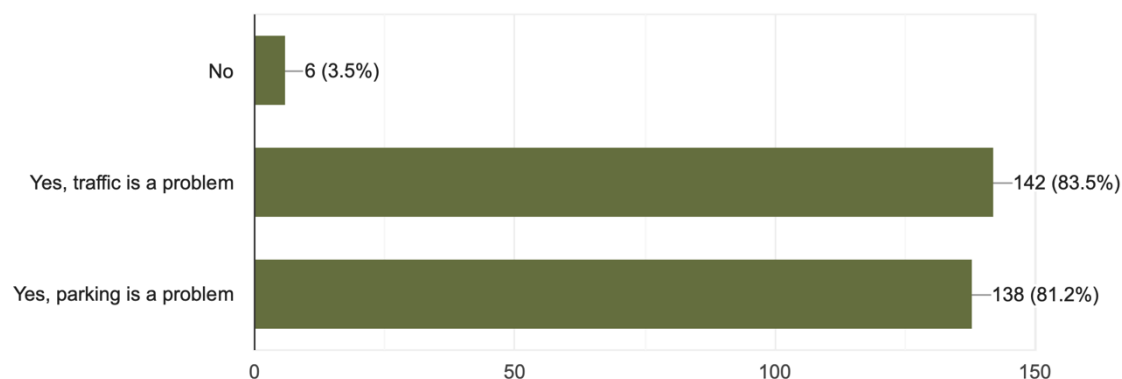
The name and address field (question 1) was completed partially/fully in 172/178 (97%) of returned questionnaires. Question completion was variable, and thus denominators vary by question. Data are generally presented as counts and percentages of responses.

Several responses were stratified by place of residence in the village. Using the response to question 1, responses were coded into one of six districts (Lower High St (bridge to Manor Road junction), Upper High St (Manor Road to Foxglove Manor including Hartslock Bridleway), Eastfield Lane, Manor Road, Hardwick Road, Swanston Field, and not supplied).

Question 2

170 respondents provided at least one answer to the question “Do you think traffic or parking are major issues for Whitchurch village? *(Please tick all that apply)*”

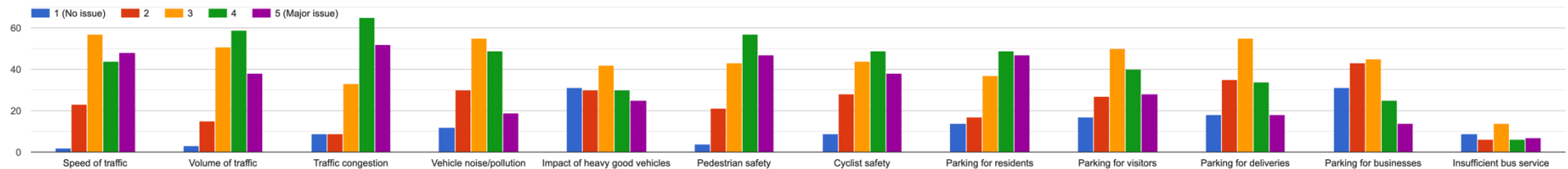
142/170 (83.5%) responded “Yes, traffic is a problem” and 138/170 (81.2%) responded “Yes, parking is a problem.” Note responses do not add up to 170, as respondents could tick all that apply.



Question 3

Question 3 asked respondents to mark on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (no issue at all) to 5 (major issue) their level of concern about 12 items relating to traffic and parking in the village. Responses varied by item. Total numbers of responses are presented by item in the histogram below:

If you think traffic and/or parking are issues, please say which of the following concern you, rating each with a tick from 1 (no issue at all) to 5 (major issue)



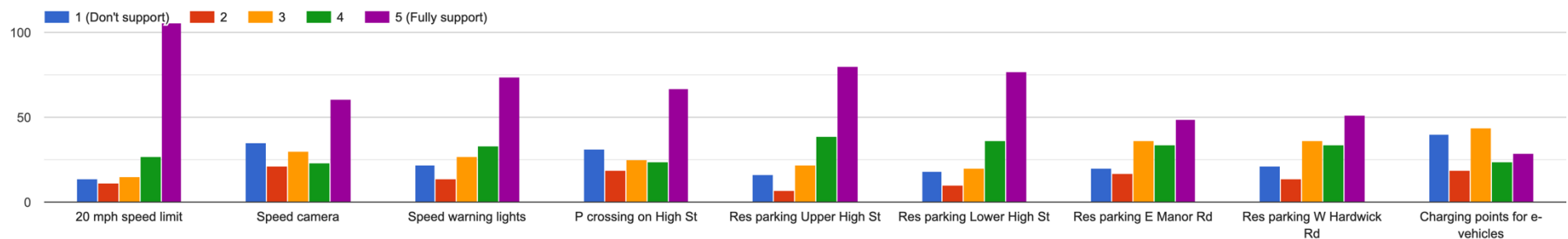
Expressed as a mean score, the highest scoring items (meaning those with the greatest expressed concern from respondents) were “Traffic congestion” (168 responses; mean score: 3.8) “Volume of traffic” (166 responses; mean score 3.7) and “Pedestrian safety” (172 responses; mean score 3.7).

Responses to question 3 were stratified by district of residence. Mean scores and distribution of scores (as demonstrated by histogram plot) were not seen to vary with any significance by district of residence.

Question 4

Question 4 asked respondents to mark on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (do not support) to 5 (fully support) their level of support of a range of possible measures to improve traffic and parking in the village. Responses varied by item. Total numbers of responses are presented by item in the histogram below:

Which, if any, of these measures to improve traffic and parking would you support, rating each with a tick from 1 (I do not support) to 5 (I fully support). (Options marked with an * would involve the use of single/double heritage-style yellow lines in the vicinity of the bays to aid enforcement)



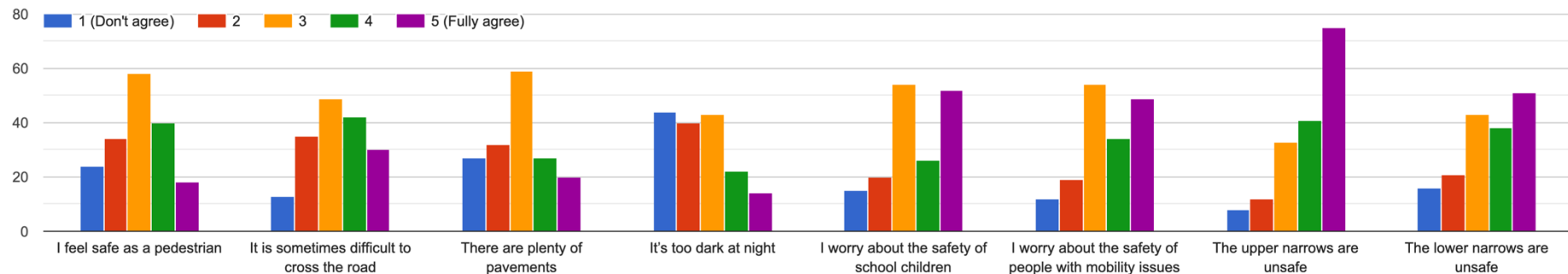
Expressed as a mean score, the highest scoring items (meaning those with the greatest level of support from respondents) were “20 mph speed limit” (173 responses; mean score: 4.2) “Resident parking in the Upper High St” (164 responses; mean score 4.0) and “Resident parking in the Lower High St” (161 responses; mean score 3.9).

Responses to question 4 were stratified by district of residence. Mean scores and distribution of scores (as demonstrated by histogram plot) were not seen to vary with any significance by district of residence.

Question 5

Question 5 asked respondents to mark on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (do not support) to 5 (fully support) their level of agreement with a range of statements made about walking in the village. Responses varied by item. Total numbers of responses are presented by item in the histogram below:

Here are some statements reflecting opinions and thoughts about walking through Whitchurch. Please rate your level of agreement with a tick with these statements from 1 (I do not agree) to 5 (I fully agree)



Opinions were divided on many of these topics. Expressed as a mean score, the highest scoring item (meaning that with the greatest level of agreement) was with the statement “The upper narrows are unsafe” (169 responses; mean score 4.0).

Responses to question 5 were again stratified by district of residence. Mean scores and distribution of scores (as demonstrated by histogram plot) were not seen to vary with any significance by district of residence.

Questions 6 and 7

Question 6 asked respondents about how many cars they currently own in their household. 176 responses were received. 54/176 (30.7%) reported owning one car, 90/176 (50.1%) owned two cars, 17/176 (9.7%) owned three cars, 3/176 (1.7%) owned four cars. 7/176 (4%) reported owning none. Mean car ownership was 1.73 cars and modal car ownership was 2 cars.

Question 7 asked respondents to indicate how many cars their household might own in 5 years' time. There was a suggestion that car ownership might decrease with a mean car ownership of 1.62 cars (but the modal car ownership remains 2 cars).

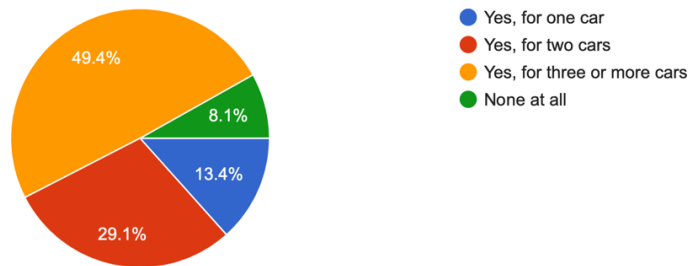
Car ownership or projections of car ownership were not seen to vary appreciably by district of residence in the village.

Questions 8 and 9

Question asked respondents to indicate whether they had access to private parking. 158/172 (91.9%) reported access to access to private parking for at least one car, and almost half had access to parking for three or more cars. 14/172 (%) respondents reported no access to private parking.

Do you have private parking?

172 responses



Of the 14 respondents reporting no access to private parking, 6/14 (43%) live in the Lower High St, 6/14 (43%) live in the Upper High St, and 2/14 (14%) live in Manor Road.

Of the 14 respondents reporting no access to private parking, the total number of cars owned is 22 (9 in the Lower High St; 9 in the Upper High St and 4 in Manor Road).

Question 9 asked respondents with private parking whether they had issues accessing it. Of 158 responses, 114/158 (72.2%) reported no issues. Several issues including difficult access due to traffic speed, sightlines, blind spots, and narrow points were cited by the remainder.

Question 10

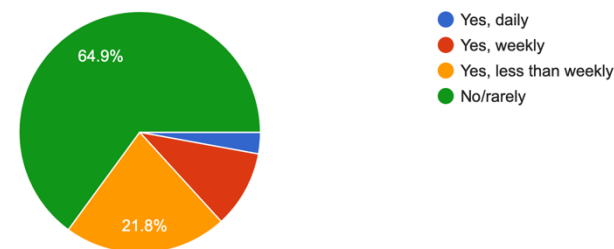
This question asked respondents about their requirement for regular on-street parking for visitors. 113/174 (65%) reported no requirement for regular on-street parking with a further 38/174 (22%) reporting a need for on-street parking less than weekly.

Question 11

This question asked respondents to indicate their likely requirements for access to parking if resident-parking or other restrictions were implemented. The question was completed by 66 respondents with the results presented adjacent (respondents could tick all that apply). The poor completion rate may indicate a lack of demand (very few respondents citing ample private parking provided a response to this question, for example). The low response rate may have reflected questionnaire “fatigue.” Alternatively, the question may have performed poorly, as little detail was provided about the nature of proposed restricted parking.

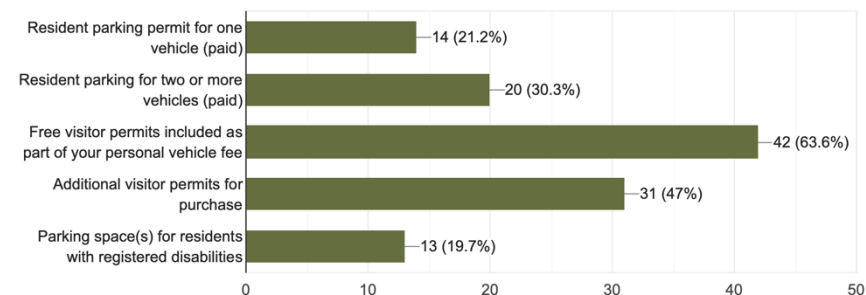
Excluding deliveries, do you have regular visitors who need on-street parking in Whitchurch?

174 responses



If parking restrictions are planned, would you need (tick all that apply):

66 responses



Question 12

Question 12 invited respondents to “jot down any thoughts or opinions regarding traffic and parking in Whitchurch that you have not had the opportunity to express.”

A response was provided by 134 respondents. A thematic review was undertaken by members of TAPWG with the following themes emerging:

- Respondents providing free text answers were largely in agreement with parking restrictions in Lower High St with limited hours
- Parking problems of a different nature in Manor Rd were a common theme
- Some concerns were raised regarding the “suburbanisation” of Whitchurch, with some keen not to impact upon the rural character of the village with yellow lines and street furniture and signage
- A 20mph speed limit was overwhelmingly supported



Word cloud generated by responses to question 12 -
the larger the word, the more frequent the mention

Conclusions and recommendations

TBC