

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Draft minutes of the Traffic Advisory Committee held on Wednesday 20th June 2018 at 7.00pm in the Roysse Room, the Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames

Present:

Cllr Alice Badcock	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council (Chairman)
Cllr Helen Pighills	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Jeanette Halliday	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Cllr Vicky Jenkins	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Cllr Alison Rooke	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Emily Smith	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Monica Lovatt	Vale of White Horse District Council
Cllr Chris Palmer	Vale of White Horse District Council
Mr Chris Hulme	Thames Valley Police
Mrs Jill Carver	Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce

In Attendance:

Cllr Mike Badcock	ATC and VWHDC
Cllr Angela Lawrence	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Mr Lee Turner	Principal Officer, Traffic Schemes – Area Operations South
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
2 Members of the public	

T1 Election of Chairman

It was proposed by Cllr Helen Pighills, seconded by Cllr Vicky Jenkins and **resolved** that Cllr Alice Badcock be elected Chairman of the Abingdon Traffic Advisory Committee for the council year 2018/19.

T2 Election of Vice-Chairman

It was proposed by Cllr Alison Rooke, seconded by Cllr Chris Palmer and **resolved** that Cllr Helen Pighills be elected Vice-Chairman of the Abingdon Traffic Advisory Committee for the council year 2018/19.

T3 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Neil Fawcett (Oxfordshire County Council).

T4 **Declarations of Interest**

None.

T5 **Public Participation**

Catherine McNeill outlined her concerns regarding dangerous parking around junctions in St Amand Drive. She made a number of points:

- Members would already be aware of the challenges of parking in the Caldecott Road / Wilsham Road area where parking was tight and confined. People often park in the nearest empty space and with regard to St Amand Drive parking was often blocking the view onto Caldecott Road which she believed was illegal and was certainly dangerous.
- Ms McNeill had witnessed near misses between cars and cyclists and the situation will worsen with more building. Parking was creating a hazard for vulnerable road users.
- Roads are a shared public space and people have a right to use the road safely.
- St Amand Drive is being used as a public car park.
- Drivers needed to be nudged to more thoughtful driving. Cars are just left without people thinking.
- This estate was set up in the 1960s when there were less cars around.
- Ms McNeill asked for Members' ideas.

Cllr Mike Badcock spoke as a local member in the Caldecott Ward. He made the following points:

- This is a potentially dangerous situation with people showing no respect for other road users.
- Possible solution was to limit parking by having a half hour period in the middle of the day when parking was prohibited.
- A solution was required before a child would be seriously injured or killed.
- He was supporting Catherine McNeill in her desire to find a solution to the problem.

Catherine McNeill stated that it was her understanding of the Highway Code that drivers could be cautioned or penalised if they park within ten metres of the junction. She felt that some enforcement was required. However she had never seen any police presence in the area. If penalty notices were issued then word would spread and this would deter inconsiderate parking. Yellow lines should also be considered and blind corners should be double yellow lines.

Cllr Alice Badcock stated that people should take responsibility for themselves and parking.

The Town Clerk reported that in tendering his apologies Cllr Neil Fawcett had stated that he supported the residents' concerns which also affect other roads in the part of south Abingdon nearest to the town centre.

Mr Lee Turner confirmed that there were no parking restrictions in the area.

Mr Chris Hulme made the following points:

- The questions had been posed “is it dangerous?” and “would Thames Valley Police do anything?”. As a Traffic Management Officer he was very rarely in a position to give or receive good news – it gets worse and worse. Parking has not been a priority for the police for a long time. Police resources are under pressure and there were lots of other priorities. However there was an answer which he would move onto later.
- With regard to parking within ten metres of a junction, this is a rule not an offence. Where there are no parking restrictions police would have to rely on:
 1. Obstruction; or
 2. A vehicle being parked in a dangerous position.
- In the case of obstruction, this required a vehicle to be posing a physical obstruction in which case the appropriate cause of action was to ring 101. In relation to a vehicle being parked in a dangerous position this needed to pose a serious risk to life, not a position which was potentially dangerous.
- Everyone was keen on free parking and drivers often hunt for places to park. When the County put restrictions in place this simply displaces the problem elsewhere. The problem with restrictions was that they applied to everyone, including the local residents. Yellow lines would apply to all residents if they were in place.
- In relation to the suggestion of a half hour period during which parking was prohibited this does “sort of work” but residents could not rely on enforcement. It was necessary to rely on good driver behaviour and most drivers did abide by the rules.

Mr Lee Turner reported that one potential way to address matters would be to put down white lines indicating areas for drivers not to park. This did not require a legal Order, they were not legally enforceable but by and large worked. Putting down single or double yellow lines or introducing residents' parking would mean the introduction of restrictions which would apply to all and in that regard needed agreement from interested parties. He reported that in order to introduce the legal Order for yellow lines it would be necessary to consult, issue notices in the press etc and the process would cost £2,600. The County did not have any money for such a process, it would need to be raised via a third party.

In further discussion the following points were made:

- Residents have paid for single white lines in front of dropped kerbs.
- Suggested that notes could be left on cars parking in difficult places.
- Suggested a white line be placed at both ends of the junctions of St Amand Drive and Caldecott Chase.
- White lines suggested on the Waysmeet estate where the main road is often full of parked cars from the schools and residents' drives are blocked.
- Suggested white lines would benefit Cameron Avenue.
- Members were requested to email Lee Turner with any suggestions in relation to areas of the highway which might benefit from white lines so that they can be collated and be brought back to the next meeting. Mr Turner stated that any requests would need to be considered by the County Council to see whether or not they were appropriate / acceptable as they needed to be used sparingly.
- It was suggested that PCSOs should be asked regarding areas which may benefit from white lines – Mr Hulme to co-ordinate.

Two members of the public and Cllr Mike Badcock left the meeting at the conclusion of this item, it being 7.27pm.

T6 **Minutes and Matters Arising**

The Committee received and considered the draft minutes of the meeting of 21st March 2018, as circulated with the agenda.

Resolved: That the draft minutes of the meeting of 21st March 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

Matters Arising

Minute 6: The Committee noted the updates to the constitution as agreed by the Town Council:

- (a) At paragraph 3.2 changing the wording from “*The quorum of the Committee shall be five members **and** a representative of each of the local authorities at 5.1 a, b and c.*” to read “*The quorum of the Committee shall be five members **including** a representative of each of the local authorities at 5.1 a, b and c.*” The current wording is ambiguous and I recommend that it be changed.
- (b) At paragraph 7.2 to add “(k) Cycling” to “the type of matters which may be discussed.”
- (c) To add a provision for substitution as follows: “Where a member who is a representative of a non-council body is unable to attend a meeting they may nominate a substitute member provided that the nominating member informs the office of the Town Clerk prior to the commencement of the meeting.”

Note that the Town Council amended the recommendation of this committee to allow for a substitution system to be limited to non-council representatives.

Car Parking around Schools

The Town Clerk reported that he had e-mailed 18 schools in Abingdon regarding car parking around schools, and he had received replies from 8 of the schools. These had been passed on to Mr Turner.

Mr Lee Turner reported that he had spoken with Judy Jones who is the Oxfordshire County Council Safety Officer dealing with these matters. Problems with parking around schools were very common and there were no easy solutions as often it was the parents who caused the issues. There were road safety schemes in place but with limited resources to deliver these. The evidence was that such schemes did not necessarily result in the reduction in casualties but did slow traffic. Most pedestrian child casualties were outside of school hours. There were road safety schemes including “footsteps” and cycle training. It had previously been known as STARS – School Travel and Road Safety. However the focus is not now on parking, it is on cycle training. Mr Turner stated that he could circulate some documents and is happy to discuss matters with individual schools.

In further discussion the following points were made:

- Cllr Monica Lovatt reported as local member for Fitzharris that many parents ignore all yellow lines and PCSOs only visited to enforce once a year.
- Cllr Angela Lawrence stated that she was trying to get walking buses started through the Community Led Plan process.

T7 Items submitted to the Town Clerk ahead of the meeting

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above, as circulated prior to the meeting.

The Town Clerk reported that there were 20 individual items which had been notified and that in his report he had attempted to group the items by theme and within theme, they were listed in alphabetical order:

Cycle and Pedestrian matters including traffic calming, safety matters and consideration of weight limits

1. Consideration of a ban on Heavy Goods Vehicles using Abbey Close from the Guildhall to the Abbey Close Car park.

Cllr Jeanette Halliday raised this matter. She stated that the stretch of road was in effect single lane and HGVs get stuck going along it. There was often no reason for HGVs to go down Abbey Close and they damaged bollards and large vehicles shook the houses.

In discussing this item:

- Cllr Alison Rooke stated that she could see the issues involved and suggested that signage be installed.
- Mrs Carver stated that if deliveries from HGVs were necessary for businesses this would be difficult to stop. She stated that there were issues in delivering to businesses in Stert Street and that the “To the Town Centre” sign which had been installed by the Joint Economic Forum had recently been damaged by a vehicle.
- Cllr Monica Lovatt stated that over recent months there would have been lorries making deliveries to the work taking place at the open-air pool and the new toilets.

Lee Turner stated that one possibility would be to have a sign at a strategic point in Abbey Close stating that it was unsuitable for large goods vehicles. The County Council could also investigate “no through road” signs.

The Town Clerk reported that a resident had expressed concern regarding the speed of some vehicles using this part of Abbey Close. Mr Turner stated that it was possible for the County to put monitoring in place to ascertain whether this was a problem, this would cost £100 plus VAT.

2. Cycling

Cllr Angela Lawrence had raised this matter. Cycle paths etc needed much better signage and it was necessary to make it much easier for people to cycle. In particular she raised the issue of potholes which was a problem for cyclists. In discussing this matter the following points were made:

- Cllr Alice Badcock stated that through the Community Led Plan process James Wigmore was organising a cycling forum.
- Cllr Alison Rooke stated that in some places overgrown vegetation is such that cyclists cannot pass by and matters such as stinging nettles were amongst the hazards. She stated that County guidance was that potholes of less than 40mm were not normally repaired but these can be lethal for cyclists. She queried whether there was any leeway in relation to this matter. Lee Turner reported that he hoped that there was.
- Cllr Jeanette Halliday stated that recently she had sight of the Sunningwell Neighbourhood Plan and it would be good if their cycle tracks joined with those in Abingdon.
- Mr Lee Turner reported that there was a Science Vale Cycling Strategy and an Oxford Cycling Strategy and outlined some of what the County Council was doing in this regard. In relation to potholes the County Council had spent the last two or three months solid repairing them.

- Cllr Alice Badcock reported that the County Council does have a cycling champion, Cllr Suzanne Bartington and these matters would also be considered by the Cycling Forum.

3. Faringdon Road Pedestrian Crossing proposal

The proposals for the pedestrian crossing had been circulated to all Members. It was reported that this pedestrian crossing was being funded by Abingdon School.

4. Heavy vehicles using the town centre, especially East and West St Helen Street.

Mrs Jill Carver stated that she had asked for this matter to be included on the agenda. East and West St Helen Street were old historic streets and there were cracks in virtually every house. The road was in a despicable state as evidenced by the large pothole outside the Punch Bowl and problems outside 63 East St Helen Street. There were too many vehicles using the road and lorries often get stuck. No one takes notice of yellow lines. There were also problems in St Helen's Court and Lombard Street.

In discussion the following points were made:

- Cllr Alison Rooke – Lombard Street is very difficult for pedestrians, she could not push a buggy down it.
- Cllr Emily Smith – can the County Council or the police ask for deliveries to be made in smaller lorries. Mr Hulme reported that this did happen in Oxford but whether it could happen would come down to cost.
- Cllr Jeanette Halliday suggested that consideration be given to deliveries coming later in the day, although this could make matters worse in the evening.

5. Northcourt Road - traffic calming and use by heavy vehicles

Cllr Helen Pighills had asked for this item to be put on the agenda. There was a problem with heavy goods vehicles using Northcourt Road and the road was not suitable for this.

Mr Lee Turner reported that in relation to the Northcourt Road, colleagues in the Asset Team were looking at this matter, it was on the "early stage list".

6. St John's Road – update in relation to parking and safety e.g. is one-way a possibility?

Cllr Emily Smith had asked that this matter be considered.

There was discussion regarding if St John's Road was to become one way then which way it would be. A survey had been proposed. There was a query how

this would then affect the other junctions. Mr Turner stated that he hoped to be in a position to give an update for the next meeting.

Issues related to major developments

7. Consultation results on positions of pedestrian crossings on Dunmore Road and Twelve Acre Drive (North Abingdon development)

This had been raised by Cllr Emily Smith. Lee Turner gave an update in relation to this matter.

Chris Hulme stated that this had been a half-hearted consultation process. At present there were crossings to nowhere and there should have been an explanation as to why it was proposed that they should be installed. He had concerns in relation to speed limit change in the Oxford Road (north) but had understood that this will move in time. It was reported that this matter was due to go to the County Council Cabinet in July 2018.

8. Diamond Interchange at Lodge Hill – update.

Lee Turner updated the Committee regarding the Diamond Interchange at Lodge Hill.

Cllr Emily Smith stated that design work had been held up because Highways England had asked for more information. However this should not impact on the programme as long as there were no further queries.

Maintenance issues

9. Bridge maintenance.

Cllr Vicky Jenkins stated that a major survey was to be undertaken in relation to Abingdon Bridge. She considered that there were significant potential problems and her view was that it would be best for the bridge to be traffic light controlled with traffic only flowing in one direction at any one time. This matter would be brought back to the next meeting.

10. Thames Street – A local resident, Dr Race, had reported that culverts in Thames Street are blocked with mud and dead leaves with the result that the car park is liable to be flooded and very difficult to use. All the culverts require clearing since the area is liable to flash flooding which could cause flooding to properties.

Cllr Alison Rooke stated that there was a house at the end of Thames Street which was encroaching the highway. Lee Turner stated that he had visited this and Cllr Helen Pighills stated that she was raising this matter with the Vale of White Horse District Council.

Parking

Chris Hulme gave an update of the Police's position in relation to parking enforcement. He stated that, as reported previously in the meeting, the resource for parking enforcement was very limited and consequently the service is not good. Parking is not a priority for the Police. The PCSOs do have "days of action". However the Police was a diminishing army and often they would start on parking duties and then get called away to other duties. Frankly there were more important things to do, lots of enquiries, matters such as domestic violence etc to attend to. It was noted that residents' parking in Abingdon town centre was operated by the Town Council.

Mr Hulme stated that if members wanted proper enforcement then they needed to move towards a civil parking regime where parking offences are decriminalised and responsibility moves from the Police to the local district councils. This had happened in Oxford City in 1997. Early in 2004 the other four Oxfordshire Districts started to consider moving to civil parking enforcement and in 2009 West Oxfordshire District Council took this responsibility on. However the other district councils had not moved to civil parking and remained with police enforcement. This was unique as decriminalisation had happened in the rest of the Thames Valley Police area. That is why when people telephone the Police up regarding parking in the non-decriminalised parts of Oxfordshire they often get the wrong answer! Mr Hulme stated that if and when the other district councils decide to go for decriminalised parking it would take at least two years to set up.

Mrs Jill Carver asked whether it would be possible to decrease waiting times allowed in the loading bays. She understood that at the moment it was difficult for PCSOs to enforce because of the amount of time allowed and she felt it may be easier to do if times were reduced to 15 minutes. The Chairman, Cllr Alice Badcock, asked whether this would be possible. In response Lee Turner stated that yes it was possible but it would cost money. The County Council would need to consult with and speak to local traders. Mrs Carver posed the question that if the Chamber of Commerce went round and got support from local traders then would that make a difference? Mr Hulme reported that this had been what had happened in Henley. He stated that PCSO Ali Blood does the best that she can and most people were in favour of lowering the times allowed in the bays. However often people did not understand the difference between loading and shopping.

Cllr Emily Smith mentioned that CCTV covered the town centre and she had contacted the Police regarding a car parked outside the HSBC Bank. She asked whether there was a role for CCTV in parking enforcement. Chris Hulme responded that unfortunately it is too difficult to do this.

Mrs Carver stated that she would go back to local traders to see what their view on decreasing waiting times in the bays was.

12. Dangerous parking around junctions – St Amand Drive: this had been covered under the item in relation to public participation.

13. Disabled Parking Places consultation.

The Committee noted the Disabled Parking Places consultation in relation to Abingdon.

14. Loading bays and enforcement – town centre. This had also been covered on the previous item. Members noted the current consultation in relation to this matter.

15. Parking of commercial vehicles on residential roads.

Cllr David Pope had raised the issue of the parking of commercial vehicles on residential roads which was often causing problems for residents.

Cllr Alison Rooke stated that there were particular problems in St Peter's Road and Radley Road and Cllr Helen Pighills felt that Abingdon needed a proper lorry park.

The Town Clerk stated that many firms no longer have depots in which works vans are left overnight and employees are required to take them home.

Mr Hulme stated that one of the issues was how people would know whether are commercial. He stated that vehicles of less than 3.5 tonnes may be parked on the highway but if they are in excess of 3.5 tonnes then they require an operator's licence and that will identify where the vehicle should be kept. In these circumstances the vehicle would have a disc in its window.

16. Parking on grass verges

The problem of parking on grass verges had been raised by Cllr David Pope.

Cllr Alice Badcock reported that this was a wide problem across the town.

Lee Turner reported that County Council has very little powers in this regard except where the verges are adjacent to the yellow lines where the verge then has the same parking restriction as the adjacent highway. He stated that if vehicles caused significant damage to grass verges the highway inspectors may get involved.

Cllr Emily Smith reported that she knew of a resident who wanted posts placed on verges but the costs were quite high, the bulk of the cost being the Traffic Order which had been required to shut the road so that the post may be safely installed. Lee Turner stated that there is a process to allow you to buy posts as a resident, householders have to approach the County Council in this regard.

(Mrs Jill Carver and Cllr Vicky Jenkins left at this point, it being 8.45pm.)

17. Restrictions on parking relating to flat conversions e.g. corner of Wootton and Evelin Roads.

Cllr Emily Smith had raised this as an issue where planning permission had been given without provision being made for parking. Once the application had been approved was there anything that could be done in relation to this matter? The potential for white lines was again mentioned. Lee Turner stated that the local planning authority, the local district council, consulted the County Council Highways Department on all planning applications.

18. Update on parking turning point, Ock Mill Close.

Cllr Jeanette Halliday reported that the turning point had been paid for by residents and had now been installed.

Traffic flow and regulation

19. Cllr Monica Lovatt raised the issue of problems experienced by traffic turning from West St Helen Street in to the High Street, there being significant delays for traffic turning out of West St Helen Street. She noted that this was a much used route into the town centre from the south of Abingdon. She felt that a hatched yellow box or “keep clear” area should be considered.

Lee Turner reported that he had made enquiries in this regard from the Strategic Team at the County Council and that there were no plans to install such a box.

20. Traffic surveys

Cllr Alice Badcock stated that when planning application were submitted traffic surveys were often done at the wrong times, eg during school holidays, and consequently yielded unrealistic results. She stated that this matter ought to be addressed by the local planning authority and the highways authority.

T8 Report from the Principal Officer, Traffic Scheme South Team, Oxfordshire County Council

Members received and considered the report from the Principal Officer, Mr Lee Turner. All items for report have been picked up in the previous item.

T9 Items raised by Members at the meeting

Cllr Alison Rooke expressed concerns regarding safe and unsafe vision splays at junctions including the need to remove vegetation which could obstruct views. Lee Turner stated that where there were problems Members should report the specific locations.

T10 **Calendar of Meetings for 2018/19**

Members noted the draft calendar of meetings for these committee meetings:

- Wednesday 7th November 2018;
- Wednesday 6th March 2019.

The meeting rose at 8.55 pm

DRAFT