

Highways and Environment newsletter





Welcome.

Welcome to the September 2019 Highways and Environment newsletter.

This publication is distributed monthly to members, town and parish councillors and other key decision makers.

Please take a few minutes to read it through. This month's newsletter looks at a number of services and events over the next few months.

Headline News

- **Additional Highway Funding**

See pictures of the work completed so far: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-asset-management

- **Additional Street Cleaning Funding**

See the work undertaken so far: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-streetscene-enhanced-services

- **Street Sparkle Days**

Schedule of visits: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-streetscene-enhanced-services

- **Weed Treatment Areas**

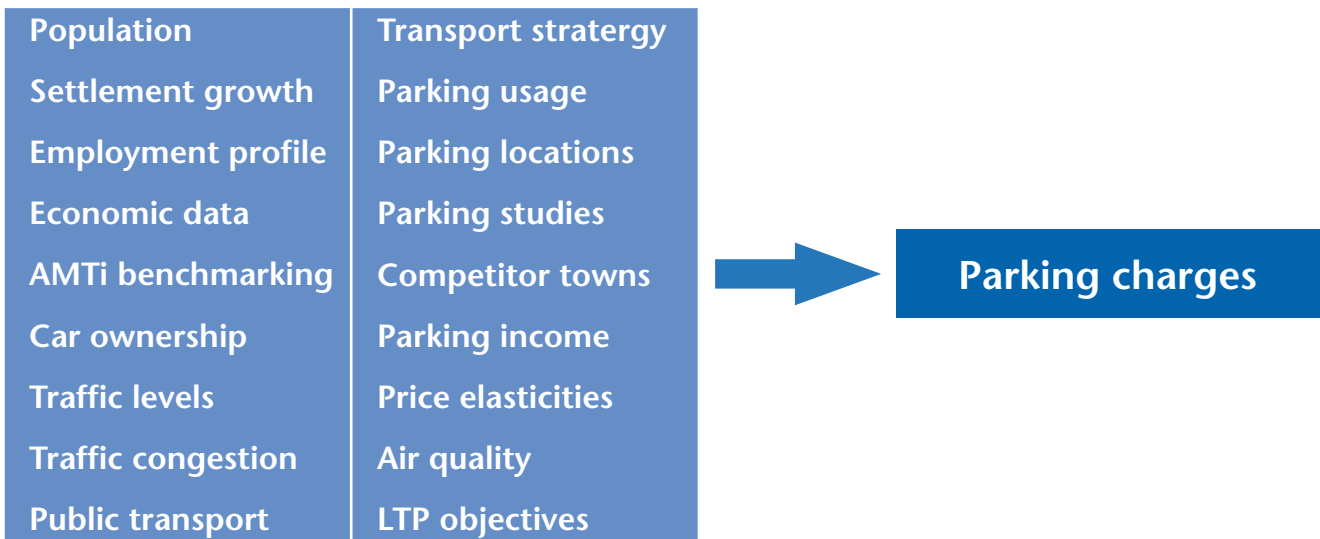
See maps of areas treated: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-streetscene-enhanced-services

The strategy behind parking charges

The current Car Parking Strategy sets out how parking management, including charging, is undertaken in Wiltshire. The strategy focuses on three key factors:

- Regeneration: using parking measures to support town centre regeneration.
- Restraint: using parking controls as a means of restraining / managing traffic and improving environmental quality, or to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes.
- Revenue: securing sufficient revenue to cover the costs of providing car parking, and using any surplus revenue to fund other important local services.

The strategy sets out a ‘fine grained’ approach to car parking management, and in particular charges, based on the local circumstances of each car park.



This is why parking charges differ across the local areas and the county itself. It ensures that parking charges reflect the local need and maximises the benefits of these vital assets to the community they serve.



Pavement parking and the law

In 2015 a private members bill was proposed in Parliament which would have made it an offence to park a vehicle on a pavement. However, the bill was withdrawn by Parliament shortly after the second reading in December 2015. Consequently it is still not necessarily an offence to park a vehicle on a pavement (except in London). However, there are a number of offences associated with the pavement parking may be applicable.



- To drive a vehicle on a footway (or pavement) is an offence under the Highways Act 1835 and is also prohibited by rule 145 of the Highway Code. This is enforced by the Police. Clearly any vehicle parked on a pavement will have most likely been driven on and the Police can take action if they consider appropriate.
- To park on a pavement in such a manner as to obstruct pedestrians from moving along it is an offence. This is enforced by the Police where a pedestrian wants to pass but is physically prevented from doing so by a parked vehicle.
- To damage a pavement by driving and/or parking on it is an offence. However it is necessary to prove that the pavement was undamaged before a vehicle was driven on it and that a specific vehicle has caused the damage. In practice this can be difficult to prove as most damage to the pavement/footways are likely to have been caused over a long period of time by repeated parking.
- It is an offence to park on a pavement which is adjacent to a carriageway which has yellow lines on it and Wiltshire Council's Parking Team can and will action these offences.
- The police can issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to motorists that leave their vehicle in a hazardous position, or a location that may impede wheelchair users. This includes parking in front of dropped kerbs

Other action undertaken can include:

- Physical highway changes to control parking, this will be taken through the local Community Area Transport Group (CATG) with an element of local funding.
- Working with the local community regarding local events, as these can often create parking issues and can be avoided by working with organisers to communicate appropriate parking arrangements.
- Businesses and schools can also impact on the availability of parking at certain times. Normally organisations are very conscious of the effect their arrangements have on local communities and will have plans in place. Discussing problems with them, will often resolve the problems.

When looking at parking amendments through regulations it is vital the wider picture is considered. Restricting parking in an isolated area will push vehicles to surrounding streets, may deter customers to businesses or increase traffic movements etc. bringing greater challenges, hence it is vital changes bring improvements, not more issues.

Road marking for vehicle crossing (bar markings)

A bar marking is an elongated white “H” which is located across a vehicular crossing, typically a driveway. The line is white and normally 75mm wide and extends across the dropped kerbs of the vehicular access.

The marking itself is non-enforceable. The purpose of the marking is to provide a reminder that parking across a dropped kerb causes an obstruction to people wishing to access or leave their property. Creating such an obstruction on the highway is an offence and the police may at their discretion issue a fixed penalty notice. However, it should be noted the police may have higher priorities to address.

The marking is provided solely to highlight the presence of your driveway / vehicular access to others wishing to park on that road. Should you park within the bar marking then it devalues the meaning and may indicate to others that you do not use your driveway.

The council recognises that a bar marking may be useful where on-street parking causes regular obstruction of a vehicular crossing. For the council to consider and approve your application you are required to:

- Provide evidence of obstruction i.e. photographic evidence,
- Provide evidence of visibility issues for vehicles exiting the drive or access,
- Provide evidence of commuter parking,
- Where a marking is required for a shared drive then the agreement of the neighbour is needed,
- Provide a plan of the proposed bar marking showing extents and dimensions
- Provide details of your preferred contractor to undertake the work

What the council cannot do.

- The council will not consider a bar marking where it may not be obvious an obstruction is occurring,
- A marking cannot be placed where yellow lining or zig-zag markings are present.
- The marking cannot be sited on the opposite side of the road to the driveway,
- You must have an appropriately constructed driveway / access. This means tarmacadam or other construction across the verge or footpath together with dropped kerbs.
- As a non-statutory service the council will authorise the positioning of a bar marking only.
- The installation of the marking will need to be executed by an approved contractor commissioned directly by the applicant.

You will need to apply by sending an email to the council at one of the following addresses:

centralhighways@wiltshire.gov.uk
northernhighways@wiltshire.gov.uk
southernhighways@wiltshire.gov.uk

There is an administration charge which covers the cost of inspecting the location and the council agreeing the application with you. The application is subject to highway engineer approval. The fee will not be reimbursed in the event the application is declined. Therefore, you should reflect on whether the bar marking is really necessary and that all the provided information has been considered.

You must provide details of a suitable contractor to undertake the work. The council's own contractor Ringway is the preference but you may seek out others. However, your choice of contractor will be subject to approval by Wiltshire Council. You will be required to arrange payment for the work directly with your chosen contractor.

Your chosen contractor will undertake the work at their convenience. You should be aware that during winter months there may be delays due to temperatures being too low for painting white lines.

After the bar marking is in place Wiltshire Council will take no responsibility for ongoing maintenance.

Advisory disabled parking bays

A disabled parking bay is a parking space in a residential area, marked with white paint with the words 'disabled' at the edge of the box.

A disabled parking bay can be used by any Blue Badge holder, and is not exclusively for the applicant's use. The parking bays are advisory only and not enforceable. A non-blue badge holder may park there without being penalised. Wiltshire Council can mark disabled parking bays on the highway if the resident requesting the disabled parking bay meets the required criteria and if the Council's highways team approve the location.

To be considered for a Disabled Parking Bay, an assessment will be undertaken by an occupational therapist employed by Wiltshire Council Adult Social Care. The occupational therapist will use the guidance in the Occupational Therapy guidelines to decide whether a disabled parking bay is indicated. To request an assessment a referral should be made to the adult social care team on **0300 456 0111** or email: **customeradvisors@wiltshire.gov.uk**

When the occupational therapist has agreed that the person is eligible for a disabled parking bay, the highways team will assess the location to ensure that it is safe. If the location is approved by the highways team, arrangements will be made for the bay to be painted and an indicative date for carrying out the lining will be given, subject to weather conditions and access arrangements.

The painted lines forming the advisory disabled parking bay markings usually last for about five years. Should an existing parking bay require re-painting, the resident should contact the adult social care team in the first instance on 0300 456 0111. If the provision of the disabled parking bay is still appropriate, the adult care team will contact the highways team to arrange the re-painting.

Advisory disabled bay markings are not provided in areas subject to other waiting restrictions as they cannot conflict with legal restrictions.



The future of parking in Wiltshire

Parking and the use of car parks has changed over recent years, and is likely to change even more over the next five years when new innovations are introduced.

This is both an opportunity and threat, as investing in technology is a long-term commitment and the risk is that you introduce a service that quickly becomes out of date. For example, investing heavily in fixed assets, such as payment machines, when payments can be made automatically via Apps on a phone.

Cashless and contactless payment methods are becoming more widespread and, for a large part of the population, the payment method of choice. Currently, Wiltshire Council operates the MiPermit system for cashless payment predominately over the phone, and cash payments at its machines.

Customers want to be able to pay for services as easily as possible, using new technologies where appropriate. Customers expect a quick and effortless service, and one way of doing this is to have an online parking account where drivers are able to manage their details and automatically pay for a service as they use it.

However, it must be noted that at a national level, pay and display methods using cash are still the most common parking payment method.

The council continues to investigate modern technologies to improve the parking experience. It continues to monitor the development of these technologies to identify the opportunities that are available today.

People are sometimes reluctant to set up a new payment account because this is unfamiliar. Any changes to parking payment methods must consider the customer base and demographics – i.e. an 'evolution' in parking payments rather than a 'revolution'.



Payment by coins

Where coins are accepted there is a cost to the council to collect and process the income. There is also the risk of break-ins to payment machines with a potential loss of income. Whilst the number of parking payment machines can be considered to determine whether a reduction can be made to generate a revenue saving on maintenance, unless the actual proportion of coins coming through the system is reduced there will not be a saving on the collection and processing costs.



Payment by credit / debit card/ contactless

A replacement programme of the older Pay and Display machines with new machines has been undertaken over the last 12 months – all new machines will be capable of accepting new payment consoles to accept contactless payments.

A trial in the Brown Street Car Park, Salisbury has just commenced and we will be keen to evaluate the use.



Payment by mobile phones / apps

Many people now manage their lives via their smartphones, so it is inevitable that mobile cashless parking is attractive to them. Parking using a cashless system is seen as quicker and more convenient by many customers, who do not have to stand in all weathers using a parking payment machine and can top up remotely if they stay longer than they had estimated when they first paid. 'MiPermit', is one of the largest providers of phone parking in the country and is the council's current provider.

The first time a customer uses the service they call the telephone number displayed on the car park signs, provide their car details and credit/debit card information, a location number and how long they want to park for. The customer's credit/debit card is billed immediately and the funds sent directly to the council's merchant account. Whenever the customer wishes to use the service again the system recognises their mobile telephone number and asks them to confirm the registration of the car they are parking (or lets them specify a different one) and the location code of the car park plus how long they wish to park. This call normally takes no longer than 30 seconds.

Customers can choose whether to receive a text reminder when their pre-paid parking is about to expire and they can extend their stay by making an additional call if they wish (assuming the particular car park terms and conditions allow it).



Cashless ANPR Parking

The parking industry has developed over recent years to include a number of other systems which provide parking using a 'cashless' system where the customer registers a parking activity using an online system and the car park is monitored by automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras to track usage of the car park.

These methods of parking payment continue to be actively considered by this authority. However, the government has legislated against enforcement by CCTV cameras, which presents a considerable risk over compliance and enforcement. This is a major barrier to this system in Wiltshire Council car parks.



Pay on foot

This would only be applicable to a small number of the council's parking areas due to the requirement to control traffic movements (barrier entry/exit to ensure payment). A Pay on Foot system enables users to park and not pay until they wish to leave. This means users do not need to worry about how long they stay and the possibility of receiving a penalty charge notice. It is also suggested that the longer someone stays, the more they are likely to spend in the local economy.

Schemes operated by other councils noted that no significant increase in income is experienced. An analysis of the average length of stay also suggests that this has not increased. These councils comment that the reason for the lower than expected increase in income may be due to a number of factors: the number of season ticket holders who use the car park along with commuters and some customers preferring other car parks.

There are also issues for: Blue Badge Holders and how they can exit without payment; drivers who arrive at the barrier without payment and need assistance; breakdown of barriers etc. These challenges whilst they can be overcome, mean that careful consideration on any implementation has to be undertaken to ensure the customer sees a benefit.

The council continues to monitor developments and considers future implementation.

Officers praised

Three enforcement officers have been praised by Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council for their support in dealing with an unauthorised encampment in the town.

Stephen Neate, Rebecca Davies and Andy Mullings were all thanked by the council for their hard work.



CAB

Bradford on Avon & Melksham CAB Andy Cadwallader
Chippenham and Corsham CAB David Arnup
Devizes and Pewsey CAB Richard Dobson
Malmesbury and Calne CAB Matt Perrot
Royal Wootton Bassett, Cricklade and Marlborough CAB Martin Cook
Salisbury and Southern CAB Graham Axtell
Tidworth and Amesbury CAB Andy Cole
South West CAB David Button
Warminster and Countywide Technical Denise Nott
Westbury and Trowbridge CAB Pat Whyte



Streetscene

Northern and Eastern Fiona Waind
Western and Southern Craig Campbell



Highways contact details

Bradford on Avon, Chippenham, Corsham, Melksham,
Trowbridge, Warminster and Westbury community areas:
centralhighways@wiltshire.gov.uk

Calne, Devizes, Marlborough, Malmesbury, Pewsey, Royal
Wootton Bassett & Cricklade community areas:
NorthernHighways@wiltshire.gov.uk

Amesbury, Salisbury, Southern, South West community areas:
southernhighways@wiltshire.gov.uk



Street cleaning and amenity

Streetscene@wiltshire.gov.uk



Parking

ParkingServices@wiltshire.gov.uk

