

# EAST MALLING LOCAL PARKING PLAN



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## Introduction

There is a long history of parking management in East Malling and this Plan seeks to build on it. It involves adjusting the existing parking restrictions as required to match current needs. It includes introducing new ways of managing parking to match present day traffic and parking conditions to achieve a fair balance of parking opportunities for competing parking needs in the village.

The broad context for parking management in this Borough is set by the operational arrangements that exist. The Local Highway Authority in this Borough is Kent County Council and it is responsible for the complete range of activities on our roads including maintenance, highway improvements, traffic management and many other related matters.

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council carries out a parking enforcement service on behalf of the County Council. This has been extended, in partnership with the County Council, to include a wide range of parking management activities. In this way an integrated and comprehensive parking management role both on-street and off-street across the Borough is being achieved.

Setting up Local Parking Plans generally requires close partnership working between a number of parties to ensure that the broad range of traffic and parking management concerns are dealt with jointly. This is all the more important in East Malling where many of the concerns expressed by the local community relate more to traffic management than parking and therefore require the County Council to be closely involved in its highway authority role.

Many years ago the Borough Council produced a Parking Action Plan to provide a systematic approach to dealing with the considerable number of requests that had been received, and which the Council continues to receive, about parking problems throughout Tonbridge and Malling. The East Malling Local Parking Plan (EMLPP) is the latest in a series of such Plans and it has been prepared to respond to parking requests and concerns about parking that local residents and businesses in the Village have expressed. This Parking Plan is the result of a full review of parking across a whole neighbourhood and distils the thoughts of the local community through two rounds of survey and public consultation.

## Parking Policy

The broad policy aims of the East Malling Local Parking Plan are to :-

- **support the commercial and social vitality of the Village;**
- **assist parking opportunity for residents;**
- **manage parking to ensure that it assists the expeditious movement of traffic (including pedestrians and cyclists);**
- **improve road safety for all users;**
- **improve the local environment, paying particular attention to the Conservation Area;**
- **safeguard access for the emergency services;**
- **ensure access for buses and refuse freighters;**
- **meet the needs of disabled people, some of whom will be unable to use public transport systems and depend entirely on the use of a car;**

In working to achieve these aims we have several guiding principles and these are supplemented by the **Operational Policies** set out in **Appendix A**:

- **To maximise the amount of on-street parking consistent with road safety and access for all highway users.**
- **To provide actions in the Plan to resolve existing identified parking problems and do so in a way that avoids transferring problems to neighbouring streets.**
- **To make reasonable judgements about the consequences of actions in the plan and to remedy them but to avoid over-speculating about what problems might arise where no problems currently exist. If problems develop, monitoring and future reviews of the Local Parking Plan will deal with them.**
- **To achieve a reasonable and even-handed balance between the competing parking needs of various groups: residents, shops, businesses, visitors, pedestrians, delivery vehicles, buses, taxis, private hire vehicles, coaches, cars, bicycles, motorcycles, push-chairs and wheelchairs. However, around the railway station there is greater demand for parking than the space available and we will give precedence to the needs of local residents and businesses over those of commuters.**

## **The Focus of East Malling Local Parking Plan**

To assist with implementation and management of the Parking Plan, the actions are focused on the following zones:-

- **Public car parks in the village.**
- **Roads and streets in the central area.**
- **Mill Street neighbourhood**
- **Stepstile, Clare Park and Winterfield estates.**
- **Adjacent to the local schools.**

This is supplemented by sections of a more general nature on

- **General Parking Actions**
- **Parking Trends**

## **The Village Centre Car Park off the High Street**

The High Street car park is an important local asset and it makes a valuable contribution towards relieving parking pressures in the village centre.

General description :-

- Owned and operated by East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council and included within the Tonbridge and Malling Off Street Parking Order
- 44 spaces with an additional ten spaces available on the access road to the car park.
- When first constructed, it provided additional resident parking based on a permit system. This has lapsed and the usage of the car park is unenforceable.
- There are no CCTV cameras and street lighting does not meet current illumination standards.
- Commuters regularly use the car park throughout the working day leaving little opportunity for use by neighbouring residents, local businesses or visitors to the Village. Monday to Friday – there are generally no spaces available in the morning or from Midday to early evening
- In the evenings, there are generally 8 – 12 vehicles parked overnight .
- On weekends up to 14 vehicles have been parked including vehicles associated with nearby allotments
- There is no provision for Disabled persons parking or cycle storage

### **Overall assessment of the High Street Car Park**

- There is little scope for increasing the number of spaces in the existing car park. The current layout makes best use of the available space
- The Parish Council wants the car park to be available to meet the parking needs of local residents, businesses and visitors with priority for those groups but also to recognise the pressures generated by commuters using the adjacent railway station by preserving some season ticket usage.
- Security and lighting need to be upgraded by the Parish Council to attract better use at night and at the weekend.
- Daytime use needs to be controlled to create a better balance between competing local parking needs.

- The control mechanisms for the car park need to reflect and support any resident preferential arrangements approved for managing levels of commuter parking in the car park and on nearby roads.
- Proposals for operating the car park should best be progressed in parallel with on street parking management measures.

### **Recommended Actions**

- Reinstate parking controls to operate Monday – Friday, 8 am – 6 pm to allow a maximum stay of 4 hours with exemptions for resident/business permits.
- Season tickets at a cost of £250 (tied to the annual season ticket in Borough Green Car Park) to be issued to a maximum number of 15 tickets on issue at any one time (approximately 33% of car park capacity).
- Provide one disabled persons parking bay in car park and one in access road
- Explore with Kent County Council the provision of secure cycle parking facilities
- Ten bays to be clearly marked on the access road and waiting restrictions to be installed under the on-street waiting restrictions Order.
- Enforcement and management of the car park and access road to be carried out by the Borough Council's Parking Team on behalf of the Parish Council
- Parish Council to prepare 5 year maintenance and improvement plan which includes a review of Permit/Season ticket Allocation based on identified demand
- Parish Council and the Borough Council to monitor use of this car park and the other nearby Council car parks to ensure that any trends that have an adverse effect on local parking management can be identified and dealt with under future updates of the East Malling Local Parking Plan.

## Parking Management in the Village Centre

This parking management area consists of the network of radiating off the High Street and the mainline railway station to London. These are **Chapel Street** with parts of **New Road, Wateringbury Road, Mill Street** (around eastern junction with High St) **The Grange** and **Church Walk**. The area also includes consideration of potential migration of displaced parking into The Rocks Road and Rocks Close.

### Overall assessment of Parking in the Village Centre

There are many households and a few businesses in this area that do not have parking within their curtilage and they depend on space on-street to meet their parking requirements. Commuters currently dominate the main village car park and also compete for the limited available roadside parking opportunities around the railway station. There is consequently considerable parking pressure in this area for most of the week.

There is a risk that reducing commuter access to the High Street car park will exacerbate the existing pressures by transferring commuter parking onto the street spaces or other private car parks.

Some daytime waiting restrictions (Single Yellow Lines – SYL) on the roads in this neighbourhood were installed several years ago to deal with parking pressures that then existed. These consisted of short duration waiting restrictions during the morning and evening peak periods to limit the congestion problems caused by the high volume of traffic.

Traffic flows have continued to grow inexorably since those lines were installed and the perception locally is that traffic movements are fairly high and constant throughout the day and not just at the peak periods. This has prompted the need to review and restructure daytime parking controls to address local concerns about congestion, access, safety and parking availability. This latter concern is focused on ensuring the maximum number of roadside parking spaces consistent with highway safety in terms of road width, sight lines and accesses.

### Recommended Actions

The Plan recommendations, as illustrated on **Drawing Number DD/491/10** are:-

- **Revoke partial sections of SYL daytime waiting restrictions and replace with double yellow lines where safety and traffic flows are compromise traffic flows.**
- **Mark out permitted parking areas with controlled resident preferential permit bays operating Monday to Friday 8 am to 6pm with maximum stay of 4 hours without a permit and without limit for those displaying a qualifying permit.**



- **Install double yellow lines to provide corner protection at junctions to improve safety and traffic flows and reinforce the guidance of the Highway Code.**
- **Provide a Disabled Persons Parking by close to the Church**
- **Introduce access protection markings across accesses and driveways to prevent obstruction.**
- **Remove unnecessary signing.**
- **Make the access sign to the Village car park more conspicuous.**

**The Rocks Road and Rocks Close** are residential areas closest to the rail station therefore subject to most pressure locally. An incremental approach to dealing with the increase in commuter parking has taken place over the years but problems related to blocked accesses, highway safety and traffic flows continue to affect residents. With this in mind, the Plan recommends the following actions:-

- **Introduce a daytime waiting restriction on The Rocks Road and Rocks Close to operate for a 30 minute period during the working day from Monday to Friday (proposed as 10am to 10.30am) to deter all day parking by commuters without overly inconveniencing residents and their visitors.**
- **Include access protection marking across dropped kerbs in Rocks Close and The Rocks Road.**
- **Extend the 'no waiting at any time' restrictions at the apex of the blind bend in The Rocks Road and at junctions to increase road safety.**

## **Parking Management in the Mill Street Neighbourhood**

Mill Street is part of a C class local access road linking traffic movements and a regular bus service between West Malling, A20 and the village centre.

Although parking on this road is largely uncontrolled there is serious competition for roadside parking between the businesses, shops and the Victorian style terraced houses at the western end where there is little or no off street parking. Pressures are concentrated around the sharp bends between the junctions of Middle Mill. The need to facilitate two-way traffic does restrict the amount of on-street parking that is permitted as there is continuing damage to boundary walls and vehicles, with obstruction reported by larger vehicles and the local bus service. With this in mind, the Plan recommends the following actions illustrated on **Drawing Number DD/491/9**:-

### **Recommended Actions**

- **Mark out permitted parking areas with uncontrolled bays in the western end of Mill Street and the southern section of Middle Mill Road.**
- **Structure roadside parking areas to maximise kerbside parking and promote free flow of traffic consistent with highway safety where junctions, accesses and road width allow.**
- **Install “No Waiting at Any Time” restrictions where parking compromises road safety to reinforce the guidance in the Highway Code including extension of existing restrictions in Cottenham Close.**
- **Monitor parking patterns in the area of Cottenham Close after completion of the residential development of the former primary school site.**

## **Parking Management in Stepstile, Clare Park and Winterfield Estates**

The survey work and consultation exercise revealed a few locations where parking on-street impedes traffic flows and creates concerns about road safety. This problem is more evident where many of the residents do not have access to off-road parking for their car.

The problem is not persistent throughout the day but it is sufficiently prevalent and hazardous where it does occur to warrant some parking controls in this Local Parking Plan. Locations and nature of the restrictions are illustrated on **Drawing Number DD/491/11**.

### **Recommended Actions**

- **Install SYL, DYL and APMs to reinforce the rules of the Highway Code to protect sight lines, turning areas, access points and junction movements.**
- **Continue to monitor the need for further parking control when the agreed plan is implemented.**

## **Parking Management adjacent to Local Schools**

St James The Great Primary School, the family centre in Chapman Way and The Mallings School in Beech Road serve the local area. The Mallings School is attracting an increasing number of pupils from outlying areas. There are some minor problems associated with parking and occasional congestion to traffic flow on the roads around the school site. However, it is moderate in comparison with the scale of problems associated with school generated traffic at many other locations in the Borough.

The Mallings School operates a School Travel Plan (STP) with 'Drop-off Zone' at the Beech Road entrance and a dedicated pedestrian access from Clare Lane. School buses and taxi arrangements meet the travel needs of most of the students from outside the area.

The parking management for Beech Road entrance has been implemented in advance of the main Parking Plan as an item of urgent work to prevent obstruction of the exit gate and support the safe operation of the drop off area.

The primary school is in the process of developing the STP following the re-build of the school with a family centre

Most problems around a school site are a result of poor parking behaviour and a permanent enforcement presence is neither practical nor achievable for each school site. The introduction of parking restrictions on roads near to a school should be limited to supporting the rules of the Highways Code with care being taken to ensure that the problems are simply transferred onto other nearby roads. The Borough Council will continue to work with the schools and Kent County Council to assist and support the work of the School Travel Plan. It will seek to ensure the parking environment on roads around the school continues to support pedestrian safety, preserves the amenity of the residents, promotes free flow of traffic and does not disrupt public transport service timetables.

Proposed parking management arrangements for the school sites are illustrated on **Drawing Numbers DD/491/11 and DD/491/12.**

### **Recommended Actions**

- **Install revised School Keep Clear Markings to protect the area around the school gates**
- **Ensure that junctions, sight lines and access points around the area are adequately protected to reinforce the rules of the Highway Code**
- **Protect dropped kerbs with Access Protection Markings to provide additional parking opportunity across dropped kerbs for householders with driveways**

- **Monitor parking patterns after implementation of Parking Plan in particular for through traffic and the bus services to ensure access at peak school traffic times do not become a problem for essential public services, refuse freighter or emergency vehicles**

## **General Parking Improvement Actions**

A number of generic concerns about parking and, critically, traffic management in the village were identified through the preparatory work on this Local Parking Plan. The parking related concerns are included below as recommended actions in the Plan. Those related to traffic and speed management are included as referrals to the Country Council or the Police as appropriate.

### **Recommended Actions**

- **Continue to ensure that the Parking Plan for East Malling works for the benefit of local residents, businesses and visitors through effective control of the Village car park and on-street waiting restrictions.**
- **The implementation phase of the Plan to be accompanied by priority deployment of the parking enforcement team to ensure the new parking arrangements can settle in properly.**
- **Sign posts and plates no longer needed for double yellow lines to be removed and highway surface reinstated in appropriate materials.**
- **Continue to work with Parish Council, Schools and KCC to support implementation of School Travel Plans.**
- **All bus bays to be upgraded to Clearways to aid public transport movements.**
- **Refer concerns about footway parking, speeding traffic and width restriction offences for Police action.**
- **Refer concerns about inadequate Advanced Direction Signs and misleading Sat Nav information to industrial sites to the County Council for review.**
- **Refer requests for traffic calming and additional street furniture to Kent County Council.**

## Parking Trends

Pressure for more parking capacity on and off-street in East Malling is likely to increase over time. However, it is a pressure that cannot realistically be met not the least because there is no practical way of creating any more on-street space. The aim of the Plan has been to create as much on-street space as can be allowed consistent with the safety of everyone using the public highway. Similar practical restrictions apply to off-street capacity because there no land obviously available to build more car parks. The only such possibility might be an extension of the High Street car park but this will have a cost and no firm means of identifying how this cost could be met in the current difficult financial climate.

- **The East Malling Local Parking Plan will need to be reviewed after it has been in operation for 18 months or so to ensure that the Plan continues to provide a best balance between competing local parking needs.**
- **Monitor changes in local circumstances and parking patterns to ascertain the need to modify the Local Parking Plan and determine the requirement for remedial measures**
- **Continue to monitor the Local Parking Plan through a Steering Group consisting of local County, Borough, Parish Council Members together with representatives of the Conservation Group, KCC Highways, Russet Homes. The results of the Steering Group's future considerations to be shared with the Planning Transportation Advisory Board and Joint Transportation Board.**
- **Continue to monitor trends in residential estates and roads outside the village so any problems for these residential areas caused by "over-spill" parking are identified at an early stage and suitable measures introduced to deal with them.**
- **Review with the Parish Council other options for creating additional parking facilities if local parking demand warrants it.**
- **Review with rail operator and KCC options for creating cycle storage facilities if local demand warrants it**

## Appendix A

### Operational Policies

Preparation of parking plans routinely produces a common and consistent set of parking themes. These themes are set out below, together with the operational principles that, in the light of particular local circumstances, guide the response.

Ref	Theme	Guiding principles
OP1	<b>The “Right to Park”</b>	Some people incorrectly believe there is an inherent right to park on a public highway. The practical approach is that people can park on the highway as long as it is safe to do so without compromising highway safety or obstructing other road users.
OP2	<b>Parking demand</b>	Many of the parking problems identified through consultations arise from too many cars and too few spaces for them to park in. In the consultation survey for the East Malling local parking plan, a number of suggestions were received about how this mismatch between demand and capacity could be met.
OP2a		<p><b><i>Build more car parks</i></b></p> <p>The amount of money needed to buy land and build a new car park is considerable. The Borough Council does not have funds in the current financial climate to do so even if land were available.</p>
OP2b		<p><b><i>Use of Garages and Driveways</i></b></p> <p>Some residents do not use their garages or drives and, instead, parking on-street. Parking in this way creates unnecessary and avoidable demand for on-street spaces. However, the Council cannot compel people to use their driveways or garages so it is not a matter that can be addressed in this Plan.</p>
OP2c		<p><b><i>Convert verges and greens into parking areas</i></b></p> <p>The survey and consultation work for the Plan prompted suggestions from some residents that verges, greens and other public open space be</p>

Ref	Theme	Guiding principles
		<p>converted to parking bays.</p> <p>Verges and greens are under various ownerships and such the County Council or Russet Homes. Even so, the view of the Parking Plan Steering Group is that there is no compelling justification from parking demand for any of these verges or open spaces to be sacrificed to create extra parking. They make an important contribution to the appearance of the village and should be preserved.</p> <p>Russet Homes has improved parking facility for tenants of their properties in East Malling in recent years with the demolition of some underused garage blocks. Some have been and converted into more effective communal parking areas.</p>
<b>OP3</b>	<b>Formalising parking and providing priority for local needs</b>	<p>Formalising parking through a local parking scheme inevitably challenge of some of the more questionable parking practices that take place. A consequence of this is that formal parking management schemes generally result in a perception that there is less parking available.</p> <p>Nevertheless, our central focus is to make as much parking available on-street as possible so long as it is safe to do so.</p> <p>The guiding principle is that the various needs of locally generated resident and business parking should have equal priority for the available parking opportunities. In those locations where commuter parking creates excess demand, local parking needs will be given preference through a resident and business permit scheme.</p>
<b>OP4</b>	<b>Permit Parking Schemes</b>	<p>Ideally, permit schemes are operated in areas where there are exceptional roadside parking pressures generated for residents and businesses by drivers who do not live or work in the area. Introducing permit parking for local residents and businesses is an effective way of freeing up on-street parking capacity by preventing commuter parking.</p> <p>Permit schemes are ineffective without an element of preference that removes some of the parking demand. Some of the feedback from streets where there is acute parking pressure, seeks 'resident</p>



Ref	Theme	Guiding principles
		<p>permit parking only'. However, acceding to such requests would require discriminating against other groups of drivers, be they shoppers or workers from local businesses, all of whom have an equal need and right to park locally. In such circumstances, Preferential Permit parking is not a fair or practical option.</p> <p>The High Street area of East Malling suffers from competition for scarce road space from commuter parking. It is therefore an area where a Preferential Permit scheme for local residents and businesses is a reasonable and practical option.</p> <p>The cost of a resident permit in the Borough is currently £30 and a business permit is £120.</p>
<p><b>OP5</b></p>	<p><b>Enforcement of Restrictions at Schools</b></p>	<p>Traffic and parking management at either end of the school day are a national problem.</p> <p>At a practical operational level, it is simply impossible to mount patrols by the parking team at each and every school in the Borough at each end of the school day. Instead, resolving traffic management problems at schools requires a much broader approach. School Travel Plans ( STP) are in place in most schools and offer a positive means of encouraging alternative ways for pupils to travel to and from school. The Borough Council will work with the schools, Police, PCSO and KCC to assist where possible to support and maintain work on school Travel Plans and in ensuring the traffic environment at the school gate is safe for young pupils and nearby neighbours.</p>
<p><b>OP6</b></p>	<p><b>Parking on the Footway</b></p>	<p>The current legal position is that the Police have powers to deal with instances of obstruction and the offence of driving on and off a footway. Unless a vehicle is parked on a footway contravening a restriction such as a single or double yellow line, Civil Enforcement Officers (formerly Parking Attendants) cannot take any action.</p>
<p><b>OP7</b></p>	<p><b>Turning Heads</b></p>	<p>Parking in the turning area of a cul-de-sac is a frequent problem and it is generally residents themselves or their visitors who do this. It can create problems of access and highway safety for larger</p>

Ref	Theme	Guiding principles
		<p>service, delivery and emergency vehicles.</p> <p>Introducing waiting restrictions in such a situation removes useful casual parking opportunity for visitors, for example, that could otherwise be tolerated so it is seldom a practical option and does not generally feature within the Parking Plan.</p>
<b>OP8</b>	<b>Parking Enforcement</b>	<p>There is consistent pressure across the Borough for more enforcement. The extent to which this can be met is dependent on the size of the Borough Council's team of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO). Its aim is to provide an effective enforcement service within existing staffing resource by varying the patterns of attendance at problem locations and by responding to requests from the local community when possible.</p>
<b>OP9</b>	<b>Obstruction of Access</b>	<p>Difficulty in gaining access to a property is not in itself sufficient justification for installing double yellow lines across a driveway or dropped kerb. White Access Protection Markings (APM) can be installed at locations where there is a demonstrable and persistent problem with obstruction. Although the APM is not enforceable, the Police have powers to deal with obstruction and its presence does tend to support the offence of obstruction if the police are asked to take action.</p>
<b>OP10</b>	<b>Vans Parked in Residential Areas</b>	<p>There is no legislation that can be used to effectively discriminate against residents taking their works vans home and parking in the streets where they live.</p> <p>In some instances a condition on an Operators Licence will prevent overnight parking by vehicles over 7.5t.</p>
<b>OP11</b>	<b>Traffic Management</b>	<p>The Local Parking Plan is aimed at managing parking demand and capacity in the village. There are many concerns about traffic speed and volumes. However, these are matters to be addressed by the County Council, in its role as the Local Highway Authority and by the Police.</p>