



REPORT ON THE CAR PARK FOLLOWING THE SURVEY IN  
APRIL 2016



Following a meeting of the Infrastructure Group on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> October the following recommendations are being made to Watlington Parish Council and based on the statistics and

observations made during the survey conducted as part of the evidence gathered for the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP)

It has been clearly established that the following observations should be taken into account:

- The operation and siting of the Car Park is a crucial part of the role of the town of Watlington as a service centre supporting the three settlements within the WNDP and Parish area and many other communities providing facilities and services for several thousand residents of this region of South Oxfordshire
- The Car Park signage is poor and not clear
- There is a general lack of awareness amongst users as to the terms of parking
- The two hour parking spaces work well
- The use of the car park is abused by a hard core of drivers who leave cars in the car park for several different but “unacceptable” reasons
- Drivers are either unaware or reluctant to use the other recognised Car Park areas
- Any major event and certain peak periods render the Car Park full to capacity with the resultant loss of business to the traders
- The Car Park generally works well as a short term car park
- The financial running of the Car Park is in need of updating (see below)
- The capacity of the Car Park will be severely tested through population growth and increased tourism and the possible removal of much of the daytime parking in Shirburn and Couching Streets
- A lack of any form of enforcement results in a low level of abuse but the vast majority of users respect the way the Car Park operates
- The status of a “Free Car Park” as an attraction to shoppers and visitors is highly valuable

### Recommendations

We suggest a number of simple, fairly cost effective measures applied individually or collectively but implemented during 2017 and pending the availability of additional parking space arising from the adoption of the WNDP and its policies and aspirations

- 1) Replacement of signs with clear concise information
- 2) An increase in two hour parking spaces
- 3) Allocation of a limited number of resident park spaces (see below)
- 4) The production of sponsored “parking time dials” to be used on a honesty basis with all users of the car park being given one per vehicle to be displayed in short term space occupation. Volunteer check of arrival time accuracy and overruns would entail “offenders” having a polite notice placed on their windscreen. This idea is reliant on the use of these honesty parking dials and their use but it is our belief that offenders will “toe the line”. Fines and other enforcement measures are subject to the financial running of the income
- 5) A full analysis of the running costs and “trader contributions” to establish whether this fair and comprehensive and reflects the current mix of use – especially the question of the use of the car park by the staff of businesses as opposed to their customers or clients. Should there be any differentiation?
- 6) More use of the Recreation Ground Car Park for long term parking through concerted publicity and signage

- 7) The suggested hours of operation of the 2 hour spaces is 8am to 6pm which to be clearly visible
- 8) Directional sign(s) saying "FREE SHORT TERMS SHOPPERS CAR PARK"

### Finances

As a free car park, is it a fact that the Co-op may be paying up to 40 times as much as some other businesses, although they are a major beneficiary?

There are grounds to believe that the Car Park should not be subject to the payment of Business Rates and this view has been also expressed by SODC. It is not run commercially and "income" in the accepted sense – subsidy and donations are a different matter. This is a major financial consideration with a potential saving of £5000 in business rates. The requirement is for the Car Park to be run as a Charity with whatever that takes from an administrative viewpoint

If a small number of resident spaces are allocated, a financial return would have to be treated in a manner that would not prejudice the potential saving in business rates

### Notes

The amount of on street parking availability impacts on the Car Park capacity and the perceived and actual requirements that any change would precipitate

The use of ANPR is only practical for statistical use as other usage relate to enforcement procedures which would negate the goodwill that presently exist

