
Meeting: Delegated Decisions by the Executive Member for Community Services on Traffic Regulation Orders

Date: 13 September 2016

Subject: Church Street, Ridgmont – Consider objections to Removal of Residents Permit Parking Scheme

Report of: Paul Mason, Head of Highways

Summary: This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Community Services for the removal of the existing residents permit parking scheme in Church Street, Ridgmont

RECOMMENDATION(S):-

That the existing residents permit parking scheme in Church Street be retained.

Contact Officer: Gary Baldwin
gary.baldwin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Cranfield and Marston Moretaine

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS
<p>Council Priorities: The proposal will improve access to parking for some road users and will help disabled blue badge holders find a parking space.</p> <p>Financial: Work will be funded from minor traffic management and parking budgets.</p> <p>Legal: None from this report</p> <p>Risk Management: None from this report</p> <p>Staffing (including Trades Unions): None from this report</p>

Equalities/Human Rights:

None from this report

Community Safety:

None from this report

Sustainability:

None from this report

Budget and Delivery:	
Estimated cost: n/a	Budget: n/a
Expected delivery: n/a	

Background and Information

1. The Council received complaints over a number of years about non-resident parking in Church Street. As a result, in April 2015 the Council published a proposal to introduce a residents' permit parking scheme in Church Street and Segenhoe Close. Objections were considered and it was decided that the scheme would be restricted to Church Street only as there was little support from residents of Segenhoe Close. The residents permit scheme came into operation in October 2015.
2. The Council subsequently received correspondence from Ridgmont Parish Council (see Appendix D) requesting this Council to remove the permit scheme. The Parish Council undertook a survey of residents of the area, carefully considered the matter and voted unanimously to ask for the scheme to be removed.

Central Bedfordshire Council undertook its own informal consultation, which indicated mixed views. Feedback from that exercise suggested that there are several disabled drivers living in the area who would be disadvantaged if the parking scheme was removed and no other measures put in place.

3. As a result, the Council published a formal proposal to remove the permit parking scheme and provide two disabled parking spaces.
4. The proposals were formally advertised by public notice in June 2016. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, Ridgmont Parish Council and the Ward Members. Residents were individually consulted by letter.

Objections and Officer Responses

5. A total of 4 objections were received, all from residents of Church Street who are currently eligible to apply for a residents permit. The main issues raised were as follows:-
- a) The views of residents of High Street are being taken more seriously than the feelings of those who live in Church Street.
 - b) Residents of High Street are able to park outside their own homes, on other lengths of road or in the car park in Segenhoe Close. Now that Ridgmont has been bypassed there is no problem with parking on the High Street.
 - c) The existing scheme works very well and also allows unhindered access for emergency vehicles, carers and visitors.
 - d) The residents of the bungalows in Church Street rely heavily on support services due to their age and/or medical conditions, so carers and relatives need to be able to park close by.
 - e) The disabled parking spaces will not help.
 - f) The proposed disabled parking bays should be on the other side as the bungalows on that side have larger front gardens, so the parked cars will not block natural light into their homes.

6. Officer response:-

Most residents of High Street have unrestricted on-street parking outside their homes, but in some cases, not enough to fulfil their needs. Hence, Church Street does provide a convenient and safe place to park. There is a car park in Segenhoe Close, which appears to have spare capacity and Aragon Housing has agreed to extend it. Use of this is unrestricted, so is available to residents of High Street.

The existing scheme has the effect of keeping that length of Church Street near to the bungalows reasonably clear of parked cars, so does help their visitors. The permit scheme has a 1 hour permit-free period which is ideal for short stay visitors, such as carers. Given that the bungalows are set very close to the road, it is understandable that the residents feel that parked cars to the front of their homes are quite imposing and restrict their natural light.

The proposed disabled parking bays would help in the respect that disabled residents of the bungalows should be able to find a parking space close to their homes. It is a fact that any blue badge holders could use one of the spaces, but in a village road of this kind, this is unlikely to occur on a regular basis. It would be feasible to re-locate the disabled bays to the other side, but the Council would have to give those affected the opportunity to comment on it.

It is unusual for the Council to introduce permit parking on a single road with such a small number of dwellings. The permit income will never cover the cost of implementation and ongoing enforcement. Hence, officers would not usually recommend a permit scheme on this scale. However, having introduced the parking scheme, there does seem to be some merit in retaining it. There would appear to be adequate parking available in the general area to satisfy the needs of High Street residents.

The length of Church Street covered by the existing permit parking scheme can accommodate 9-10 vehicles. If the two disabled spaces were installed, this would reduce it by 3 spaces due to the extended length of a disabled bay. Hence, the removal of the permit scheme and installation of two disabled spaces would free up 6-7 parking spaces.

7. On balance, it is felt that the permit parking should be retained as it appears to benefit those who live in Church Street. The permit scheme covers a short length of road with adequate parking available nearby to satisfy the needs of those who do not live in Church Street.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Public notice

Appendix B – Drawings of Proposals

Appendix C – Written representations

Appendix D – Ridgmont Parish Council letter



PUBLIC NOTICE

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO REMOVE THE EXISTING RESIDENTS PERMIT PARKING AND INTRODUCE PARKING PLACES FOR DISABLED BADGE HOLDERS IN CHURCH STREET, RIDGMONT

Reason for proposal: The residents permit parking scheme that was introduced last year is causing inconvenience to some residents of the area. A preliminary consultation indicated that most of those living in the general area favour removal of the parking scheme. A number of disabled blue badge holders live in Church Street, so the Council is proposing to provide two dedicated disabled spaces for them.

Effect of the Order:

To remove the existing 1 hour Limited Waiting with No Return within 2 hours, except Permit Holders, on the following length of road in Ridgmont:-

Church Street, from a point approximately 2 metres south-east of the front wall of no.72 High Street extending in a south-westerly direction to a point approximately 2 metres south-east of the front wall of no.1 Segenhoe Close.

To introduce Parking for Disabled Badge Holders only on the following length of road in Ridgmont:-

Church Street, from a point in line with the north-west flank wall of no.1 Church Street extending in a south-westerly direction for approximately 13 metres.

Further Details may be examined during normal office hours at the address shown below, viewed online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices or tel. 0300 300 5003.

Comments should be sent in writing to the Traffic Management team at the address below or e-mail traffic.consultation@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk by 1 July 2016. Any objections must state the grounds on which they are made.

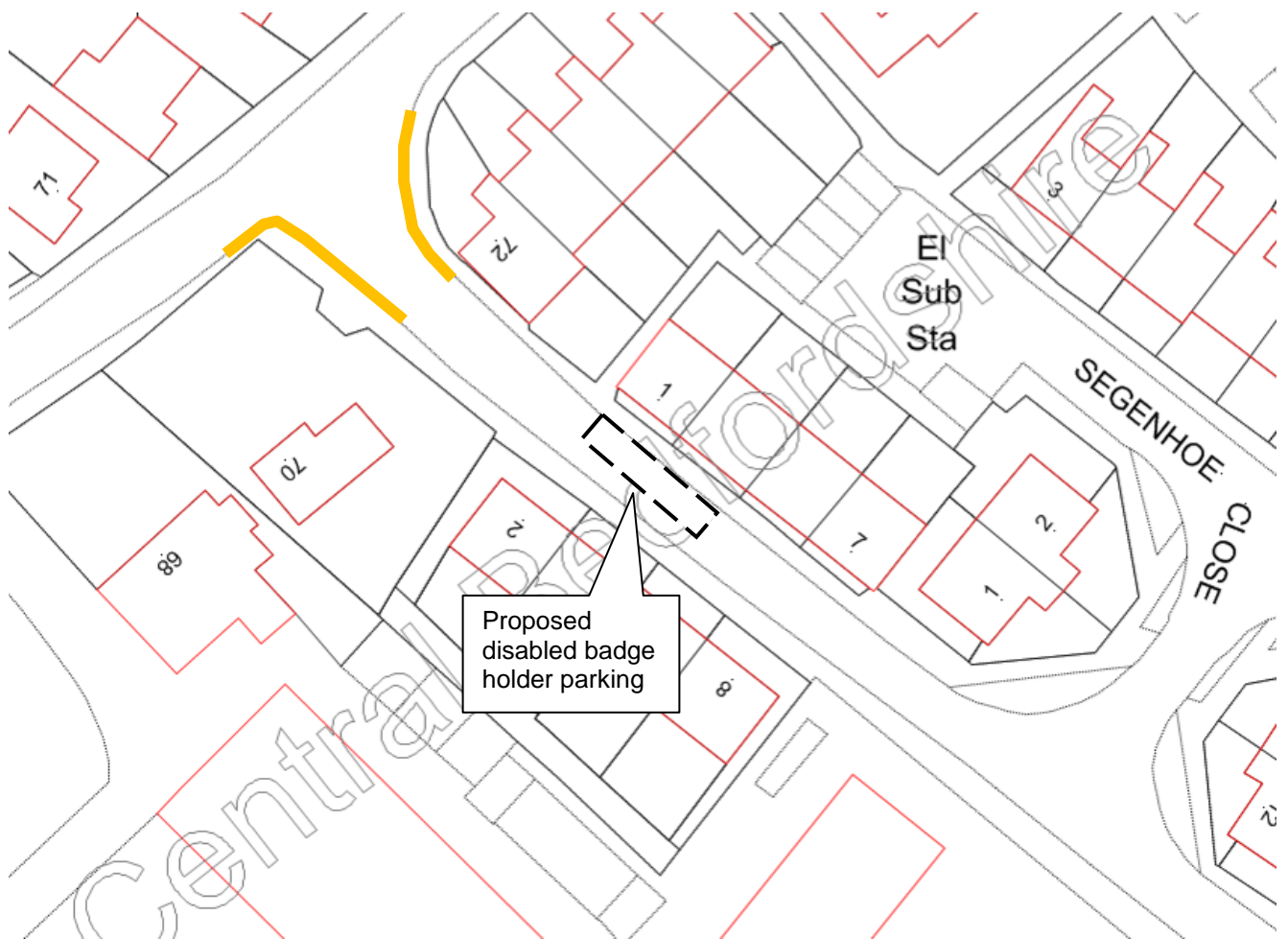
Order Title: If made will be "Central Bedfordshire Council (Bedfordshire County Council (District of Mid Bedfordshire) (Civil Enforcement Area and Special Enforcement Area) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2008) (Variation No.*) Order 201*"

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Chicksands
Shefford SG17 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait
Director of Community Services

2 June 2016

Appendix B



Appendix C

As requested; I'm putting in writing my objection to the parking proposal for Church Street.

Further to our telephone conversation on Tuesday 7 June 2016, regarding the cancellation of the resident street parking permits. You are now returning to the free for all, that existed prior to the installation of the permit scheme. Except for the two Blue Badge invalid car users parking spaces, that you've put outside numbers 1 and 3 Church Street which is on the left hand side of the road. Had you visited Church Street prior to this making this arbitrary decision, you would know that the bungalows on this side of the street, have their bedrooms and living rooms facing the street and are approximately 1.5 metres from the curb. Now everyone on the left hand side will have only parked cars to look at, and have our daylight completely blocked by said vehicles.

It seems to me that our views are subservient to those of the people living in the High Street, and they wish to return to parking their cars, vans and trucks in Church Street. If you visited and looked at the situation you might see, that it is totally unnecessary to pander to these selfish people. The persons who instigated the petition, have ample parking within the boundaries of their properties as do all their neighbours. Now that the High Street is not a major through link road, those people have been able to park on that thoroughfare...the fact that they can't be bothered to follow the Highway Code, and park both sides of the road is sheer bloody-mindedness on their part.

I look forward to receiving your response to this email, that you have requested for the proposed council meeting on this situation.

Firstly, I am disappointed to note that despite acknowledging my email of 21st April last, Gary Baldwin stated that he would reply in due course, to date, I do not appear to have received a response. I may also add that I have yet to receive any follow up correspondence from Ridgmont Parish Council as they have not taken the time to respond to my email – dated 22/3/16 – apart from acknowledging receipt.

I have corresponded with the Aragon H.A residents of Church Street, who have kept me updated with the letters that they have received from your department. I am therefore disappointed to note that your letter to the householders – dated 1/6/16 – proposing to remove the permit parking scheme, has clearly not taken on board the strong views of the actual 8 residents who live in that part of Church Street, but you appear to be favouring local residents who live in the vicinity. It also appears that you have listened to local people and are more concerned that they are able to park their car on Church Street for their benefit as opposed to the 8 residents in the bungalows who rely heavily on support services, due to their age/medical conditions.

You state in your reason for the proposal that the residents permit parking scheme introduced last year is 'causing inconvenience to some residents of the area'. Are these people inconvenienced because they live within metres of the entrance to Church Street and would prefer not to park outside their house on a busy road? Moreover, you propose to provide two dedicated disabled spaces for 'a number of blue badge holders who live on Church Street'.

I would like to re-iterate my points as to why I support the residents as follows and raise the following:

- Where and what is your proof that local residents have been inconvenienced?
- How will x2 dedicated blue badge holder spaces help with controlling traffic & cars parking outside the bungalows – and allow for emergency vehicles to reach residents.

- It has been noted that an anonymous person has covered up the x2 existing signs regarding the permit parking scheme to Church Street with a black sac. Is this not intimidation and why have the sacs not been removed by someone from Highways?
- Since these signs were erected last year, the scheme has worked 'brilliantly' and not hampered emergency services, professionals or visitors to the bungalows. Some of these residents rely heavily on the support from a medical/caring capacity. It was reported that on x2 occasions where emergency vehicles were called out to the bungalows during the last couple of years in response to a 999 call. They were hampered by parked cars and unable to get the ambulance and fire rescue vehicle along Church Street. Surely this fact alone warrants careful consideration as to continuing the permit parking scheme.
- 4 bungalows have their bedrooms and living rooms facing the street and are approximately 1.5 metres from the curb. The new regulations would allow vehicles to block daylight and impact on the view from a living room as the residents will be looking out onto a parked car/van.
- It appears that the person who initiated the petition lives on the High Street. How has restricted parking on Church Street affected their quality of life?

To reiterate, I fully support the 8 Aragon H.A residents and hope that you look favourably at their situation and disregard local people who, by most accounts the continuation of the permit parking scheme will not impact on their life as they are able to take alternative steps to parking.

A response to the contents of this email would be most welcomed.

Myself and the other 7 residents of Church street are gravely concerned that the parking scheme is, according to Mr Gary Baldwin, being considered invalid.

A week ago I had a bad fall in my garden, and fell heavily on my lawnmower whilst putting it away, besides heavy bruising, I cut my upper arm very deeply and realised that I would have to have stitches. Unfortunately all four members of my family were away, so I called the care team that monitor these bungalows & fortunately they phoned the paramedics, and within 10 mins I had help as they arrived promptly, and were able to park just next door. That has not been the case in the past.

Why is Mr Gary Baldwin considering the views of some of the High street residents, who are able to park outside their houses, and deprive us of the same privilege? I am 72 years old with lots of health issues; my neighbour has been disabled since her twenties; my other neighbour has lost part of her body to cancer, and on the other side of the street we have another disabled man who also has to have a carer, plus three others who are well into their sixties, and don't want their sitting room and bedroom windows blocked by lorries and vans. I myself had a problem with a huge pantechicon who couldn't manoeuvre into the nursery, so parked in front of their gates and no. 8 next door, within inches of my car, photo enclosed.

In short we are being bullied now, because we managed to get the parking for residents, as other Aragon care homes have, despite opposition from just a few High street residents who were used to park their extra 2nd & 3rd cars here. We have been threatened more than once, and I have had to call the police. Are you going to allow this to happen to elderly and infirm and vulnerable residents? I sincerely hope not.

I write with regard to your public notice referred to above to object in the most strongest terms. This scheme was finally introduced last November having been delayed due to IT/programming problems with the software. Since it came into effect it has been a resounding success as the residents have been able to park unobstructed and without difficulty. Additionally, it has stopped the parking outside bungalows 1, 3, 5 & 7 who have had their lives made a misery by inconsiderate vehicles obstructing their front doors and living room windows blocking both access and daylight. (The fronts of the bungalows are virtually on the public footpath and just a few feet from the road itself.)

The removal of this scheme in favour of 2 blue badge bays has already been discussed at previous traffic management meetings and was considered then to offer little/no benefit of the residents as it does not solve the problems and in some ways actually makes the problem worse. Church Street has long been considered by some residents as a car park, many of whom have their own drives or garages but prefer to park in Church Street rather than open their own gates or park outside their own windows. The houses within the adjoining roads all have either their own off-road parking or the ability to have it whereas the residents affected in Church Street do not as there is insufficient distance from the property to the footpath to allow it.

I fail to see how this parking scheme is causing inconvenience or to whom as the only residents affected are those too lazy to use the Car Park at the top of Segenhoe Close or to park further down the High Street towards the church where they can park easily if they need to. I note that some of the objectors rent garages from Aragon even though they are not Aragon residents and, despite these being few and at a premium, use them as storage units not as garages. (Aragon are aware of this but state it is difficult to police.) It is also disappointing that despite Aragon's Property Director having made an offer to Gary Baldwin to turn over the Segenhoe Car Park to C. Beds AND make additional Aragon land available to extend it, that this has not even been considered. It is also disappointing that neither Highways or the Parish Council have bothered to come and talk to the residents and actually see for themselves the issues that we face.

Finally, I would like to point out that myself and at least one other resident have been intimidated, verbally abused and physically threatened by certain of the objectors. Bedfordshire Police have been involved with warnings being issued to certain residents that they face criminal prosecution if they persist. (Crime/incident reports are filed with the Police.) We have been told that they intend to get the scheme removed and then they are going to make sure that we cannot park. This gives you an indication of the lack of consideration and the malicious intent of some. I state again, the removal/change to this scheme serves only to return us to the original problems and I object strongly.

Appendix D

RIDGMONT PARISH COUNCIL

Segenhoe Manor
Segenhoe
Ridgmont
Bedfordshire
MK43 0XW
maria.spearing@sky.com
01525 280753

Councillor Brian Spurr
Executive Member Community Services
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands
Shefford
Bedfordshire
SG17 5TQ

1st April 2016

By email: brian.spurr@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Dear Councillor Spurr

Re: Church Street Parking Scheme Ridgmont

I am writing on behalf of Ridgmont Parish Council with regard to the above parking scheme.

Since its implementation, the Parish Council has received representations from residents opposing the scheme, including a petition. Furthermore, it has caused unrest and disquiet within a very small community.

Therefore, in order to make an informed decision, regarding the merits of the scheme, and to give all concerned an opportunity to put forward their views, the Parish Council held an Open Meeting on 31st March. All residents were invited, and the Council personally leafleted those most affected.

Residents were given time to speak and notes made of the issues raised:

- Ample parking is available in Church Street
- Only 2 residents wanted the scheme out of the 8 who live in Church Street
- Parking on the High Street has become a problem
- The cost effectiveness of patrolling the scheme
- Urbanisation of the village
- The scheme has been policed several times and specifically at weekends
Resulting in residents being given a penalty charge
- The 1 hour parking scheme is not welcoming to visitors to the village; walkers, church users, and affects the small business owners in the village
- It has caused disquiet within a small community
- A letter was received from Aragon Housing supporting the scheme on behalf of the Church Street residents

In addition, prior to the Open Meeting, the Parish Council carried out its own research to ensure it made an informed decision:

- Church Street was visited on varied occasions and times, including a weekend, when the Parish church was being used for a christening, and found that there appeared to be no issue of parking space availability outside the Church Street bungalows
- It was noted that there may be an increase of vehicles wishing to park in the summer months at weekends
- The Parish Council was mindful of the issue of parking with regard to the needs of the residents of Church Street, who have disabilities and require carers to visit them in their homes. Therefore the council undertook to walk from various points in the village to Church Street to ascertain how long it would take a carer, who had to park a distance away from Church Street and walk. This was timed from the Eversholt Road, various points along the High Street, and from the Rose and Crown Public House car park. It was found that it would take a carer only a few minutes to reach Church Street
- It was also found that there was ample parking available to a carer in the locality, if they could not park in Church Street itself
- It was noted that since the implementation of the scheme, Ridgmont High Street has had an increased number of vehicles parking in the High Street, which has caused access problems for the school bus and emergency vehicles
- The Parish Council made inquiries regarding disabled residents and parking. They are able to submit an individual request to Central Bedfordshire Council for a disabled parking bay
- Aragon Housing were contacted to ascertain how many Church Street residents had contacted them, but to date there has been no reply

After listening to the views of residents, and taking careful consideration of all the issues, the Parish Council took a vote, which was unanimous.

The Parish Council would respectfully ask that Central Bedfordshire remove the Church Street Parking Scheme as soon as possible.

If you would like further information or wish to discuss this letter in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Spearing

Maria Spearing
Chair – Ridgmont Parish Council
Cc Cllr Matthews, Cllr Clark,
Cllr Morris, Paul Salmon CBC