

# **REPORT ON PARKING ISSUES IN KELSO FOR SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S PARKING ISSUES' WORKING GROUP, AUGUST 2018**

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 This report summarises comments, ideas, representations and reactions to parking issues in Kelso.

1.2 It is based upon a Parking Survey on the Survey Monkey website, a public meeting sponsored by Kelso Community Council and subsequent discussion in that Council, a meeting with Visit Kelso and several representations from constituents.

1.3 Councillor Euan Robson the author wishes to express his appreciation of the help and co-operation of all involved.

1.4 This report will be submitted to Scottish Borders Council's officers to help to inform the deliberations of the Parking Issues' Working Group which is to report to the Council in the autumn of this year after consideration of Borders wide issues at its final meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> August.

## **2 Results of the Parking Survey**

2.1 196 responses online responses were received and five paper copies were completed. Not every respondent answered every question. The total number of respondees is recorded in red at the end of each question.

2.2 The question and results are as below

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### **KELSO PARKING SURVEY**

The purpose of this survey is to gauge people's views on parking in Kelso. The information gathered will be submitted to a short-term Working Group established by Scottish Borders Council which will report in August. Your response is anonymous. Thank you for participating.

The survey is online at :-

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LSZVF6Y>

## 1. Where do you live?

**201**

In Kelso	<b>127</b>	<b>63%</b>
Within 10 miles of Kelso	<b>61</b>	<b>30.5%</b>
Elsewhere in the Borders	<b>8</b>	<b>4%</b>
Elsewhere in Scotland	<b>1</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
In Northumberland	<b>3</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
Elsewhere in England	<b>1</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

## 2. Do you normally use car parks or on street parking when you park in Kelso?

**200**

Car parks	<b>82</b>	<b>41%</b>
On street parking	<b>118</b>	<b>59%</b>

## 3. How long would you normally park for?

**200**

Less than an hour	<b>130</b>	<b>65%</b>
More than an hour	<b>36</b>	<b>18%</b>
All (working) day	<b>25</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
Other (please specify)	<b>9</b>	<b>4.5%</b>

## 4. At present there is no charge for using car parks and on street parking is also free. Do you agree with this approach?

**201**

Strongly agree	<b>129</b>	<b>64%</b>	Disagree	<b>10</b>	<b>5%</b>
Agree	<b>40</b>	<b>20%</b>	Strongly disagree	<b>7</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<b>15</b>	<b>7.5%</b>			

## 5. Would you favour the introduction of a disc system to indicate your arrival time?

**200**

Yes	<b>127</b>	<b>63.5%</b>
No	<b>73</b>	<b>36.5%</b>

6. What is the maximum waiting time that should be permitted for on street parking?

**201**

30 minutes	<b>20</b>	<b>10%</b>
45 minutes	<b>7</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
1 hour	<b>61</b>	<b>30.5%</b>
2 hours	<b>102</b>	<b>50.5%</b>
Other (please specify)	<b>11</b>	<b>5.5%</b>

7. Do you agree that the present no return within an hour restriction should continue?

**200**

Yes	<b>153</b>	<b>76.5%</b>
No	<b>47</b>	<b>23.5%</b>

8. Do you think that more on street parking should be made available in Kelso?

**200**

Yes	<b>112</b>	<b>56%</b>
No	<b>88</b>	<b>44%</b>

9. If you think more on street parking should be made available where do you think this should be?

**101**

10. Do you think there should be new public car parks in Kelso and if so where should they be?

**196**

Yes	<b>87</b>	<b>44.5%</b>
No	<b>47</b>	<b>23.5%</b>
Location for new public car park (please specify)	<b>62</b>	<b>32%</b>

### **3 Analysis of the Results**

3.1 Many of the responses were predictable and the survey would have benefitted from more responses from visitors from outside the Borders.

3.2 The two hour on street restriction suits the majority of parking requirements as suggested by responses to Questions 3 and 6.

3.3 12.5% of respondents need to park all day

3.4 Only three respondents argued for no restrictions at all

3.5 84% oppose the introduction of any parking charges

3.6 A majority favour a disc system similar to those of neighbouring authorities

3.7 The "Other" responses to Questions 3 and 6 included a few suggestions that there should be no restrictions and a similarly small number raised the issue of a residents' permit for those living in the two hour waiting zone.

3.8 Most respondents accept that there should be no return within the hour

3.8 As evidenced by Questions 8 and 10 a majority of respondents wished to see more parking spaces made available with over 75% responding positively to the provision of new off street parking.

### **4 The Location of new On Street Parking**

4.1 A number of suggestions were made both in the 101 responses to Question 9 in the Survey and in meetings and general representations and ad hoc comments.

4.2 As regards the Survey, the reduction of Loading Bay spaces was referred to by 6 respondents with specific reference to Roxburgh Street and Horsemarket. 3 respondents suggested angled spaces in Horsemarket and 2 mentioned the re-introduction of two bays near the Bank of Scotland auto teller on Bridge Street. 4 respondents said there are "too many taxi spaces". 1 mentioned more spaces in Abbey Row but did not say where, another commented that bays should be created on the double yellow lines outside Ladbrokes and the former Barclays Bank "as people park there in any event. 1 respondent declared "you tell us"!

4.3 Comments and suggestions in meetings and on an ad hoc basis mentioned similar locations but also included references to Cross Street and to the area around Hogarth's Mill.

### **5 The Location of new Off Street Parking**

5.1 Again a variety of suggestions were made both in the 62 responses to Question

10 in the Survey and in meetings and general representations and ad hoc comments.

5.2 Survey responses included two people who thought that a multi storey car park should be built either on the Knowes or in the land adjacent to Hogarth's Mill. 7 suggested the Mayfield area with 11 proposing the Glebe field adjacent to Rennie's Bridge. 6 mentioned the old High School, 4 suggested using Springwood Park with 1 of those proposing a new footbridge across to the town from the showground. 3 people talked of a park and ride and 3 specifically mentioned the old Foundry site in the area of Station Road and Sprouston Road. 1 respondent mentioned Shedden Park and 1 proposed Woodside Park whilst another specifically rejected that location.

5.3 In both the survey and in meetings and elsewhere the general response was that finding another location is not easy and that there is no obvious place for a new off street car park. Many comments were received about the proper enforcement of on street parking which it was thought would facilitate greater circulation of traffic.

5.4 A draft report of the discussions in Community Council public meeting can be found in Appendix 1

## **6 General Strategic Conclusions**

6.1 The extent of the consultation process was not exhaustive but it has allowed me to gain a reasonable impression of public opinion and a chance to draw some fair and reasoned conclusions.

6.2 There is a general acceptance that better enforcement of the two hour waiting limit would improve the availability of on street parking in the restricted zone in Kelso.

6.3 There is widespread criticism of those who choose to park all day in one on street space or hop between spaces when they could park in the Knowes car park.

6.4 Whilst it is for Scottish Borders Council to decide whether there should be a change to decriminalised parking almost all those who discussed the option were of the view that given that the Council had invested in the Police Community Action Team, that its role in the enforcement of traffic regulations including parking should be allowed develop to assess its efficacy. This is particularly so as regards overstaying waiting limits.

6.5 There is no desire to change waiting times or no return intervals from those in force at present.

6.6 There is no desire for the introduction of paid parking anywhere in Kelso as such is thought to be unnecessary and a risk to trade given that competitor areas and in particular Northumberland either do not have or have removed paid parking.

6.7 The provision of additional on street or off street parking in Kelso is thought of

as beneficial but is recognised as not being easy to achieve nor that there are ready made solutions.

## **7 Conclusions – New Parking**

7.1 As regards on street parking it is clear that Scottish Borders Council needs to review and probably reduce loading bays in the controlled zone. The loading bay in Cross Street could be removed as could some of those in Roxburgh Street and in Horsemarket. Consideration might usefully include loading bays operating for fixed periods rather than continuously.

7.2 The disabled space in Cross Street should be removed and replaced by an additional one adjacent to Rutherford Square.

7.3 An additional electric vehicle charging point should be installed in the taxi rank next to the Town House. This could be used by taxis when no vehicle is refuelling on the understanding that refuelling has priority.

7.4 There is support for the re-introduction of two or three parking bays on Bridge Street adjacent to the Bank of Scotland autoteller. This could be accompanied by the introduction of double yellow lines in the remainder of the street up to Abbey Row to deter parking in the narrower part of the street. One of these bays could be a disabled space.

7.5 As regards off street parking there are two inhibiting factors. The first is that if people are reluctant to walk from the Knowes car park to the Square why would they walk from locations similarly close or further afield? The second is that Scottish Borders Council does not own some of the land identified for example such as the field off the roundabout at the end of Hunter's Bridge or Springwood Park.

7.6 It would appear that Scottish Borders Council ought to give consideration to using some of the land at the old High School for parking if for no other reason than to relieve congestion at the northern end of Bowmont Street near to the junction with Roxburgh Street.

7.7 Further as regards Bowmont Street, the car parking in the industrial units off Inch Road should be reformed to make better use of the space available and should include better signing and the opening of the gate on to Bowmont Street to facilitate pedestrian access to the town centre

7.8 Woodside Park, Springwood Park and the field near Hunter's Bridge mentioned in 7.5 above would appear to be non-starters as far as new off street car parking is concerned because of ownership issues and distance from the town centre.

7.9 The same issues apply to locations in Mayfield and the Glebe field. As regards the latter the area of most archaeological interest is that closest to the town centre. There would be significant cultural and heritage objections to development of the Glebe field.

7.10 The old Foundry site in the area of Station Road and Sprouston Road does however appear to have several advantages. Although not close to the town centre it is close to the bypass and a bus service passes the existing entrance. The land is privately owned but has lain undeveloped for many years as it is said to be contaminated. Parking would seem to be a very sensible use for the area.

7.11 There would appear to be two further advantages to such a development. It could provide a sensible location for visiting coaches releasing much needed spaces in the Knowes car park. It could also become an overnight lorry park relieving the congestion on the roads of the Pinnaclehill Industrial Estate. Shuttle bus links are important in both regards

7.12 A feasibility study should be conducted on the development of the Foundry site.

## **8 Conclusions – other matters**

8.1 Other parking issues that have arisen during the life span of the Working Group.



8.2 A complaint has been received about bus and other vehicles parking on the

pavement adjacent to the Windy Gowl in Roxburgh Street. This has been raised with the Police CAT team. However if the problem persists the installation of bollards will need to be reconsidered.

8.3 Complaints have also been received about parking at Kerfield Court. There are some 25 dedicated spaces in the internal courtyard for over 40 flats. There are five spaces on the road outside. The area is very congested with visitors and especially carers' vehicles. Visitors could use the parking area nearby in Woodside Park but carers need speedy access because of workload pressure.

8.4 A solution may be to extend the existing parking area as it is suggested that the land would be available on a free of charge basis and to develop end on or diagonal bays to create more spaces. It is not clear whether Scottish Borders Council could or indeed should be involved in such an initiative.

8.5 The objection to end on or diagonal bays centres on the dangers inherent in reversing into the access road when leaving the parking bay. However this proposal is worth further consideration.





8.6 That very objection has been raised at Mayfield Gardens where a resident has complained about minor accidents where reversing cars have collided with other vehicles exiting from the Garden Centre.

8.7 The only realistic response would be to limit the bays by making them parallel to the egress road but that would involve many residents parking elsewhere.



8.8 Congestion on Inch Road by Edenside Primary School and at the Kelso Medical Centre was also raised by constituents.

8.9 A solution in the form of use of the Inchmyre residents' car park accessed from Inch Road has been proposed with the construction of a replacement for residents on land at Inchmyre. This project will require on-going research and collaboration with the land owners and tenants' representatives to determine whether it is feasible. A photo of the area is overleaf.



## **9. Other Significant Proposals**

9.1 Two important proposals were made during my consultations.

9.2 Community Councillor Peter Cooper has pointed out that signage to the Knowes car park is poor. He proposes that entrances to Kelso should display signs which indicate the Knowes as a long stay car park close to the centre of the town and that repeat signs guide motorists to the car park and to the overspill car park at Mayfield.

9.3 Better signage could lead to greater use of the Knowes and the Inch Road car park as in 7.7 above.

9.4 A review of car park signs should be undertaken as a first step.

9.5 As mentioned in 3.6 a significant majority of respondents favoured a disc system but that might imply the introduction of decriminalisation.

9.6 However consideration should be given to a voluntary disc system – a Citizens Disc System – whereby a disc is displayed to indicate arrival time to assist Police in determining length of stay. Those not displaying a disc may thereby attract more Police attention as possible overstayers. Discs from other authorities might be used and advertising could defray production costs.

## **10. What happens next?**

10.1 As previously stated this report will be considered by Scottish Borders Council's officers and can be made available to any interested parties.

10.2 Some of its conclusions or recommendations may be pursued by the Council but there are no guarantees.

10.3 Euan Robson as author of this report disclaims any liability for loss or damage that may be claimed by anyone acting upon the contents of this report or by their inferring that any recommendation or conclusion that may be derived herefrom.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Parking In Kelso**

#### **Draft Summary of Public Meeting held in the Town House on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

The Provost opened the special meeting which he had previously advised would be held at 6pm prior to the formal meeting of the Community Council.

Scottish Borders Councillor Euan Robson made a presentation to Community Councillors and to members of the public present. He tabled an outline paper which forms part of this Minute as an attachment.

Councillor Robson explained that he is a member of Scottish Borders Council's Parking Issues Working Group which is to report to the Council in September. He emphasised that at this stage no decisions had been taken and that the Working Group was still taking evidence and would formulate its recommendations in August.

He advised that there were five themes in his presentation.

#### **1 Options for parking management in the Borders**

Councillor Robson said that the Working Group had considered whether the current arrangements whereby the Police were responsible for enforcement should continue. The alternatives were decriminalisation whereby the Council would take on responsibility and a version of this where the Council would subcontract parking management to a private organisation. He said that most Councils in Scotland operate on a decriminalised basis and in answer to Councillor Tomcyck agreed that Edinburgh Council used a private contractor.

He believed that as Scottish Borders Council had initiated a Police Community Action Team of one sergeant and six officers part of whose remit would be parking enforcement, the Working Group would likely recommend remaining with Police enforcement at least for a while.

Councillor Robson also said that moving to decriminalisation would cost in the region of £300,000 in set up costs partly because of the considerable work on new traffic regulation orders.

There had been 175 tickets issued thus far by the Police CAT team. Councillor Mountford, in response to a member of the public who doubted that the team had been in Kelso, said that there would soon be a town by town breakdown of where tickets had been issued to ensure proper monitoring and fulsome coverage.

## 2 Waiting Times

Waiting Times were not standard across the Borders and ranged from half an hour to two hours with differing no return periods. The Working Group was likely to recommend standard times for simplicity's sake and these would probably be one or two hours waiting time with no return within the hour and 8.30 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Saturday duration. If this was adopted there would be only a small change in Kelso as the present duration was 8.00 am to 6.00 pm. In answer to a member of the public who raised the issue of guests in hotels the Provost said that the shorter day time restriction would be advantageous to hoteliers as guests could effectively park on street from 3.30 pm to 10.30 am which generally coincided with check in and check out times.

## 3 Payment for Parking

Councillor Robson said that he detected little or no appetite to re-introduce either off street or on street parking charges. Some towns notably Galashiels had paid parking which funded the maintenance of amenity areas. Apparently 75% of income from parking in the Borders came from Galashiels. In response to a member of the public who asked whether it was worth considering raising money in Kelso in this way Councillor Robson said that the experience of paid off street parking in Kelso several years ago was that the public was very opposed, on street parking congestion became worse and the car parks made a loss at that time.

He agreed with a member of the public who referred to the introduction of free parking throughout Northumberland that if Kelso charged there would then be a disincentive to visit the town to the detriment of local traders.

#### 4 New public car parks in Kelso

Councillor Robson indicated that there were 232 off street parking spaces in the town. He asked whether there was a consensus that more off street parking would be welcome to which there was general agreement. However everyone present recognised the difficulty was that every potential site may have both advantages disadvantages. It was recognised that some drivers appeared not to want to walk any distance even from the Knowes car park into the Square. It was also agreed that lack of enforcement had allowed the problem of overstaying to become endemic. The consensus of the meeting was that traders in the town should try to park off street.

As to locations for off street parking, places mentioned included the Glebe field, the foundry site at Pinnaclehill, Woodside Park, the old High School, Tweedside paddock, the showground and private land on Bowmont Street near Winchester Row. The Glebe field whilst most proximate to the Square was actually a greater walking distance to the Square than the Knowes. Also the main archaeological remains were in the area nearest to the town. The foundry site was well away from the centre but could possibly include an overnight parking for HGVs and parking for visitor buses on call for tourists to the town at a drop and pick up point in or near the Square. In the latter case this would release spaces in the Knowes. Woodside Park was well away from the Square and would attract opposition from surrounding residences. The old High School was up for sale and the other locations were on private land.

#### 5 On street parking

Councillor Robson table a map of the town centre and there was considerable discussion concerning a number of options to increase on street parking spaces. Amongst these included the re-creation of two spaces adjacent to the Ban f Scotland auto teller, a review of loading bays in Horsemarket and Roxburgh Street in particular, re-assessment of the taxi rank especially in the light of the alleged cabling for a charging point for electric vehicles on the rank on the north side of the Square.

Councillor Robson said that he would report views to the Working Group at its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> July and report back. He also indicated that he had set up an online survey for all residents at

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LSZVF6Y>

and would welcome people's comments.