

LIVING WITH PARKING CONTROLS IN ST ALBANS DISTRICT

Introduction

Residents will be aware that since residents parking has been introduced in areas of the District; (both St Albans and Harpenden) there has been an ever increasing presence of non residential parked vehicles throughout the day in adjacent roads to where parking controls have been introduced. A non residential parked car is defined as a vehicle parked by an individual who is not resident in the area or is not visiting a nearby resident or property.

The movement of vehicles during the day will very much depend on the reason for being parked. The usual scenario being vehicles arrive in the morning and depart early/late evening (the classic commuter). Whereas near to a hospital or busy retail area vehicles may come and go throughout the day.

The increase in problems in such an area often results in requests by residents and Councillors alike for action to improve the situation.

The Problems To Consider

A challenge in streets next to roads with no controls is that there is often insufficient road width to allow parking on both sides of the road unless vehicles are parked on the pavement. The District Council has a stated wish not to allow parking on the pavement; unless there are very special circumstances. Often pavements are not particularly wide which means that if vehicles are parked on the pavement, pedestrians, particularly those with pushchairs are forced into the road.

If vehicles currently park partly on the pavement and there is insufficient room to allow a pedestrian with a pushchair along the pavement, it is unlikely the current practice will be permitted. This means that if parking bays are introduced they can only be introduced on one side of the road. This will generate discussion as to which side the bays will be, as the 'non-bay' side will need to have at least a single yellow line restriction to deter parking. This restriction will apply to residents.

The problem can be compounded when not all residents have access to off street parking and inconsiderate parking takes place.

When undertaking surveys on whether parking controls should be introduced this can result in a range of responses from residents living in the affected area.

- Unfair for residents to have to pay for parking.
- Roads are only wide enough to allow parking on one side, therefore something needs to be done.
- Virtually no cars parked in the road before controls/charges were introduced elsewhere.
- Residents can't get out of their driveways
- All day parking seems to be the problem

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Introduce Double Yellow Lines at Junctions

If double yellow lines are introduced at junctions visibility will be improved. However there is a concern that those drivers who currently park at these junctions will park further down the street making existing problems of footway parking and obstruction in front of residential properties worse.

Introduce a Waiting Restriction In The Middle Of the Day

This type of restriction is often seen around stations where drivers want to park their cars before catching a train. Typically the restriction lasts a couple of hours which gives time for enforcement to cover the whole area when the restriction is in operation. This type of restriction will generally solve the problem where it has been caused by morning and evening movements. It will not work if there is vehicle turnover during the day (arriving and leaving throughout the day).

Disadvantages

- No parking will be allowed for residents or their visitors during the restricted hours
- Additional signs and lines on street

Advantages

- Prevent all-day commuters leaving their cars all day
- No cost to residents

Introduce A Waiting Restriction for the Whole of the Day e.g. 8am – 6.30 Monday to Friday

This would keep the roads clear throughout the day, but allow residents to park their vehicles on street at night. This would not prevent residents parking on the pavement at night, but it would keep the roads and pavements clear during the day. If the cause of the parking has activities throughout the day, e.g. shopping, hospital, a decision would have to be made whether the restriction would operate for 5, 6 or even 7 days a week. This option would have an impact on any residents that do not have off-street parking and are present during the day. As residents are generally at home during the weekend it may not be appropriate to have restrictions at the weekend.

Disadvantages

- No parking will be allowed for residents or their visitors during the day
- Visitors to the area can park outside of the restricted hours.
- Additional signs and lines on street

Advantages

- Prevent commuters leaving their cars all day
- No cost to residents

Introduce A Waiting Restriction for the Whole of the Day e.g. 8am – 6.30pm Monday to Friday on One Side of the Road Only

In addition to the comments above this would keep the controlled side of the roads clear throughout the day. However it would not prevent parking on the uncontrolled side where road width allows. This could result in all available parking space being taken during the day by commuter parking. This would prevent residents from parking as they would not be permitted to park on a yellow line.

Residents Parking - Permit Parking

The introduction of a permit parking area (Residents Permit Parking) enables those residents (or others) who hold a valid permit to have priority over the available road space. The necessary legal documents required for resident parking will state the properties eligible for permits.

Drivers who are not residents will no longer be able to park in the area. However visitors to residents (family, friends or workmen) will be able to park if a visitor parking permit or a works permit is displayed.

Introduce a 2 Hour Permit Parking Areas

Disadvantages

- Cost of permits
- A space is not guaranteed for residents or their visitors
- The number of visitor permits are limited
- As shop workers may operate a shift pattern, this may not prevent workers parking on the residential roads outside of controlled hours.
- Additional signs and lines on street
- The number of parking spaces may be reduced as parking may only be allowed on one side of the road.

Advantages

- Prevents commuters leaving their cars all day
- Less restrictive to residents and their visitors than all day controls
- Residents have priority

Introduce an All Day Permit Parking Areas

Disadvantages

- Cost of permits
- A space is not guaranteed for residents or their visitors
- The number of visitor permits are limited
- Additional signs and lines on street
- In some cases the number of parking spaces may be reduced as parking will only be allowed on one side of the road depending on road widths.

Advantages

- Prevent commuters leaving their cars all day
- It should be easier to find a space during controlled hours
- Residents have priority

Retain the status quo

Disadvantages

- Problems finding a parking space during the day
- Obstructive parking in front of driveways and on footways
- Nothing changes

Advantages

- No cost to residents
- No signs and lines on street

Permit Prices

The introduction of a Controlled Parking Zone will require residents and their visitors to purchase a permit **if** they propose or need to park a vehicle during the hours of control on the road.

The current charges for annual permits are as follows.

Zones Operating 6 Days a Week

	Part Day 2 Hours	All Day
1 st Vehicle	£19.38	£38.76
2 nd Vehicle	£67.32	£134.64
3 rd Vehicle	£146.88	£293.76

Zones Operating 7 Days a Week

1 st Vehicle	£51.00
2 nd Vehicle	£179.52
3 rd Vehicle	£326.40

Residents who are holders of a Blue Badge (Disabled driver) and have a vehicle registered at the property may receive their first permit without charge

Visitor Vouchers

73p per voucher (10 per book)(all day, where restrictions allow)

A total of 12 books per year is permitted. Additional books can be provided upon application to accommodate temporary increases; (builders, new birth etc.)

Footway & Verge Parking

Within an area where footway parking has been identified as a regular occurrence, additional controls maybe required. The impact does vary depending upon the exact location as some areas are able to accommodate a vehicle on the footway without restricting pedestrian access. This is not the case at all locations. When considering any of the options to introduce controls the addition of a footway ban could be included. This would be the most cost effective method as both restrictions can be introduced at the same time.