

Eye Neighbourhood Plan

Supporting Document 14 – Car Parking

Draft for discussion with the Community

Introduction

1. Concerns about car parking in the Town led the Town Council to convene a public meeting to discuss the communities need for car parking with local residents.
2. This meeting identified the following purposes for car parking:
 - *To encourage people to use the shops, cafes and services in the Town Centre*
 - *To provide spaces for households in the historic centre without their own spaces*
 - *To provide spaces for people working in the Town Centre*
3. The meeting agreed to carry out a survey to find out how parking is currently used.

Survey Results

4. Surveys were delivered by hand to every household in Eye. The overall return was disappointingly low at around 13%. However, the area directly affected by parking issues - the commercial centre - returned around 25%.
5. The results are as follows and will be included in the draft of the Eye Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Eye needs more parking provision - for visitors, residents, businesses and workers
 - Parking capacity has a direct effect on trade - shoppers come to Eye for the ease of parking
 - Majority opposed to paid parking
 - We need effective control of parking in Eye - including timed parking
 - Significant support for residents and business permit scheme - providing it was free
 - There are daily issues with parking in Eye
 - Visitors to Eye come regularly mainly for shopping and appointments usually up to 2 hours
 - Current street line markings are confusing and unclear
6. Other points raised were:
 - Some support for limited free parking as in Diss
 - Problems with congestion around Primary School
 - Lack of spaces and control for disabled and elderly visitors
 - More responsible and respectful parking required

Conclusions:

Since Mid Suffolk District Council is reviewing its policy on car parks, it may become inevitable that as it looks for ways to pay for controlled car parking, it will want to introduce charging after an initial free period - as in Diss. From the survey, it is clear that the majority of visitors are here for shopping or appointments - hair dressing, dentist etc and we want them to enjoy a coffee or lunch too, so 2 hours seems more sensible. Aldeburgh has a 2 hours free policy that works well.

The development of a free permit scheme for both residents and businesses (including employees) is proposed. This will entitle the holders to free full time parking in the case that the car parks become payable after an initial (2 hour) free period. There should be specific zones for these permit bays.

New car park sites are proposed - the Rettery, then the Community Centre were preferred as new sites by respondents. The proposed extra 60 spaces at the Rettery would be a major contribution to solve the problems. The Community Centre is reluctant to give up land or carry the costs for maintenance of a town car park. There is also the possible redevelopment of the Chicken Factory. This has been zoned for retail, parking and housing. This will help Magdalen Street congestion as long as any development ensures adequate parking for employees and shoppers as well as additional spaces for visitors to the town. This site also joins the Cross Street car park so could be a way to expand it.

It is important that existing on-street spaces are protected to ensure that they do not get swallowed up by new developments. Paddock House for example has around 20 spaces on the perimeter and development of the site should include these spaces to avoid exacerbating the parking issues. There are approx. 120 on-street spaces in Eye and it is necessary to ensure they are clearly marked and are actually in the right places.

There are concerns over safety and ease of parking for disabled or elderly visitors and this needs to be reviewed and managed as both disabled bays are often used by casual shoppers. A Special Access notice that is kept by the shopkeepers to give to customers in special circumstances - giving them 2 hours dispensation – should be considered.