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**Meeting:** Traffic Management Committee

**Date:** 1 March 2011

**Subject:** Off-Street Car Park Order, Arlesey Community Centre

**Report of:** Basil Jackson, Assistant Director of Highways and Transport

**Summary:** This report provides the Traffic Management Committee with details relating to the proposed off-street car park Order for Arlesey Community Centre, High Street, Arlesey, following public consultation. The proposed Order was designed in light of a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

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**Contact Officer:** David Bowie, Head of Service, Traffic Management

**Public/Exempt:** Public

**Wards Affected:** Arlesey and Stotfold

**Function of:** Highways and Transport

## CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

### Council Priorities:

The Council priorities affected by this paper are:

- creating safer communities,
- managing growth effectively; and
- supporting and caring for an ageing population

### Financial:

Any improvements to the current parking situation at the Arlesey Community Centre should be designed to be cost neutral to the Council (i.e. costs for implementation, maintenance and enforcement should be covered by income). Currently the private car park has no parking controls and the disabled bays and the bays reserved for the Town Council are frequently abused by traffic on the school-run and by others throughout the day. If an Order was made for the car park, bringing with it the ability to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs), then permits could be sold for regular car park users and the use of the spaces could be enforced. The cost of a Traffic Regulation Order would be in the region of £4000 - £5000, with work costs of approximately £3000 - £5000 for the necessary signs and lines. Permits would be issued at a cost of £120 per vehicle, per annum. The implementation costs would be met from the Car Park Management & Maintenance budget and recovered over a period of three years.

### Legal:

In April 2009, Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) succeeded Bedfordshire County Council (BCC) as the highway and traffic authority for the road network in Central Bedfordshire. An important function of the traffic authority is to manage on and off-street parking. From February 2004, BCC delivered this aspect of its legal responsibilities through a contract with Vinci Park Services which is continued with CBC. To be legally enforceable, parking services must be compliant with the Traffic Management Act 2004. The lease agreement for the Arlesey site allows Central Bedfordshire Council to introduce parking charges for this facility.

**Risk Management:**

The key risk revolves around whether or not sufficient income would be accrued from parking fees/permits to cover the cost of implementing the Order. If the Order was not implemented there would be an increase in the risk of injudicious parking continuing and the council would have no power to control the situation by enforcement. There is no concern over the existing problem continuing if an Order is made for the car park as proposed.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

None as a result of this report.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

The proposed scheme was initially conceived as a result of a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsmen by a disabled motorist who was unable to utilise either of the two existing disabled parking bays. However, there are additional problems concerning the use of the car park in general and, following a number of site visits, a broader scheme was developed. Having the ability to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs), if the scheme is implemented, would allow the two existing disabled bays, and a third proposed disabled bay, to be controlled and would allow disabled motorists to rightly utilise the bays provided, thus having a positive effect on Equality and Human Rights. The numbers of disabled bays proposed is in accordance with current best practise and PPG13 guidance.

**Community Development/Safety:**

The Traffic Management Act was introduced in 2004 to tackle congestion and disruption on the road network. The Act places a duty on local traffic authorities to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic on their road network and the networks of surrounding authorities. The Act gives authorities additional tools to better manage parking policies, moving traffic enforcement and the coordination of street works which are all important components of community safety.

**Sustainability:**

The effective management of parking is a key part of accommodating Central Bedfordshire's growth agenda and ensuring that the district is "open for business".

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

**To approve the proposed off street car park Order and scheme design for the Arlesey Community Centre car park and to approve the introduction of permit parking for current users of the private car park.**

## **Background**

### **Policy context**

- 1 Parking plays a key role in Central Bedfordshire's transport policies. It provides the opportunity not only to stimulate economic growth, particularly retail growth but also, where appropriate, to manage demand to help control congestion.
- 2 A key element of parking policy is enforcement. Effective parking enforcement serves the following objectives:
  - (a) provides a safe and free-flowing road environment by discouraging injudicious on-street parking;
  - (b) supports economic regeneration and local businesses by providing safe, convenient and competitively priced off-street parking;
  - (c) promotes sustainable transport; and
  - (d) provides residents with a fair opportunity to park within the street in which they live, free from commuters and shoppers.

### **Current Parking Situation**

3. The current parking problem at the Community Centre car park arises in the main from school-run traffic with parents injudiciously parking their cars in any possible place to drop off or collect their children. This has led to a formal complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman from a patient at the Health Centre who was unable to utilise either of the 2 existing disabled parking bays, owing to them being continually occupied by parents and delivery vehicles. Furthermore there is a concern for the safety of children and legitimate users of the car park owing to motorists driving without due care when entering and exiting and manoeuvring within the car park.
4. The car park is also used by various clubs and organisations who utilise the Community Centre and, at times, those users are also inconvenienced by the poor parking and current use of the car park. Currently these users do not pay to use the car park for their activities and, under the current proposal, would be able to utilise the free public car parking areas in the rear of the car park to access the Community Centre. Parking bays will be marked in the rear area of the centre to facilitate easier and more structured parking.

### **Proposed Solution**

5. Do Something:

A total redesign of the car park which incorporates: an extra disabled bay (bringing the total to 3); a combined loading/ambulance bay to ensure such parking is removed from the disabled area; marked, reserved permit holder bays for the Town Council, doctors' surgery and other identified existing users, and five timed bays to allow users to visit the doctors' surgery without fear of penalty. To stop longer stay abuse of the parking area it is proposed these bays will be limited to 60 minutes waiting with no return within 4 hours.

6. Do Minimum:

Implement a Traffic Order on the 2 existing disabled bays to allow enforcement of these bays only.

**Advertised Scheme**

7. The "Do Something" option which will allow for full control of the car park has been officially advertised. The Do Minimum option is not favourable as this would not be an effective use of funds as just having 2 disabled bays to enforce in Arlesey would not be a good use of Parking Officer time in that location, and would make the cost of the Order unduly prohibitive.

**Consultation**

8. The Off-Street Parking Order was advertised on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2010 with comments to be received no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2010. The documents were made available at Central Bedfordshire Council offices, the Town Council office and the local library.

**Objections**

9. In total 3 objections to the proposals were received. The objections were received from: the Honorary Chairman of the Arlesey Short Mat Bowls group; a resident of High Street, Arlesey, who is a Medical Centre user and a Short Mat Bowls group member, and the Town Council. The objections can be outlined as follows:

The Short Mat Bowls group hire the Community Hall and have the feeling that if more designated/permit bays are implemented then their members will have fewer car parking spaces available for their period of hire. In summary their feelings are that the scheme will “reduce parking capacity considerably and cause chaos to our members and others”.

**OUR RESPONSE: *There is ample parking at the rear of the car park in question where we have agreed to mark out free parking bays to allow for visitor parking.***

The resident’s concern is over the timed bays which allow just 30 minutes waiting. The resident had had to visit the Medical Centre with his wife and the visit took approximately an hour, which is twice the proposed waiting limit. He had a further concern in his role as a bowls group member and where the proposed restrictions would leave him and fellow members with respect to where they could park.

**OUR RESPONSE: *There is ample parking at the rear of the car park in question where we have agreed to mark out free parking bays to allow for visitor parking. We have agreed to amend the original timed bays in the front car park to 60 minutes waiting with no return within 4 hours.***

The Town Council object to the 30 minutes proposed waiting time on the 5 timed bays, saying that this does not allow adequate time for patients at the Medical Centre. They also have a concern over the timed bays, in that organisations such as the Blood Donor Service are at the Medical Centre for a morning or afternoon 3 times a year, baby and toddler groups use the Community Centre and other clubs, including slimming and the bowls group also use the facility. It is also felt that the proposed Car Park Order would just add to the already considerable parking problem with parents flouting it when dropping off and collecting their children. In summary, the Town Council feel that the proposal is penalising genuine users of the car park and giving greater force to parents and other abusers of the private car park. They also had an issue if any charges were to be imposed for the implementation of permits.

**OUR RESPONSE: *There is ample parking at the rear of the car park in question where we have agreed to mark out free parking bays to allow for visitor parking. The Blood Donor Service will be able to use the combined Ambulance/Loading Bay. There is a clause in the lease agreement for the Town Council, and other occupiers of the premises who use the car park, that charges can be introduced to cover parking on top of the peppercorn rent.***

## **Conclusions**

10. That the proposed scheme be considered by the Traffic Management Committee for the desired outcome of improving road safety and controlling injudicious parking, thus allowing genuine users to park without obstruction in the car park. To consider the received objections and the responses to the objections and make a measured decision as to whether to overrule the objections and allow the scheme as proposed to go ahead or to agree with the objections and stop the scheme progressing.
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## **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Scheme design and objections

ARLESEY SHORT MAT BOWLS

31 Stotfold Road  
Arlesey  
Beds  
SG15 6XL



B Jackson  
Asst. Director Highways  
Parking Places  
Technology House  
239 Ampthill Road  
Bedford  
MK42 9QQ

24-08-10

PROPOSED NEW PARKING SPACES AT ARLESEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Dear Mr. Jackson

Members of the Arlesey Short Mat Bowls group, are just one of several organisations hiring the Village Hall for their activities. We are most concerned that the proposal to introduce yet more designated parking spaces will further reduce the capacity for our members to secure a parking space for their period of hire.

On site there are already clearly marked parking bays on the ground for disabled parking, also a notice secured on the wall to that effect. Doctors spaces are also reserved, and a number of metal arms, secured to the ground are there to reserve others. A further upright notice clearly states who are the legitimate users of the car park namely The Resource Centre, The Doctors surgery, the Village Hall and the Arlesey Youth Centre.

To introduce yet more designated spaces will reduce parking capacity considerably and cause chaos to our members and others.

Can I therefore request these proposals are abandoned and consultation takes place with on site occupiers in order to examine the current situation and establish a fair parking facility to encompass the parking needs of both occupiers and users of the Community Centre.

I await your reply

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doreen J Rix".

Doreen J Rix Hon Chairman.

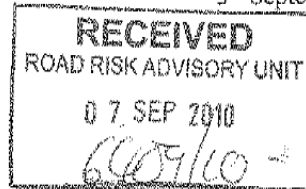
Doreen  
9/9/2010

218 High Street  
Arlesey  
Beds  
SG15 6TD

Tel: 01462-731309

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2010

Mr Paul Salmon  
Traffic Management Team  
Central Bedfordshire Council  
Technology House  
239 Ampthill Road  
Bedford  
MK42 9QQ



Dear Mr Salmon

I refer to the Central Bedfordshire Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2010 dated 13<sup>th</sup> August 2010 concerning the Village Hall area in Arlesey. Are you sure that this matter has been thought through?

Yesterday I had to visit the Medical Centre. I am 80 years old and have a condition which meant that I could not walk there, so I drove myself (my wife is also 80 and no longer drives). I was there for an hour. Where does your proposed new order put me? I am not alone in this situation, I am sure.

I am a member of the Arlesey Short Mat Bowls Group which meets at the Village Hall every Friday afternoon. We are there from 1.30 p.m. until about 4.15 p.m. We are all pensioners and come by car (you try carrying full-sized woods any distance). How are we going to be catered for? Are you going to stop us from using a village amenity which has been in existence since the late 1970's? There are other organisations which use the Village Hall during the week which will be similarly affected.

I note that there will be certain spaces reserved for permit holders – presumably Medical Centre Staff, Arlesey Town Council Staff, Resource Centre Staff and the like. These, I trust, will be free permits otherwise I can see even more street parking, thus making the situation even more dangerous around the School.

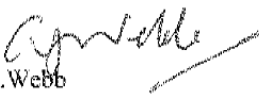
The underlying reason for all this I understand. Mums these days think that the children have got no legs. However there must be alternatives to the drastic measures proposed.

Your response to these points would be appreciated – and a personal one – not a computer generated missive.

With anticipated thanks,



Yours faithfully,

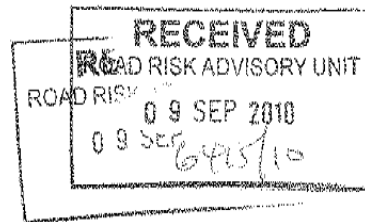
  
A.J. Webb



Town Council Office: Arlesey Community Centre, High Street, Arlesey, Beds SG15 6SN  
Telephone: 01462 733722 Fax: 01462 730860 Email: atc@btinternet.co.uk  
Web Site: arleseystc.co.uk

Town Clerk: Mrs Elsie Hare

Mr Paul Salmon  
Traffic Management Team  
Central Bedfordshire Council  
Technology House  
239 Ampthill Road  
Bedford  
MK42 9QQ



9 September 2010

Dear Mr Salmon

**Central Bedfordshire Council (Off-street Parking Places Order) 2010 - Consultation**

Arlesey Town Council considered the consultation concerning the Medical Centre, Arlesey at their Council meeting held on Tuesday 7 September 2010.

In their deliberations the Town Council feels you have not addressed key issues in the correct way by not consulting the daily users of the Community Centre, who have to park because they work there. Consideration has not been given to the patients that attend the Medical Centre. Instead it gives more access to abusers of the car park.

The Community Centre has many visitors throughout the day. There are many reasons why up to 30 minutes parking is totally unreasonable, some are listed below.

- Doctors' patients may need more than 30 minutes especially if they need to undergo treatment
- The Village Hall has continuous activities during the day throughout the week

For example the Blood Donor Service visits at least three times a year and are there all day, long morning sessions for parents and toddlers are held twice a week. There is a morning slimming club session, a Baby Signing Session and a bowls club on Friday afternoons. The visitors to all

these activities always stay longer than 30 minutes. In the future other activities may come along where attendees will stay for longer than 30 minutes

- The Resource Centre and Library have activities for parents, babies and toddlers that last longer than 30 minutes. Other users and visitors of the Resource Centre are often there longer than 30 minutes

If this Order proceeds in this format you will be giving permission to the unruly, rude and irresponsible parents to park in the car park. They already take down bollards of the staffs' reserved car parking spaces in order that they can park their cars while they take their children to school. They also park in the disabled and ambulance bays and then campaign for parking spaces for the few minutes they need to drop off and pick up their children. Some parents don't park, as they are in too much of a hurry, they drop off their children in the car park traffic. Some parents will walk behind our cars when we back them in to park. All of this has been witnessed by one of your own officers.

The police have suggested there is plenty of parking in nearby roads near the school for parents to then walk them safely to school. There are also areas near the school where parents can park has the consultation taken in only the Community Centre issues when there are wider problems to address.

Therefore the Town Council objects most strongly as the consultation does not fully address the issues. It penalises the people who work at the Community Centre, patients of the Health Centre and regular users of the Village Hall who need to park much longer than the permitted 30 minutes stay. The Council will object if charges are made for permits for people who work at the Community Centre

The Town Council feels the scheme is unworkable and doesn't believe the car park will be policed after a few weeks. Therefore we invite you to come along to have a meeting with the Members of the Town Council and if need be Dr Atias before any final decision is made.

Yours sincerely



Elsie Hare  
Town Clerk




**Off Street Parking Places Order**  
2010

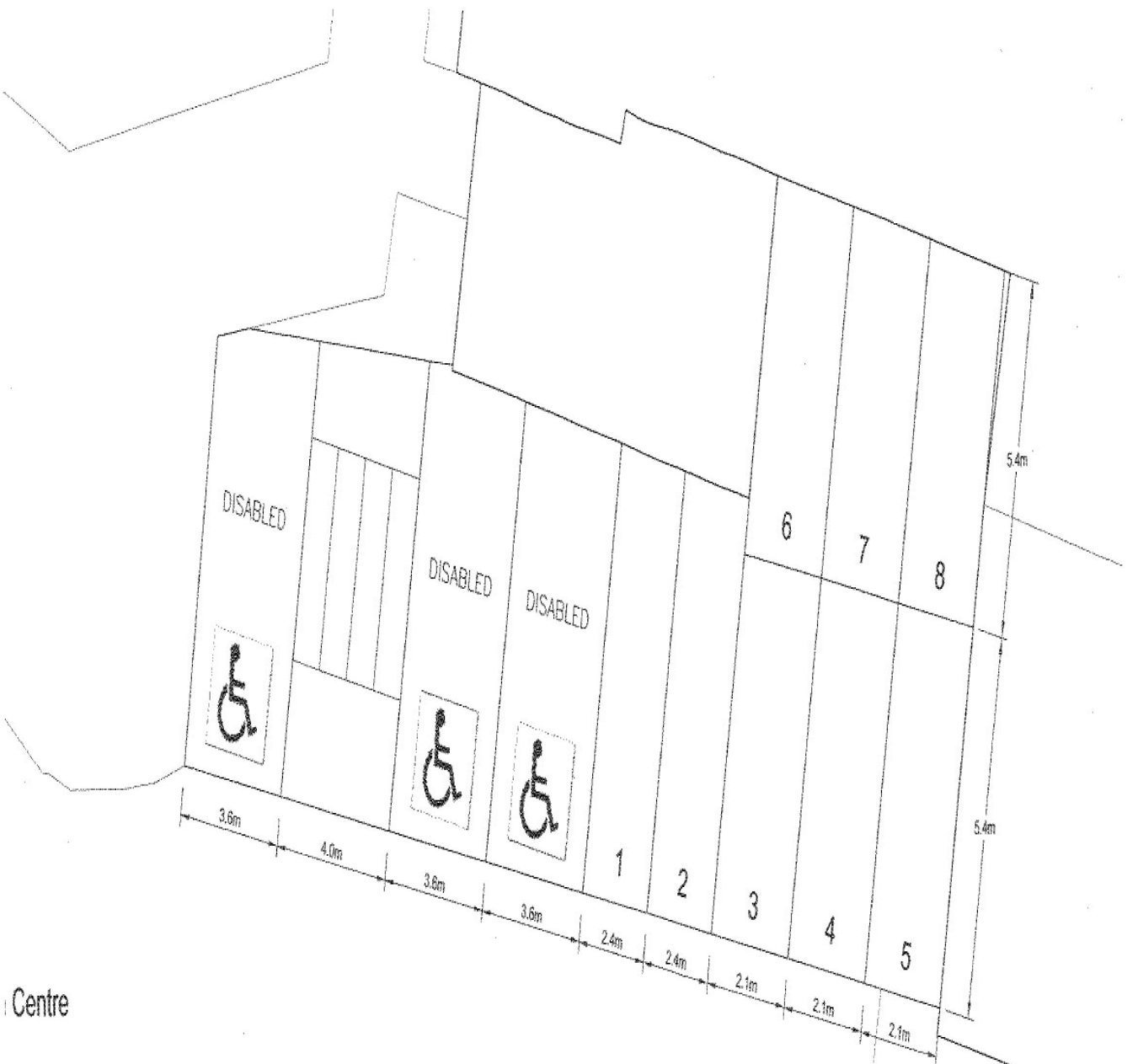
Arlesley Medical Centre Car Park  
High Street, Arlesley

Plan 15

Drawing Number:	2010/15
Date:	21/07/10
Scale:	1:500

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Centre

