



Benson Parish Council
Serving Our Community

Benson Neighbourhood Plan Plan Revision 2022-2035

Submission Version - Sept 2022

Appendix G - Parking Plan

Appendix G was created for the Original Plan adopted in August 2018 and has been slightly updated in this Plan Revision to reflect developments since that time.



Appendix G - Parking Plan

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1 Background

Parking is a necessity of modern life, and Benson is not unique in having issues with it. Benson's basic parking issue is that demand for spaces exceeds availability at key times in the day. Parking is generally considered an essential enabler to shopping and there could well be serious consequences for our few remaining shops, if insufficient parking was available.

2 Problem Sites

The following sites have all been reported as having issues with parking over recent years, usually at the days/times indicated. Recommended Actions to solve or at least ameliorate the issues are shown below in italics.

2.1 Village Centre

In what is regarded as the Village Centre, there are approximately 60 parking spaces available (including spaces for 'Blue badge holders'). These include the Millstream Car Park (owned by SODC), College Farm Car Park (owned by BPC) and some on street parking. Many of these spaces are taken up by overnight residential parking, and others by people working in the village centre, as a result of which, parking for shoppers is becoming an increasing issue. Another complicating factor is recent approvals of small developments and flat conversions with inadequate (or no) parking provision.

Comments have been made about the illegal parking frequently seen when demand is high, usually on restricted sites and in inappropriate places. It is not uncommon for such parking to have safety implications, especially near junctions or across dropped kerbs.

Recommendations:

- Ensure free parking remains available in the village centre
- Encourage village access for alternative transport, especially for cyclists and pedestrians with the provision of secure cycle racks
- Maximise the use of existing parking, by road bay marking for example
- Insist on adequate parking facilities for all future developments
- Consider the introduction of parking restrictions in the Village Centre car parks (e.g. limit the parking to 1 hour between 0800 and 1830); issue residents with parking permits, possibly chargeable; and charge for workers to use the car parks while at work.

2.2 Oxford Road

Parking outside the school in Oxford Road is an issue every school day at drop off and pickup times, with the issue also spreading into adjacent roads such as Horseshoes Lane and Littleworth Road. Oxford Road has higher than average recorded speeds in OCC surveys, but it is argued that the parked cars on Oxford Road appear to slow the through traffic down by acting as a chicane.

The new Relief Road will help the traffic flow as through traffic will now bypass the village and will not have to negotiate Oxford Road.

Recommendations

- Encourage use of adjacent parking facilities, such as the Parish Hall and the Library
- Encourage and facilitate alternative transport to/from school, especially cycling/walking.

2.3 Church Road

Parking outside the Church can create temporary problems whenever there is any function on in the Church or Church Rooms. Church Road is a busy through road at present and nose to tail parking outside the church can at times create what is in effect a long stretch of single carriageway

Once again, the new Relief Road will help as through traffic will now be able to by-pass the village and will not necessarily have to travel along Church Road.

Recommendations:

- Encourage additional parking close to the church, perhaps in St Helen's Avenue.

2.4 St Helens Avenue

The main issue reported is the parking approaching the junction with Church Rd, with restricted stretches at present. Visibility near the main junction can be seriously obstructed, especially for users of the cycle/foot path which exits there.

Much of the parking is believed to be linked with the bus stops nearby, and with riverside leisure facilities at certain times - summer weekends being the prime example.

St Helen's Ave is the widest road in the village and, except for the junction at Church Road, there are usually no major issues. Parking for the allotments for example does not seem to cause problems.

The present road restrictions are white lines, which the County laid down a few years ago at BPC's request. These white lines are used to reinforce Rule 243 of the Highway Code and would seem to have been effective.

Recommendations:

- Restrict more of the highway in the immediate vicinity of the junction
- Consider providing new parking facilities adjacent to the A4074 for leisure use
- Encourage alternative means of transport.

2.5 Preston Crowmarsh Lane

There are issues with parking in the lane to Preston Crowmarsh from the junction with the A4074, due to the narrow road width. Emergency vehicles could be prevented from accessing Preston Crowmarsh from the junction adjacent to the bus stop, due to the inconsiderate parking on the slip road, especially where cars double park carelessly on the grass area. Isolated measures to stop parking here are likely to create problems elsewhere, so the provision of a dedicated/marked parking area would be beneficial.

There are also issues with parking at the entrance to the lock, especially in spring/summer when the immediate vicinity can be churned into mud by the high volumes of parked cars.

Recommendations

- Some form of discouragement to parking would seem to be required or a properly designated car parking area should be considered in this area
- Request OCC to raise a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for consultation to make the Preston Crowmarsh Lane a 'No Waiting' area.

2.6 Additional Parking

It is considered important to maximise existing parking, but also to create additional parking wherever possible. Thus, as well as the previously mentioned new sites, facilities such as the library car park should be considered for use.

Recommendations:

- Investigate the use of alternative parking sites, e.g. the library

3 Parking Enforcement

Oxfordshire County Council made an application to create new special enforcement areas (SEAs) in partnership with Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils and this new parking enforcement regime came into effect on the 1st Nov 2021.

This means management of parking offences in these areas, typically enforced by the police, becomes the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council. Parking violations will become civil offences and enforcement will apply to on-street parking on roads/highways.

We expect these changes will result in increased, more consistent enforcement of waiting and loading restrictions, double parking offences and dropped kerb obstructions. Civil parking enforcement is already in operation in Oxford City and West Oxfordshire.

4 Summary

- Parking is necessary and problematic - and there is no easy solution
- Parking in the Village Centre is essential for our shops
- Enforcement of restrictions should be improved with Oxfordshire County Council taking on this role from the police
- The use of existing parking areas should be maximised and alternative parking should be encouraged
- Where possible additional parking areas should be provided to increase capacity
- Use of cycle/foot routes should be encouraged and prioritised
- All new developments should include adequate parking for dwellings and visitors.