



## SHOTLEY BRIDGE VILLAGE TRUST

### **Traffic & Parking Study - 2009**

'The Parking Lot', a focus group of the Shotley Bridge Village Trust, has undertaken this study.

Evidence was gathered, through surveys during August and September, to facilitate an informed discussion about parking and traffic issues in the village centre. The information, which has been summarised in this document, is available as technical evidence, for further analysis. The attached map shows the geographical area covered by the study.

### **Issues and problems**

Prior to carrying out the surveys, the group discussed the perceived issues and problems, including those that had been discussed at Village Trust Open meetings:

- Lack of parking spaces
- Parking on pavements – obstructing pedestrians particularly persons with push/wheel chairs.
- Driving along and reversing onto pavements - causing surface damage and danger to pedestrians
- Illegal parking – where there are waiting restrictions or across dropped kerbs
- Speed of traffic – on approach to the village centre and past the shops
- Little enforcement of parking restrictions
- Vehicles overtaking at speed on A691 & A694 approaching the village centre
- Parked cars on narrow roads obstructing service vehicles, particularly bin wagons
- Obstruction of drives and service access from parked vehicles
- Parking too close to or on junctions and bends
- Parking in front of shops for long periods preventing 'blue badge' parking and servicing
- Double parking on village car park overlapping the pavement
- Difficult for pedestrians to cross the road where there are parked cars and on 'blind' bends
- Lack of off street parking for new residential developments
- Public not allowed to use Crown & Crossed Swords PH car park
- No disabled parking bays

### **Survey results**

Surveys were carried out to find out about:

- Existing parking restrictions and parking areas
- The parking and servicing requirements of businesses and residents
- Traffic volumes and speeds
- Illegal parking
- Parking generators and patterns

The parking and traffic studies were undertaken both within the school holidays and also in term time to see if there were differences. Photos were taken to help highlight the issues.

### Traffic study

Traffic counts for one hour were taken in August and September, covering most hours between 8.00am and 6.00pm. Separate records were made of northbound and southbound traffic on the three main roads [A691, A694 and B6310] that meet in the village centre. Vehicles using Burnmill Bank [B6278] were also included in the A691 count.

Vehicle numbers [per hour] on Cutlers Hall Road [A691] ranged from 150 to 285 [northbound] and 154 to 276 [southbound]. On Front Street [A694] numbers were between 121 & 184 [northbound] and between 93 & 211 [southbound]. Traffic volumes of between 61 & 152 [northbound] and 63 & 139 [southbound] along Snows Green Road [B6310] were recorded. The busiest hour was 5 – 6 pm on Front Street [374 vehicles] whilst 3 – 4 pm were busiest on Cutlers Hall and Snows Green Roads [561 & 278 vehicles respectively]. Most vehicles were cars but buses, vans and lorries accounted for 50 vehicles on the A694, 63 on the A691 and 37 on the B6310.

On Front Street, 31 vehicles parked illegally between 11.00am and 12.00 noon on the 24<sup>th</sup> August. The average number of illegally parked vehicles in any one hour period was 14. Only 3 vehicles were recorded as illegally parked [in any one hour] on the B6310.

Observations were also made in relation to pedestrian and traffic movements. There were surprisingly few pedestrians in the village centre during the day and only a few had difficulty crossing the road. Although few vehicles appeared to be breaking the speed limit, the speed of traffic along Front Street was invariably too fast, particularly where parked cars needed overtaking and buses or lorries were passing.

### Parking study

Surveys were carried out, at various times on different days [28 occasions], to find out how many spaces were available and where people parked. There are 3 parking spaces on the village car park and another 2 adjacent, on the private car park of the Golden Flower takeaway. The private car park of the Crown & Crossed Swords PH can accommodate 32 vehicles, but for customers only. On Front Street, there are 3 spaces in front of the Crown & Crossed Swords P.H. and 5 spaces in front of Kings Restaurant. There are a further 22 parking spaces marked out along Cutlers Hall Road [Riverside up to The Crescent] and more beyond. The flats at Messenger mews and new dwellings along Wood Street have off street parking available. So too do the flats at the Old Town Hall. Other residents that don't have garages or driveways park on street. Some garages, which are too small or difficult to access, only appear to be used for storage.

Before 5pm, the number of vehicles parked in the village centre ranged from 45 [on a Monday at 8.45am] to 71 [on a Sunday at 9.30am]. After 5pm, the lowest recorded was 74 [on a Wednesday at 5.15pm] and the highest was 116 [on a Tuesday at 7.30 pm]. The most vehicles parked illegally were 5 [on a Wednesday at 5.45]. Those causing obstruction or pavement parked ranged from 13 [on a Monday at 8.45am], to 47 [on a Saturday at 7.00pm]. The most cars parked on Snows Green Road were 18 [on a Tuesday at 7.30pm] and 21 [on a Sunday at 9.30am]. The maximum number of vehicles parked on Messenger Bank was 8 [on a Friday at 7.15pm] and on Front Street there were 6 [on a Thursday at 6.45pm].

Even on the busiest days there were always parking bays available along Front Street and Cutlers Hall Road. Before 5pm the highest number used was 13 [leaving 17 spaces] and after 5pm there were at least 10 spaces available, except on a Tuesday when there was only 1. The number of vehicles in the Crown & Crossed Swords car park ranged from 2 [on a Monday at 2.15pm] to 14 [on a Saturday at 7pm].

The parking study also identified particular problems on the following roads:

Church Bank – parking on the pavement or across dropped kerbs, and sometimes blocking the road  
Front Street – illegal and pavement parking by businesses, customers and residents on yellow lines  
Messenger Bank – parking both sides of the road on pavements and in front of service access

Snows Green Road – parking on pavements  
Oak Street – parking on pavements and junctions  
Wood Street – parking on pavements and obstructing private parking places

Most parking is required in the early evenings by customers of the takeaway and restaurants in the village centre. On a Thursday evening and Sunday morning, the Catholic Church generates a long line of parking along one side of Snows Green Road.

### Questionnaires

Questionnaires were given to all business premises and 80 residential properties in the village centre to find out about their parking and servicing requirements, as well as offering the opportunity to raise issues, problems and solutions.

Of the 14 responses received from businesses, their concerns were:

- Parking more dangerous as housing and business increases
- The village centre is not a safe, pleasant place to walk around
- Drivers parking in dangerous places, particularly on bends
- There isn't any parking
- Lack of parking spaces for customers
- Customers say there is no parking in the village centre
- Blocking of access points to premises and disabled crossing points
- New businesses opened without off street car parking provision
- Not enough provision of short term parking near to premises
- Parking on Front Street causes congestion which creates accident hazards
- Work vehicles parking up to consume food purchases
- Parking on single yellow lines for long periods, preventing disabled badge parking

Of the 14 responses from residents their concerns were:

- Parking on Messenger Bank ...
  - makes it hazardous
  - forces pedestrians to walk on road with vehicles on pavements
  - prevents refuse being collected
  - blocks access to driveways
- Parking on Wood Street ...
  - is a disgrace, causes congestion and affects access to properties
  - makes road very narrow, particularly Commercial vehicles belonging to residents
  - forces pedestrians to walk on road with vehicles on pavements
  - restricts vision when pulling out of Messenger Bank
  - makes it hazardous for children playing
- Parking on Front Street, with vehicles on footpath ...
  - makes driving along Front Street hazardous, especially heavy traffic and buses
  - makes it difficult for pedestrians to cross
  - makes front doors inaccessible
  - forces people in wheelchairs and with pushchairs onto the road
- Parking on Cutlers Hall Road [Riverside] ...
  - restricts access to front of houses by occupiers and visitors
  - is used by residents of River Island for parking own cars & work vehicles
- Inconsiderate drivers parking cars on both sides of Snows Green Road
- Very little thought about traffic issues when area redeveloped
- No safe place to cross Front Street, due to blind corners, particularly for children and the elderly
- Inadequate parking provided in Messenger Mews, leading to fly parking
- Users of the social club and restaurants fly parking

- Many garages are not used for parking cars, only storage
- People are too idle to garage their cars, leaving little room for others to manoeuvre
- General deficiency of parking spaces for people eating in the village
- Lack of parking due to ever increasing number of residential properties
- Vehicles parked opposite driveways prevent access and egress
- New shops and restaurants approved without car parks
- No official parking for visitors and shoppers
- Developer corn mill site still has to provide off street parking places
- Single yellow lines around Sale Pepe bend are dangerous
- Vehicles often drive [wrong way] up Messenger Bank out onto the main road

## **Possible solutions**

The Group looked at a range of potential solutions to the issues that were raised, including all the suggestions made by businesses and residents. They were discussed with the two local County Councillors and ranked into 5 groups, in order of priority, for further investigation:

- Priority give way promontories on A691 & A694 on straight approach into village centre
- 20 mph speed limit through village centre
- Mirror for pedestrians on the blind corner, opposite Romanza
- Introduce pedestrian refuge or crossing
- Negotiate the use of existing private car parks for use by public and/or staff of businesses
- Construct a new car park on Snows Green Road [field opposite Catholic Church]
- Reduce road width and extend parking area in front of Kings Restaurant
- Take away recycling bins to enable enlargement of public car park
- Review existing parking restrictions
- 'Keep clear' white lines at junction corners, in front of dropped kerbs and opposite drives
- Speed cameras and/or 'slow down' visors
- Renew yellow lines on Burnmill Bank, approaching the bridge, and 'give way' from Wood Street
- Better signage of parking places
- Limit parking time nearest the village centre
- Bollards and flower tubs outside shops to prevent parking on pavements
- Traffic lights on approach to centre, which turn red if traffic is speeding [common in Spain]
- Construct a new car park on Wood Street [former Victory Club car park]
- Request residents to respect yellow line parking restrictions
- Education campaign raising awareness to customers about where to park, using leaflets & posters
- Parking restrictions on Messenger Bank
- Bollards or litter bins on corners
- Time limit for parking on Snows Green Road
- Enforcement of parking regulations
- Double yellow lines on Wood Street to prevent parking in front of resident parking bays
- Polite notices and stickers on vehicles parking inappropriately
- Widening road or pavement
- Traffic lights at main junction [with a pedestrian phase]
- No entry sign at bottom of Messenger Bank needs amending, as inappropriate for local residents
- Demolish outbuildings next to Crown & Crossed Swords car park to provide extra parking spaces
- Create parking spaces opposite public car park by reducing size of flower bed
- Bring back a traffic warden

## County Engineer comments

To determine the feasibility of the possible solutions a draft copy of the report was made available to Durham County Council engineers. Their initial response was discussed with County Councillors and the local police, followed by a site meeting to explore the most feasible solutions further.

Further investigations are being carrying out on the following:

- Introduce pedestrian refuge or crossing
- Negotiate the use of existing private car parks for use by public and/or staff of businesses
- Construct a new car park on Snows Green Road [field opposite Catholic Church]
- Reduce road width and extend parking area in front of Kings Restaurant
- Take away recycling bins to enable enlargement of public car park
- Review existing parking restrictions
  
- Speed cameras and/or 'slow down' visors
- Better signage of parking places
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- Construct a new car park on Wood Street [former Victory Club car park]
- Request residents to respect yellow line parking restrictions
- Education campaign raising awareness to customers about where to park, using leaflets & posters
- Parking restrictions on Messenger Bank

## Next steps

Since the study was undertaken 'keep clear' white markings have been painted on one side of Messenger Bank to try to prevent double parking and obstruction, but some drivers are ignoring these.

Also, the County Council are in the process of re-legalising and repairing the existing yellow line markings, prior to the new Civil Parking Enforcement regime that is being introduced in November, when it takes over the responsibility for enforcing parking restrictions, from the police.

The report was discussed at the Executive Committee of the Village Trust on 27<sup>th</sup> April, prior to discussion at the Trust's next Open Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

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