

# Cowley Area Forum

## Notes and Actions

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011

John Bunyan Baptist Church, Crowell Road

www.oxford.gov.uk



### Introduction

This first Cowley Area Forum focussed mainly on parking and highways as one of the priority issues concerning residents in the area. This issue was chosen because residents have frequently expressed concerns to local councillors, particularly about including nuisance parking, residents parking problems, safety around schools and highway maintenance. Attendees were also able to view a display and give their views on a new consultation document on the planning designation for over 30 sites within the local area.

Brief presentations outlining the issues and possible solutions were made by:

- Mandy Rigault - Senior Road Safety Officer at Oxfordshire County Council on the Zig Zag STARS (Schools Travel and Road Safety) parking programme with schools
- Craig Rossington - Principal Transport Planner at Oxfordshire County Council on transport plans for Oxford
- Inspector Matt Coburn - Neighbourhood Police Team, Thames Valley Police on dealing with neighbourhood parking issues
- Corinne Grimley Evans - Pedestrians Association on promoting walking, campaigning for pedestrian safety and encouraging considerate parking.
- Henrietta Gill - speaking on Residents Associations actions to reduce nuisance parking

### Parking and Highways Issues in the Cowley Area

The main issues expressed by attendees were:

- Many residents face problems of parking on residential streets and are often unable to park near their houses. Some park in a way which obstructs resident's driveways and there is a concern that emergency and delivery vehicles are at times unable to gain access, particularly where people are parking on corners or double parking.
- There are additional problems caused by cars parking on the pavements and making them unpassable – particularly for pushchairs and wheelchairs. This is made worse where residents don't cut back hedges/front gardens which overhang into the street.
- Many of those parking in residential streets are the staff of employers in the area. Those particularly mentioned were the offices on Barnes Road and Between Towns Road (OCHA, Alec Turnbull House, Knights Court and employees of the Templar Square Shopping Centre). Also, staff working at the Churchill Hospital site park in the area of Peat Moors often restricting access to residents and those visiting the Bullingdon Community Centre.
- Key problems streets mentioned include: Peat Moors, St Lukes Road, Coleridge Close, Bailey Road, Boswell Road, St Omer Road, Marsh Road, Bartholemew Road, Cricket Road and Florence Park Road.

- The problems are perceived to be spreading. Significant concerns were expressed about proposed new developments in the area, e.g. the development sites on Barnes Road, the old Conservative Club and new students' flats in the area. People feel that this will increase the demand for parking and that there isn't adequate provision for this within the plans. Where these are 'no car developments' people feel that this is unlikely to be enforced. It is also felt that not enough facilities are being built for all the people that will be moving into the area.
- Another area of concern is that users of Florence Park are parking on the grass verges and filling up the streets around the park.
- The increasing number of houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs) are making the issues worse as they bring in more cars to the area.
- Double parking on yellow lines near schools and abuse from drivers who are politely requested to move causes concern. This doesn't happen if Community Wardens are present.
- There is a concern that the Traffic Regulation Order in St Lukes Road and Coleridge Close is not being enforced.
- There are dangers in the area for cyclists – particularly around the junction to B&Q. More signage would be useful.
- Some side streets are being used as rat runs.
- The road surface in St Luke's Road is broken up and has no lines. Coleridge Close also needs resurfacing.
- Car park charges at the John Allen Centre causes concern – particularly the length of time that will be free of charges.
- Traffic calming devices in some streets can cause additional noise to those residents close to them.

The solutions proposed by attendees were:

- Work with local businesses to try and reduce the number of staff using residential side streets inconsiderately for parking. Employees could be encouraged to cycle, use public transport, use park and rides or park in local car parks.
- Residents could get together to form residents groups. These groups could work with local agencies (e.g. police, police community support officers, community wardens, local councillors) to reduce nuisance parking and enforce parking restrictions (e.g. double yellow lines). Groups could also use polite notices placed on badly parked cars, help residents to cut back their hedges, leaflet streets to raise awareness of the issues, place stickers on lampposts/streets etc. Potential groups would find it useful to have information on how to set up residents associations.
- Establish controlled parking zones with residents parking permits (like the ones they have in Headington). This would significantly reduce parking issues.
- Contact police, Police Community Support Officers and Community Wardens and ask them to enforce parking restrictions – esp. where hazard or obstruction and where there are Traffic Regulation Orders.
- Increase the opening hours of existing car parks and increase the use of underused car park space.
- Use double yellow lines in particular problem areas, e.g. around corners. Also re-paint double yellow lines where these are now faint.

- Reduce the reliance on cars in the area. Suggestions included the use of car clubs e.g. Common Wheels ([www.commonwheels.org.uk](http://www.commonwheels.org.uk)), liftshare clubs, 'Boris Bikes' and reducing bus fares.
- Ensure that all approved planning applications have adequate provision for parking (including the hospitals) and take into account residents concerns.
- Review the number of houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs) that are permissible in the area.
- Establish one way streets and use traffic calming devices to reduce the use of rat runs.
- Repair the road surface on St Lukes Rd and Coleridge Close and place double yellow lines on the corners.
- Support a campaign for a 20mph speed limit.

### **Actions Resulting from the Forum**

The actions that will be taken as a follow-up to the Forum will be:

- ✓ A working group will be set up to respond to the suggestions given about parking including councillors, county and city council staff, neighbourhood police etc. Local residents are welcome to join this group and should contact the City Council Communities and Neighbourhoods Team on 01865 252791.
- ✓ Contact will be made with local employers to gain their support to improve parking situation (led by County Councillors).
- ✓ Leaflets to be produced providing information on what local residents can do when they experience parking issues and the numbers of people to contact if problems occur.
- ✓ Support to be provided for new residents groups where local residents would like to establish them. This could include providing information packs and building links with residents groups in other areas who could share experiences.
- ✓ Neighbourhood Police Team to follow up on specific enforcement issues raised (including the Traffic Regulation Orders). Parking is also a priority issue to be dealt with through the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG). The next NAG meeting will be held on 29<sup>th</sup> August at 5.30pm at the Harley Davidson HQ, Oxford Business Park, 6000 Garsington Road.
- ✓ Zig-Zag programme (contact Mandy Rigault - Senior Road Safety Officer of the County Council on [Mandy.Rigault@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Mandy.Rigault@oxfordshire.gov.uk)) happy to work with local schools to reduce problems of parking outside schools.
- ✓ For the Sites and Housing Consultation the Planning Policy Team will collate all comments received from the Area Forum and these will be published in a consultation report due to be published in September. These comments will be used to help the Planning Policy team and Councillors develop the policies in the Proposed Submission document for new development sites and for new housing policies. This document will be taken through City Executive Board and Council in December for further consultation in January 2012.

## **What other priority issues are there facing Cowley?**

For the last session of the forum attendees were asked what issues they would like raised at future forums, to be held every 3 months. In order of the priority given to them by attendees the issues raised were:

1. Lack of facilities for young people/old people
2. Impact of new developments in the area including: Barnes Road Development and Community Centre; houses of multiple occupancy that are not maintained; student accommodation and the lack of new infrastructure linked to the new developments.
3. Keeping Temple Cowley fitness centre open
4. Traffic hotspots on Garsington Rd and Our Ladies Primary School on Oxford Road.
5. Location of bus stops