

Planning & Environment Committee

Date:	14 August 2018
Title:	High Street Parking Permit Request
Contact Officer:	Graham Hunt, Town Clerk

Purpose of Report

1. To provide background on a recent request from a resident to extend the existing car park permit provision to allow permit holders to park in the High Street Car Park on Market Days.

Background

2. For many years, as a gesture of goodwill, Thame Town Council has offered residents of the immediate town centre with no off street parking, the use of Town Council controlled parking in the Upper High Street, on non-market days, via a permit scheme (limited to 2 permits per household). A charge of £50 per annum was introduced in 2009 to bring the scheme in line with other resident parking schemes in Oxfordshire. Each permit is associated with a specific vehicle.
3. There are currently 34 permits issued. The Parking Attendants record usage during controlled hours. Thursday/Friday/Saturday are the busiest days with 12 to 16 permits in use, while Monday/Wednesday have between 5 and 9 permits in use.
4. Market Day in Thame is very busy, with availability of parking at a premium. Permit holders have to find alternative parking from 6am to 6pm on Market Day (Tuesday) and when there are occasional events in the Upper High Street Car Park.
5. One of the existing permit holders (since February 2018) has asked if his permit could be extended to allow all day parking in the 1 hour High Street Car Park, on Market Days. This car park has 39 regular spaces.
6. Officers have explained a variety of alternative possibilities to the permit holder, including:
 - a) Parking courteously in non-controlled areas of the town, which is presumably the normal approach.
 - b) Seeking arrangements with a householder in Thame who has space in their driveway on a Tuesday.
 - c) Using existing paid for Long Term Car Parks, such as The Spread Eagle.
 - d) Seeking advice from previous occupants of the residence.
7. Officers have explained to the permit holder that if the permit was extended this would:
 - a) Exacerbate the issue of parking availability on Market Day, which is already in short supply through both lack of long term parking provision and the lack of regular enforcement by the police of the on-street 2 hour limit.
 - b) Cause inconvenience to many car based visitors to Thame on a Market Day. Assuming that the average stay in the one hour controlled parking in the High Street Car Park is 40 minutes,

the removal of one space would inconvenience 15 car drivers and their passengers each market day.

- c) Access would have to be given to all permit holders, and assuming 10 took up the extension, then the inconvenience extends to 150 car drivers and their passengers each market day.
8. Officers' expectation is that residents of Town Centre housing who choose to live in accommodation with no parking provision should be either not reliant on cars, or make their own arrangements for car parking.
 9. Another issue that in officers' view prevents the ability to accept the request, is the limited parking provision that the Town Council is in control of. The resident was going to establish if any other Parish / Town Councils do enforce time limited on street parking, but no feedback on that has been received.
 10. The permit holder has requested that Council make the decision, rather than officers, so this report is being tabled for the Planning & Environment Committee for their decision. The resident will be making their own presentation on the request.