

## Buxton Area Forum, Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2006

### Questions and Answers

**Reference:** 01BXN 29/06/06 Hope Valley to Buxton public transport

**Question:** The public transport service from the Hope Valley to Buxton is very poor. The option of shopping by bus - visiting the local swimming pool - opera house - by bus is just not available. Everyone has to come by CAR!! There is a local residents parking allowance but this is very limited on time and we think that a weekly amount of time for use in Borough Council car parks - say free 2 - 3 hours at any time of day - any day would encourage more people to visit the Buxton shops or use the leisure facilities.

Perhaps a "disc parking" scheme would be appropriate for this.

Why have charges been introduced without consultation in Hope Car Park?

**Answer:** The High Peak residents scheme, which allows free parking in all off street car parks before 10am and after 4 pm for residents displaying their pass, was reviewed in March 2006 and has been extended for a further 2 years.

A free parking scheme of the type suggested would be difficult to enforce and it is not clear how a 'disc' system would work.

Hope Car park has been pay and display for some years. Recent increases in charges were subject to consultation as required under the Road Traffic Act 1984 (as amended by the Parking Act 1989). The Council gave notice of its proposals through The High Peak Borough Council (Off street Parking Places) (Modification No 8) Order 2006. This comprised a notice in the local press together with notices displayed in the car park. This offered any person the opportunity to object to the proposed changes before the Order was confirmed.

Reference: 02BXN 29/06/06 Proposal for parking spaces in Buxton

Question: 1. Does the draft strategy include an increase in the number of car parking spaces around the town?  
2. If the answer is Yes! Does this include taking out some pedestrian sidewalks so more off road parking can be permitted in herring bone style?  
3. If the answer is 'NO' what is the reason why?  
A good example of where there is over provision of sidewalks is:-

a. Bath Road where you could cease one sidewalk on the left going up the hill and convert it into car parking at very little expense and almost double the car parking spaces for residents etc. The road is a Bus route and it is impossible for a Bus and a car to pass at the same time thus hindering traffic flow. Result. Extra car park spaces and a wider and safer road.

b. Burlington Road.  
There are three footpaths at present for pedestrians. 2 Sidewalks on either side of the road and one path going in the same direction in the Pavilion Gardens. I am a pedestrian and walk this route regularly and in my estimation it is gross pedestrian over provision. The sidewalk on the Pavilion Gardens boundary can be taken out a little expense, thus doubling the car parking spaces if cars were parked herring bone style.

The roads I have quoted above are only two but this can be done sensitively in Buxton in many other locations, piecemeal, a bit at a time when funds allow.

I think it is a very good idea. Not mine as I pick up good ideas on my travels. I hope you do also.

Attached is a photograph of a residential road in Interlaken, Switzerland, where level ground is at a premium, due to the mountainous terrain and the provision of one sidewalk as you can see is totally adequate for pedestrians.



All we need now is some bold decision makers to alleviate this massive parking problem. Although I do not use the car around town as I would rather walk. The motor car is here to stay and there are too many cars parked on our roads interfering with safe traffic flow.

**Answer:**

1. Yes
2. No detailed plans have been formulated at this stage. Extra provision could be through both on street and off street schemes.

**Reference:**

**03BXN**

**29/06/06**

**Residents Parking permits**

**Question:**

We live on the Broad Walk and have a Residents Permit to park on Hartington Road. I would say that 95% of the time the scheme works well but there are problems when there is something popular on at the Opera House. People arrive at 7p.m. and "Risk it" so to speak. This means that residents have to arrive home before 7p.m. as if they arrive later they have to park some distance

away and then wait until the theatre has closed until they can move their car nearer home.

Secondly people are using the free before 10a.m. and after 4p.m. permits to park on Hartington Road sometimes for all day. This again reduces the parking for residents. Disabled non- resident are also parking on Hartington Road. This does need clarifying-- Can Non resident disabled permits be used in a residential parking permit area?

**Answer:** We are aware of the issue of Opera House patrons using the residents only spaces. We undertake enforcement periodically and have issued 24 excess charge notices over the past 7 months to cars parked in residents only spaces on Hartington Road. The Opera House have agreed to amend information in their programme relating to parking to point out that free parking is only available in nearby streets "that are not covered by the residents parking scheme"

The High Peak residents parking concession pass does **not** apply to on street parking spaces. The pass clearly states that it applies to High Peak borough Council pay and display car parks only. Anyone using it on the on street scheme will risk receiving an excess charge notice.

Non resident disabled persons displaying a blue badge can park in residents bays.

**Reference:**            **04BXN**            **29/06/06**            **Parking in Buxton**

**Question:** Why don't we use the area next to the university halls (Bridge Street)for parking facilities? This may be owned by the railway, but if it could be purchased with a Compulsory Purchase Order, we could use this to provide further parking as well as improve the bus stop.

**Answer:** It is not clear to what area the questioner is referring. We will need to look at a number of options if overall spaces are to be increased.

### **Questions taken on the night**

**Q:** Why did you pick the quietest day in Buxton to carry out the survey?  
**A:** Colin Buchanan and Partners response:

The timing of the surveys for September was determined by the timing of the study. In any event, analysis of ticket sales throughout the year shows that September is not 'quiet', but is representative of the situation outside of the very peak months (June to August).

- Q:** Have you found out how many people come in to Buxton to work, because that's critical?
- A:** Colin Buchanan and Partners response: We asked people in the surveys why they come into town. We also looked at parking durations (how long people parked for) in the off street car parks, which tells us something about the purpose of visits to the town centre. Generally, people who park for less than 2 hours are likely to be shoppers whilst those parking for six hours or more are more likely to be workers. The proportion of cars parked for more than 6 hours, was less than 10%. DCC had recently carried out a survey of on-street parking.
- Q from Access Buxton:** When you looked at ticket sales, did you really look at residents parking and look at who are residents and who are not? The parking backs down Brown Edge Road, is this really all residents parking? If so, residents' parking bays will have to be extended.
- A:** Colin Buchanan and Partners response: Yes, we did walk the streets and so did DCC in 2003, so the data is reliable. It tells us how much parking is by residents and how much is by non-residents. In deciding how and where residents parking should be extended we have to look at on-street parking in its entirety and take account of the effect of charging and look at residents' parking accordingly. This would be the subject of a more detailed survey.
- Q:** The impact of the university opening hasn't been taken into account in this survey.
- A:** Colin Buchanan and Partners response: Yes it has. Part of the university had already opened at the time of the surveys and we took into account further student numbers in our analyses. The projected parking demand assessment for Buxton Town Centre includes the University.
- Q:** a) I went to an October 2005 meeting regarding parking in Buxton and it was said that the Park area hadn't been surveyed. This is the worst area for parking, so why was this excluded?  
b) Also 700 Council permits were given to staff which uses up a lot of spaces.
- A:** Colin Buchanan and Partners response: a) Park area in survey – those areas weren't surveyed, but the areas surveyed were chosen in consultation with our client. DCC did not survey this area either.

However the Park area could be included in any future surveys that will be required to progress the design of a residents parking scheme.

b) Council parking – only essential users get parking permit; staff such as environmental health or planning officers who are in and out. Probably less than 100 staff in Buxton get a permit and can only use it for Council business. Additionally, the majority of staff should always use the Cattle Market car park, rather than the Slopes. Ultimately there may be no staff parking at the Slopes if we go into agreement with local hotels.

**Q:** 2.2.2 of the 'Summary of the Recommendations' states that parking demand by 2016 will be exceeded by 150 spaces. Traffic always exceeds projections; the scale of housing development has also not been taken into account. This has been based on assumption of reduction in car use, but how many urban communities have seen a reduction in car use?

**A:** Colin Buchanan and Partners response. Projections do take into account changes of land use, including new housing and other developments. Further, in making the projections we are not talking about a reduction of car use, but a reduction in the growth of car use.

**Q from U3A:** Was it suggested that there is general satisfaction with parking available? I have reservations about that conclusion.

**A:** Colin Buchanan and Partners response: This was based on the results of self completion questionnaires of users of the car parks; the substantial majority of whom said they were satisfied with car parking in the town centre. There was less of a consensus amongst the business and residents forums we addressed in October 2005.

**Q:** All the facilities we have in Buxton need people to work in them and people need reasonable long-stay parking. This would also attract visitors who want to spend longer than 2 hours in the town.

**A:** Colin Buchanan and Partners response. All needs were taken into account in the development of the strategy. Assessments revealed that, on the whole, Buxton parking prices are not out of line with other comparable areas.

Peter Sloman (Chief Exec of HPBC) – Agree that people need to park close to where they work. BUT there is a season parking ticket available at £100 per quarter, 15% discount for businesses in the town for their staff.

**Q:** Buxton population is due to increase with housing growth and the Summary projects at least another 5,000 cars, but this seems very low.

**A:** Colin Buchanan and Partners response. The projections take into account the likely impact of population growth on the demand for parking in the town centre.

**Peter Sloman A:** We want to conduct feasibility surveys over the next year. We need to think about how we're going to pay for this. Off street parking is traditionally the responsibility of the borough council, but even a £50,000 cost means a 3% increase on Council Tax. If we were to build more parking, would we get more income from that? Probably not that much, but we need to consult before we take that decision. The additional cost could be quite heavy, but there is a will to do something about this, particularly if the Crescent works take place; the parking in that area will become very controversial.  
Re: Shopping round Spring Street – we are trying to look at long term development of that shopping area, there might be the possibility of getting the developer to contribute to parking costs. This initiative would only be done with residents' backing and DCC parking provision.

**Q:** a) In the 2002 survey, my business on Clifton Road wasn't even acknowledged (nor was another business), so how could it have been in-depth?  
b) Since 2002, parking has got worse on Clifton Road, as parking is drifting out from town centre and even blocking drives. The Council aren't moving fast enough to address this.

**A:a&b)** Colin Buchanan and Partners response. We cannot comment on the 2002 study as we were not involved in that project. However we have extensive experience of designing parking schemes, taking into account all the needs of residents', businesses' etc and recognise how important it is to try and look at all potential problem areas.

**Q:** If we weren't involved in 2002 survey, why not wait for scheme to be up and running?

**A from DCC:** Buxton residents didn't want it to be implemented. We extended original scheme, but have no proposals to extend further, We are primarily concerned with safety of highway user etc.

**Q:** How are you going to implement preferred strategy? Cars are currently parking everywhere and there are no traffic wardens to move cars on. I understand parking is to be de-criminalised?

**A from P Sloman:** Different ideas are being discussed. We have to think about how it will be funded; in small market towns there is probably a net cost to some schemes. In the meantime, the Police have run a campaign to deal with the worst of bad parking.

**A from Police:** We are in a state of transition with traffic wardens and currently have 3. We are moving towards Police Community Support officers; we currently have 8, moving towards getting 25. These officers will work with local bobbies and target problems at a local level in that community. We're in a state of flux, in between strategies and in the middle of de-criminalisation, so we will target problem parking at this localised level which is an interim position until 2007-08.

**Q:** Parking policy has meant dispersal of parking into residents' areas, but why should residents in the town centre have to pay for a parking permit?

**A from DCC:** Residents parking schemes will be self-financing, but will only work if a charge is made. It facilitates residents getting a parking space close to their home. We only implement residents' parking scheme when the majority of residents want it.

**Questioner's response :** Not true.

**Q:** Cheaper parking spaces at the bottom of the hill discriminate against those who aren't as fit as others.

**A:** Colin Buchanan and Partners response. There is an imbalance in demand, so this is to encourage people to use all available parking spaces. It is certainly not viewed by the project team as an act of discrimination, we are simply trying to make more spaces available for users, and assessment revealed that parking demand was considerably higher in Lower Buxton.

**Q:** It seems unfair that there should be a higher tariff at a different location, for those who can't walk up the hill.

**A from P Sloman:** We haven't made an ultimate decision, but will take into account all concerns.

**Q:** I'm in the Cavendish Crescent; currently the Crescent and the area round the Square seems to be under-used for parking. Monday-Thursday those areas are vastly underutilised because of the 2 hour parking limit. This deters visitors; we need 4 hours parking to encourage people to use those spaces. There is Pay and Display on road parking.

**A:** It was modified as a result of public consensus.

**Q:** Has there been an ongoing survey to monitor those changes?

**A from P Sloman:** We currently have an application in to re-develop the Crescent as a hotel. If we get that funding, we'll know a lot more about what's going to happen in that area, so we don't want to turn that into long-term parking now, if it becomes the front of a prestigious hotel. Let's see what happens with this process, we'll know more in 6 months time.

**Q:** 6 months' wait is half my business year and it could affect it quite a lot. We still need more footfall in that area.

**A:** It is a long time in business terms, but we need to take a longer term strategic look at this area because of the uncertainty with the Crescent development. It's uncertain what the impact would be for local

businesses. If the Crescent was developed, it would be the wrong thing to do, to extend parking to 4 hours.

**A: DCC** – Part of the parking provision was changed to 4 hours as a result of local businesses' views. Generally, the closer to the town centre, the lesser amount of time. Near the Old Hall Hotel, there are parking spaces for 4 hours.

### **Summary**

DCC – We are a partner in this strategy, but HPBC is parking authority. DCC's priority is safety, but sympathetic to parking problems, so we won't put restrictions in where not necessary.

HPBC – What happens next? We will take account of all the feedback we have had and finalise a strategy for Council approval. We will develop action plans, the Strategy covers 10 years so there is a lot more work and more consultation still to do before we have detailed specific schemes and projects. We don't have all the answers yet.

The strategy will be used when looking at future public and private developments in the town. Any strategy must be reviewed regularly and we will do this. We will feed back through the groups such as this and Buxton Vision. The responses on the post-it note exercise appear to have picked up salient points from the report and have given us food for thought.

HPBC, P Sloman – we don't want to do anything without consultation. HPBC's priority is value for money and we don't want Council Tax to go up above rate of inflation. So we must consider the costs of all parking schemes that will not be unduly expensive for local residents.

HPBC tries as hard as possible to consult with local people, but we must ultimately take an overall, strategic approach. There has been a lot of public consultation and this has generally been welcomed. We don't know all the answers and we need residents' input to help get solutions. We want solutions to be economic for local people.

We are also currently consulting in local papers around future use of Pavilion Gardens and will consult again on car parking in Buxton. We take into account all views.

Chair closes; 'Future of Pavilion Gardens' meeting on this 20<sup>th</sup> July here.