

Parish or Ward	Location	Annex
West Malling	Water Lane	01.04-01
Formal plan ref:	DD-561-01B Water Lane	

History

Last year the Borough Council asked residents and visitors to West Malling for their views on changes to parking arrangements in the town. The proposals covered a number of issues – the operation of the car parks, whether there should be charges for parking and potential changes to some on-street parking areas.

The responses we received were wide-ranging and gave a good understanding of the views of the community. The issues relating to the car parks and charges are still being considered. Additionally the consultation produced requests for other parking restrictions that had not previously been proposed.

We have now carried out formal consultation on the on-street proposals that had already been circulated.

Statement of reasons

Our proposal is to formalise the parking arrangement in Water Lane. The intention is to allow parking by all, but to restrict parking to cars so that large commercial vehicles cannot cause an obstruction.

Formal consultation

We carried out formal consultation on the proposals by placing advertisements on-street, in the local press and by placing information “on deposit” at the Borough Council offices in Kings Hill and Tonbridge, as well as at Kent County Council’s offices in Maidstone.

Public Responses

We wrote directly to 156 residents whose properties front the proposed parking changes or who had commented at prior consultations on this issue.

	Number	Percentage
Responses	19	12.2%
In favour	17	89.5%
Against	2	10.5%

Copies of any consultation responses are available in Annex 01.06 (available to Members at the meeting) and redacted versions will be made available online as Annex 01.06r.

Statutory Consultees

We wrote directly to the local emergency services, bus companies that operate in the area, haulage associations and other motoring bodies, as well as the respective Parish Councils and County Councillors for each area.

Kent Police responded with no specific objections and their standard comments and observations on new parking restrictions.

The Parish Council commented that "Members were supportive of the proposals; however they found the reference to long-stay parking in "...overflow parking for season ticket holders from Ryarsh Lane car park and for long-stay parking" required some clarification and would suggest that this underlined phrase be removed".

Analysis of responses

A good level of response was received from the properties in the area, with a strong percentage in favour of the proposals, though there were two objections.

The first objection was against all of the proposals (including those for Water Lane) on the grounds that the proposals will cause congestion and safety hazards.

The second objection was on the grounds that the second (eastern) part of Water Lane was too narrow to allow parking.

In response to the objections, the locations where parking is being proposed in Water Lane Court is no different from that which currently occurs, save for the exclusion of large vehicles that could cause an obstruction. and vehicle speeds in Water Lane already seem low and are unlikely to increase as part of these proposals.

It has not been thought necessary to prevent parking on the narrow part of Water Lane (east of the bridge) as the road is too narrow. This is born-out as parking does not happen in this area at present.

There were also comments on other issues in Water Lane – that the verges outside Pilsden should be protected, that the 20mph speed limit should be extended and that there should be width-restriction signing to prevent large vehicles from using the road. These seem to have merit, (though the vehicle speeds are unlikely to exceed 20mph due to the road width), but they fall outside the remit of the Borough Council's parking review and would be for the Highway Authority Kent County Council to consider.

The Parish Council's comment that the term "and for long-stay parking" should be removed – the parking area would be for all to use, for an unlimited time period. As with any parking area where there is no time limit, the parking bays would not be marked as "long-stay parking". The intention is that these bays are for all to use, but the inclusion of a permit code letter encourages those with permits for other areas (such as the Ryarsh Lane car park) to use the area rather than populate other roads where parking may be more of an issue.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the objections should be set aside and the proposals should

be implemented, as this will assist in helping manage on and off-street parking within West Malling.

Parish or Ward	Location	Annex
West Malling	Nevill Court	01.04-02
Formal plan ref:	DD-561-02B Town Hill & Nevill Court	

History

Last year the Borough Council asked residents and visitors to West Malling for their views on changes to parking arrangements in the town. The proposals covered a number of issues – the operation of the car parks, whether there should be charges for parking and potential changes to some on-street parking areas.

The responses we received were wide-ranging and gave a good understanding of the views of the community. The issues relating to the car parks and charges are still being considered. Additionally the consultation produced requests for other parking restrictions that had not previously been proposed.

We have now carried out formal consultation on the on-street proposals that had already been circulated.

Statement of reasons

Our original proposals included new parking bays on Town Hill as well, but we received a number of comments against these. With this in mind we have removed the proposal for new parking bays on Town Hill.

The current proposal for Nevill Court is for new double yellow lines and parking bays. The parking bays would operate as limited waiting, but also as permit parking area WM4.

Residents of Nevill Court would be able to apply for a parking permit. If (once residents had taken-up their permits) there was space capacity in the road, then we may offer any remaining spaces to a limited number of people who work nearby and currently use the Ryarsh Lane car park.

Formal consultation

We carried out formal consultation on the proposals by placing advertisements on-street, in the local press and by placing information “on deposit” at the Borough Council offices in Kings Hill and Tonbridge, as well as at Kent County Council’s offices in Maidstone.

Public Responses

We wrote directly to 156 residents whose properties front the proposed parking changes or who had commented at prior consultations on this issue.

	Number	Percentage
Responses	22	14.1%
In favour	20	90.9%
Against	2	9.1%

Copies of any consultation responses are available in Annex 01.06 (available to Members at the meeting) and redacted versions will be made available online as Annex 01.06r.

Statutory Consultees

We wrote directly to the local emergency services, bus companies that operate in the area, haulage associations and other motoring bodies, as well as the respective Parish Councils and County Councillors for each area.

Kent Police responded with no specific objections and their standard comments and observations on new parking restrictions.

The Parish Council commented that “Members were supportive of the proposals; however they felt that it would potentially be confusing to have different permitted time periods e.g. 1 hr no return 2hrs; 3hrs no return 1hr; 1hr no return 2hrs.

Also, members would like some clarification as to the rationale and suggest that restrictions be consistent with existing restrictions”

Analysis of responses

A good level of response was received from the properties in the area, with a strong percentage in favour of the proposals, though there were two objections.

The first objection was against all of the proposals (including those for Nevill Court) on the grounds that the proposals will cause congestion and safety hazards.

The other objector commented that they could not see the benefit of introducing permit parking to Nevill Court, and that there was very little shopper parking in the area.

In response to the objections, the locations where parking is being proposed in Nevill Court is no different from that which currently occurs, so there would be no increase in congestion, and vehicle speeds in Nevill Court already seem low and are unlikely to increase as part of these proposals.

The proposals allow some controlled long-stay parking rather than the current free-for-all and provides a level of priority for residents. The proposals are not intended to address shopper parking but to effectively manage the road space for residents and long-stay parking.

With regard to the Parish Council’s comments, the proposed restriction is intended to be easy to enforce and also to allow the most flexibility. There is already a mix of time limits and restrictions in other parking bays nearby and the proposed 1hour, no return 2 hour restriction would enable resources to be used elsewhere more efficiently as the “logging-in “ period is short.

Recommendation

The objections seem to miss the intention of the proposals. Accordingly it is

recommended that the objections should be set aside and the proposals should be implemented, as this will assist in helping manage on and off-street parking within West Malling.

Parish or Ward	Location	Annex
West Malling	St Leonard's Street	01.04-03
Formal plan ref:	DD-561-03B St Leonards Street	

History

Last year the Borough Council asked residents and visitors to West Malling for their views on changes to parking arrangements in the town. The proposals covered a number of issues – the operation of the car parks, whether there should be charges for parking and potential changes to some on-street parking areas.

The responses we received were wide-ranging and gave a good understanding of the views of the community. The issues relating to the car parks and charges are still being considered. Additionally the consultation produced requests for other parking restrictions that had not previously been proposed.

We have now carried out formal consultation on the on-street proposals that had already been circulated.

Statement of reasons

We made proposals to introduce managed parking places on St Leonard's Street, with passing places to maintain traffic flow.

Our original proposal included a parking area between the entrance to Douces Manor and the town centre, but we received comments from nearby residents that this could affect their access.

To this end we have adjusted the proposals to remove the parking bay between the Douces Manor entrance and the town centre. Members also requested we reduce the extent of the double yellow lines south of the country park access.

The intention is that the parking areas are restricted to cars so that large commercial vehicles cannot create an obstruction.

Formal consultation

We carried out formal consultation on the proposals by placing advertisements on-street, in the local press and by placing information "on deposit" at the Borough Council offices in Kings Hill and Tonbridge, as well as at Kent County Council's offices in Maidstone.

Public Responses

We wrote directly to 156 residents whose properties front the proposed parking changes or who had commented at prior consultations on this issue.

	Number	Percentage
Responses	20	12.8%
In favour	14	70%
Against	6	30%

Copies of any consultation responses are available in Annex 01.06 (available to Members at the meeting) and redacted versions will be made available online as Annex 01.06r.

Statutory Consultees

We wrote directly to the local emergency services, bus companies that operate in the area, haulage associations and other motoring bodies, as well as the respective Parish Councils and County Councillors for each area.

Kent Police responded with no specific objections and their standard comments and observations on new parking restrictions.

The Parish Council commented that "Members were supportive of the proposals; however they found the reference to long-stay parking in "...overflow parking for season ticket holders from Ryarsh Lane car park and for long-stay parking" required some clarification and would suggest that this underline phrase be removed"

Analysis of responses

A good level of response was received from the properties in the area, with a reasonable percentage in favour of the proposals, though there were six objections.

The first objection was raised, but no grounds were raised that related to St Leonard's Street.

The second objection raised concerns that parking on St Leonard's Street could cause accidents, particularly where close to the park where there may be children.

The third objection commented that the parking arrangements on St Leonard's Street would push traffic on to the wrong side of the road, increasing the danger of collision – particularly an issue given the undulations of the road. The objector went on to comment that if the proposals reduce vehicle speeds, it could lead to an increase in vehicle speeds further south of the proposed changes and that traffic calming should be introduced.

The fourth objection commented that the parking arrangements would cause congestion or a safety hazard as there would be poor visibility past parked cars. It also commented that the existing street lighting in St Leonards's Street has recently been improved – suggesting that the decision on these proposals had already been made.

The fifth objection was a bland statement that there should not be any parking on St Leonard's Street, but no grounds were given for this position.

The sixth objection was that the proposed parking would detract from the the natural beauty of the conservation area of Douces Manor and the park opposite.

Additionally, there were a number of comments that the old P.O.W. camp site (to the east of St Leonard's Street at the northern end) should be turned in to a new car park for the town.

The Parish Council's comment that the term "and for long-stay parking" should be removed – the parking area would be for all to use, for an unlimited time period. As with any parking area where there is no time limit, the parking bays would not be marked as "long-stay parking". The intention is that these bays are for all to use, but the inclusion of a permit code letter encourages those with permits for other areas (such as the Ryarsh Lane car park) to use the area rather than populate other roads where parking may be more of an issue.

Discussion

The objections fall in to three categories:

- **Environmental** (the appearance of the area would be affected).
The environmental impact of any proposals can be mitigated by the use of the existing street furniture and fixing signs to walls (where possible). Additionally, road markings can be provided to the national standard for use in conservation areas.
- **Congestion and safety-related**
These concerns are important, but the proposal to allow parking on one side of a road is not particularly controversial, and the inclusion of passing places is likely to be beneficial in managing traffic flow whilst reducing vehicle speeds.
- **Undeclared, or no specifics given.**
These cannot be considered as appropriate or relevant objections and should be discounted.

Unfortunately the construction of a new car park is not possible for a number of reasons – the costs of construction, ongoing maintenance, management and business rates would prevent this from proceeding, as would the planning issues about developing what is part of the Country Park.

However, the foremost issue is that the area is not owned or managed by the Borough Council and without the ownership we would have no involvement with it. The Borough Council would not be in a position to consider purchasing the area (even if it was available).

Recommendation

The proposals are intended to address a number of issues – to manage parking on St Leonards Street (this already happens in an uncontrolled manner on Market days) and to encourage additional long-stay parking – a resource that is in short supply in the town.

The proposal is an important element in the review of parking in the town, as it will then enable the town centre parking areas to be managed more effectively as short-stay parking, which would be important to the economic viability of the town.

The objections raise concerns about speed along other parts of St Leonard's Street, though this is outside the parking review and the remit of the Borough Council.

Accordingly it is recommended that the objections should be set aside and the proposals should be implemented, as this will assist in helping manage on and off-street parking within West Malling.