

Parking Update

Stroud District Council have over the last decade commissioned numerous surveys to determine the level of the parking problems in Wotton. The same parking problems have been identified through public consultation in the local Community Plan. However, very little has been done to grasp problem and address the issue.

The latest survey was conducted last September and prepared by GVA Grimley Ltd, which again documented that there is poor perception of the off street parking in Wotton, with 60% of those travelling by car viewing the provision as 'poor'. More detail of this survey at http://www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/lp/retailing_study.asp

Advertising blitz

GCC recently authorised an advertising campaign to run in the Bristol Evening Post, encouraging Bristol businesses unhappy with the new business car parking levy should consider relocating to Gloucestershire. The council said the full-page advertisement cost £2,000 each. No mention was made of how this extraordinary spend of local tax payers money joined up with local community plans. But it is clear that GCC see office parking as a perk worth £250.



Free parking but no spaces.

Why should relocating businesses, whose workers will park all day in our already congested car parks, be subsidised in this way? Of course, none of the parking in the town is actually 'free', the space is paid for by local residents through the community charge and local precept. Historically the management of these free spaces has been very poor. Parking should be quick and convenient for residents. Numerous surveys have concluded that the car parks are well over capacity between 10am and 3pm which means that local residents (who foot the bill) cannot benefit from their free parking facility.

Stokes Bakery Site

Like the proposal for another storey to the Civic Centre car park before it, the proposal to use the old Stokes site has floundered as Renishaw need to start work on the site to retain their planning permission obtained some years ago. Again, this leaves the town with the parking issue unresolved. Residents who would like to shop and use the local facilities quickly and conveniently are still unable to find spaces when they need them.

Recent Traders' petition

The letter received back from SDC regarding the 23 hour unrestricted parking (which are already heavily used by office workers) offered no justification for the dismal lack of management. However, SDC said that are initiating a district wide car parking review, challenging the costs and benefits of them providing these facilities across the district. One thing is certain, the current arrangements are not working to support the local retailers and service providers in the town. It's time for change, things cannot be any worse than the current situation. Ironically, it is more than possible that the costs of the numerous surveys undertaken could actually exceed the rental paid by SDC for the car parks!!!

One answer to the problem

Manage the existing car parks properly so that space turnover can be increased. Reduce the 23 hour time limit to 3 hours and encourage business user to park away from the centre. This will ensure spaces are turned over allowing shoppers to use the services of the town quickly and conveniently and free up extra spaces for residents parking. This in turn will increase footfall, which improves choice and diversity, but most importantly will provide much needed local employment. Critically, there will be no additional cost to the council tax payer and the problem will be addressed.