

Buxton Area Forum, Thursday 30th June 2005
Questions and Answers

Reference: **01BXN 30/06/05 Parking**

Question: When will the present car parking controls recently imposed in Buxton be reviewed and what mechanism will be used to ensure proper consultation?

Answer: An interim review of parking controls has been conducted by HPBC and DCC. Residents parking will be introduced in some streets. A complete review will be commissioned to consultants, whose remit will include gathering peoples' views. In 2002, priorities such as off-street parking were identified through consultations e.g. public exhibitions and 2000 letters to property owners. Seeking peoples' views is important & consequently, those views were taken into account e.g. if less than 50% of responses are in favour of the proposal then it won't be introduced. There is always the opportunity to offer a formal objection, which is heard at a Cabinet meeting. Officers also offer recommendations, but a significant response from residents is important. DCC received significant response to the consultation but is always open to new ideas, if the public can suggest ways to improve public consultation & engagement, perhaps electronic engagement or telephone consultation? Let us know.

Reference: **02BXN 30/06/05 DCC's Parking Review**

Question: How has the interim review been done, other than limited questionnaire? When will the changes take place? What are the changes? How do we talk to you – DCC?

Answer: Cabinet meeting on the 7 July will consider the interim review. The County Council wished to introduce certain amounts of residents' parking and minor changes in advance of the full review. Businesses/residents will have the opportunity to comment on the comprehensive review through appropriate consultative channels. The survey undertaken by the questioner will be considered within part of the final review.

Reference: 03BXN 30/06/05 Conservation areas

Question: Re-alignment of roads in a conservation area. Do DCC consult with conservationists?

Answer: Yes – DCC consult with conservationists when making road changes in conservation areas. Try to retain historic nature and incorporate suggestions but not always easy for practical and/or historical reasons. The area alluded to may not be part of this. The Police are also looking into this particular junction and parking on pavements.

Action: Mike Ashworth, DCC to send officer to look at particular area to consider whether there is a safer alternative.

Reference: 04BXN 30/06/05 Obstructed pavements

Question: Are Pavements part of Highways? Dropped Pavements - how much thought and local Knowledge was or is used when deciding where to place Dropped Kerbs as some appear to be in inappropriate places or not where needed? Some are so close to shop fronts that they become obstructed (green Pavilion- Volts Bar Market Place blocked by tables and chairs, both have been reported to HPBC last year. Problem still persists. Kept in poor repair. Where Roads have been raised for traffic calming why have there not been yellow lines to make it clear to motorist they should not park there (station approach)?

Answer: This is an issue across the County and it is difficult to enforce every instance. DCC try to publicise that pavements are for people, limited success. Dropped crossings – some of these are historic, and for technical reasons accept that they may not be practical now. When considering new road schemes, try and create 'desire lines' where most people would want to cross. DCC need to work with Police on drop-crossings and look at if there is sufficient passage for wheelchair/buggy users etc and seek to penalise those flouting regulations. DCC always talk to local access groups when introducing new roads, possibly lack of communication in this case.

ACTION: Police to send out Beat Manager to look at these particular spots.

Reference: **05BXN 30/06/05 Disabled parking**

Question: It has been suggested that HPBC are planning to charge for Disabled Parking. Before, I had a Blue Badge. By the time I had purchased a ticket, I would need to rest in the car before I could attempt to get into shops and would many times have to drive home again without what I needed as I know that if I attempted to get to the shops I would need another ticket for another hour's rest before I could drive home. It should also be considered that this will encourage more on street parking, on yellow lines.

Answer: No plans to introduce disabled parking charges.

Reference: **06BXN 30/06/05 Community police liaison**

Question: I understand that residents in Harpur Hill around Harris Road and St James Court have, with encouragement of High Peak Community Housing, surveyed the area residents about setting up a Neighbourhood Watch. It seems that they have been informed that this is not viable as a response of around 40 is needed. As there are only 39 flats at St James Court and I am under the impression that around 21 people showed an interest, % wise about the same as our Governments share at the election. Why has this community initiative been thwarted?

Answer: A significant number on a street must want a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. The police would be more than happy to support residents who are interested in setting up a Neighbourhood Watch. 'Buxton Neighbourhood Watch' would welcome an approach from a group.

Reference: 07BXN 30/06/05 Disabled access in Pavilion Gardens

Question: With the expansion of events taking place at this venue, why where the Access improvements undertaken in such a way in that an 'accessible toilet' has been installed in an inaccessible area, I am aware that a lift will be installed later this year? (I hope) but in the mean time, that toilet is defiantly Disabled and the other toilets a definite inconvenience. Surely it would have been better to have put the lift *in* first, that would have made all areas Accessible and the present facilities more accessible without a wheel chair or Zimmer frame marathon?

Answer: Timing of the works was not ideal. Must provide 3 months notice for installation of lift because of listed building status. This was done and now waiting to get a time slot without disturbing current use. It will be a priority to install the lift.
The installation of the lift will happen in January 2006, as the area will need to be made secure for three weeks and this is the first opportunity within the facilities programme.

Reference: 08BXN 30/06/05 Parking Review

Question: When will the review of the parking in the Square and the Crescent take place? Although some aspects of this scheme have been very positive only having two hours parking time is just not sufficient. Also, when are the charges to be reviewed as they are far more expensive than any other town in the area?

Answer: On-street charges adjusted according to off-street car parks so not in competition. An extension from 2 to 4 hours parking will be introduced, with a corresponding increase on charges. This is part of overall review which is taking place.

Reference: 08iBXN 30/06/05 Parking Review

Question: *From draft review:* 'A limited set of questions were asked to residents which offers skewed views in a tabular format.' This does not correspond with our own survey which had 94 responses from businesses and residents, which questioner feels is far more responsive. Key issues

from this survey were residents parking and extra hours, not increased charging.

Answer: DCC have employed independent consultants. This is an interim proposal, DCC offering opportunities for local residents to have their input. Further representations can be given to the Cabinet member. There is no easy answer to parking in Buxton; problem of all-day commuter parking to the detriment of local traders; issue of charging for parking. DCC don't want to create a competitive environment for on/off-street parking.

Reference: 09BXN 30/06/05 Skate parks

Question: How many skate parks are there in the High peak? At least three have been vandalised, what is the total cost for these and how were they funded?

Answer: HPBC supports the development of skateboard facilities to act as a diversion from anti-social behaviour. When facilities such as skate parks are installed, frequently led by local people who consult residents and young people, asking them what they want in their local park. Maintenance costs are difficult to break down individually because they are done by different agencies (e.g. with parish councils). Cote Heath is maintained by HPBC.

There have been a number of reports of anti-social behaviour at Cote Heath, but generally a positive asset for the community. Local residents were consulted and, prior to this, there was more anti-social behaviour from 'bored teenagers'. Aware of problems with the facility and it is being monitored & worked through in conjunction with Leisure Services at High Peak Borough Council.

Additional information:

Manor Park, Glossop. Cost £25,000 which came from a local developer as part of a section 106 agreement. Owned and maintained by HPBC.

Hayfield. Cost not known. An initiative of Hayfield Parish Council and owned and maintained by them.

Memorial Park, Whaley Bridge. Cost not known. Project was an initiative of WB Town Council. It is owned by them but maintained by HPBC on a rechargeable basis.

Memorial Park, Chapel en le Frith. Cost not known. An initiative of Chapel en le Frith Parish Council and owned and maintained by them.

Fairfield, Buxton. Cost £15,000 which came from local housing development aw part of a section 106 agreement. A community initiative sited on DCC land at the rear of the Community Centre. Owned and maintained by DCC.

Cote Heath, Buxton. Cost approx £60,000 the majority of this from external sources such as the Landfill Tax levy scheme, East Midlands Development Agency Rural Development Programme and Comic Relief. On completion it was adopted and is now maintained by HPBC.

With regard to the 3 sites being maintained by HPBC, the costs of repair and maintenance due to vandalism are not considered to be significant.

Reference: 10BXN 30/06/05 **Swimming pool**

Question: What's happening with Buxton swimming pool? It keeps going on and on and we're not getting anywhere.

Answer: The pool is a Council priority. A procurement process has been undertaken to find a private partner to enable investment in the facilities. Initially, a feasibility study has been done to find out what's best for local people. Options include partnerships with the school or university and using land the Council owns. It was resolved that the best site is the existing site. Creating a new facility by flattening the existing site would cost £5.7m, which isn't feasible, so looking at other ways to enhance current structure. Considering adding value through the creation of a viewing gallery/ fitness suite/ spa facility and these options are currently being priced. Will then go back to the community and ask what they would like to see. Expecting procurement process to be completed by December 2005 and work to start in April 2006.

Reference: 11BXN 30/06/05 **Parking/road repairs**

Question: Crescent parking and road repair: Mr Risely initially wrote to DCC at the end of March about this issue and also when works on Green Lane would be undertaken. A volley of unsatisfactory correspondence ensued, in which Mr Risely felt his concerns were not being properly addressed. If he doesn't receive a reply from Nick

Hodgson by 30/6/05, then he intends to take his complaint to the Ombudsman.

Answer: Letter about the junction on Green Lane is on its way. Additional inspection carried out today. Will not be able to do work on this junction this financial year.

Reference: 12BXN 30/06/05 Parking

Question: **Context:** The parking meter arrangements in Buxton have led to a number of roads in the periphery of the town centre being cluttered for the whole day by parked cars. Passage through these roads is frequently difficult because there are no passing places. On some roads it has become common for lines of vehicles to meet head-on on roads that have effectively been reduced to one lane by cars parked nose to tail on both sides. The potential danger of several vehicles reversing out of the impasse, often into busy junctions, needs no elaboration. We understand that yet more roads are to be affected by parking restrictions. At the same time many metered spaces remain vacant.

Questions:

1. What reassessment of the situation is being undertaken in the light of experience and what measure are foreseen to maintain good, safe traffic flows in these roads?
2. What has been the impact of the metered parking arrangements upon Buxton businesses especially shopping and how well are they contributing to Buxton's regeneration?
3. If people are to be deterred from using their cars to reach the town centre how far do High Peak Borough Council and the County Council support the inspector's view from a recent Public Inquiry in the town that a 20 minute walk each way is reasonable or that a bicycle is an appropriate alternative?
4. Or are there strategic plans to make significant improvements to public transport in the town and to provide proper space for essential parking?

Answer: Already answered previously in the evening.

Reference: 13BXN 30/06/05 Devonshire Hospital/(disabled) parking/environment

Question:

1. What are the plans for the roads round the Devonshire Hospital? Please can DCC bring the plans to the meeting? Devonshire Rd/Manchester Rd/Malborough Rd to the corner of Park Rd.
2. Disabled parking on Marlborough Rd – is it going to be extended?
3. Devonshire Rd with the junction of Corbar Rd: are speed restrictions going in? There are cars using this as a short cut, driving at high speed.
4. Trees from the Palace Hotel are badly overhanging and causing an obstruction. This is on Marlborough Rd to the bottom of Devonshire Rd and includes some private housing. What can be done?
5. It is unsafe for [disabled] scooters to drive across Market Place, as there is not enough space and oncoming traffic drives at high speed. What can be done about this?

Answer: Have plan including proposals. There is some evidence that traffic speed increases on one-way roads.

Question: Can a speed reduction sign be put up?

Answer: ACTION: Pass message back to Area Traffic Manager. DCC have limited options available. May need improved signage and awareness.

Question: Disabled parking & opening of university, not much room available, will more disabled parking be made available?

Answer: Agree it's an issue. Parking issues should be addressed within the university's green travel plan, which should cover disabled parking. from DCC – input from specialist designer when renovating Market Place. DCC & HPBC need to work together and look at current design & see if there is scope for improvement. DCC contributed to improvements to Market Place, overall work done by HPBC, working with conservationists. Road safety issues are paramount & DCC treats these very seriously.

Comment: Abuse of speed is inherent across the town, not just Market Place, which is always dangerous.

Answer: from Police – all travelling under 30mph, but it's the style of driving which is dangerous; general congestion, not an easy issue to solve.

Reference: 14BXN 30/06/05 Parking

Question: As a Buxton resident living on Devonshire Road, right next to the University I would like to know what the Council is doing about the 400 extra cars that will be parking outside my house when the Devonshire opens? High Peak college has over 450 car parking spaces and as anyone will tell you, finding a space at the moment is difficult. The Devonshire site has just over 50 spaces. Hence 400 cars on the street!!!
Can I suggest that HPBC join forces with DCC and buy an eyesore and turn it into a car park (that most of Buxton will not see).
The derelict and run down sidings behind Buxton Station are no longer used. Take away part of the end wall, opposite the Palace Hotel (but keep the feature semi-circular window) for access. Move the lights on the by-pass closer together at the bottom of Palace Rd, and for very little cost you have parking for over 300 cars.
If you really push the boat out – rebridge Lightwood Rd and reuse the obsolete sidings behind Lightwood and Brown Edge – more parking for another 500 cars.

Answer: DCC actively encourage off street parking and scheme such as Park & Ride/Walk, but don't have funds to buy particular piece of land. Could be taken up as part of review process. Would have to work in conjunction with university, who must produce a Green Travel Plan, encouraging students & staff NOT to travel to university by car. Can't solve problems alone.

Reference: 15BXN 30/06/05 Parking

Question: Is there any chance of the free parking for residents before 10am and after 4pm being extended? Where do we get the permits from if we did not receive the magazine with it in?

Answer: Permits available from High Peak Borough Council Offices or from HPBC's Call Centre. Currently embarking on process to look at pricing policy – can feed back at next Area Forum. Current permits valid for a 2 year period.

Question: Would it have been more cost effective to include the permit in the Council Tax leaflet?

- Answer:** Peter Sloman, HPBC – felt it was better to issue with ‘Connect’ Magazine with an explanation. Some people throw things put in with the Council Tax leaflet, without checking the contents. Try and get ‘Connect’ to every household and it is also available in Buxton Town Hall and the Pool. Have 90% coverage. HPBC pay Post Office for 100% coverage, but they won’t guarantee that, so try & distribute ‘Connect’ magazine as widely as possible.
- Question:** Parking permits is not part of DCC’s review? Can we use HPBC residents’ permit on the street?
- Answer:** No
- Question:** Why not?
- Answer:** One is HPBC, the other is DCC.
- Supplementary:** re: Connect distribution. We have a working party to look at this & need post code evidence to give to PO & ask them why they haven’t delivered to particular addresses. Need residents to call Call Centre & lodge non-delivery.
- Reference:** **16BXN 30/06/05 Parking**
- Question:** With parking on narrow roads and residential areas being difficult, many people want to create their own off-street parking. The cost of this is quite considerable, a lot of the cost incurred is from the dropping of kerbs to enter from the road. As it is of benefit to all to get cars off the road, could the Council lower the cost by assigning time to do a number of drives at the same time, thus lowering overheads? £500+ for this kind of service is very expensive, especially for those on low income or single occupancy. What can be done about it?
- Answer:** If resurfacing road, DCC will try and ask residents if they want their kerbs being lowered which reduces costs. Residents will still have to pay for strengthening of pavements. Try to charge as little as possible, not out to make a profit from this. Maintenance Engineers can consider joint bids at reduced cost because of reduced travel. If competitive (approved) contractors can do it cheaper, DCC open to this, will still need to make an (free) application.
- Reference:** **17BXN 30/06/05 Road repairs/lighting**
- Question:** When will we have a pro-active checking and repairs service to man-hole covers and other street ironwork in Buxton? Many roads in Buxton have fallen ironwork which is very slow to be repaired.

When is the street lighting in the Crescent to be improved? Poor lighting on the west end of the Crescent, opposite the Tourist Information centre. DCC already advised but no action to date.

Answer: DCC has responsibility for ironwork if it relates to gullies and drains, this is then carried out under contract by HPBC. Endeavour to do this within 24 hours. Other utilities have access to roadworks, up to 36 other utilities. DCC officers will look at roads from a safety aspect to see if they are still safe. DCC will highlight problems to other utilities & they must make it safe if they have used highways. They need to be chased, as they often say they don't have the budget to address these issues. If a section of the highway is considered dangerous, it will be dealt with by DCC within 24 hours. But not able to deal with all issues in a year, hotspots will go on a priority list.

Question: Street lighting in the Crescent – only on 1 side. Otherwise very bad.

Answer: DCC – lights usually replaced because of insurance implications. DCC never have enough money for street lighting improvements and renewal. £0.75M has been invested through Community Safety initiatives to improve street lighting. The Crescent development will most likely introduce better street lighting.

Reference: **18BXN 30/06/05 (from the floor)** **Transport Plan**

Question: The Transport Plan hasn't been kept up-to-date, which is why there are problems. It should be amended as situations change, eg the development of the Crescent. Want DCC assurance that Transport Plan won't lie dormant & regular reviews will be held? Need to consider disability, access issues. Want to see a plan of Buxton available on a regular basis. Want to see University & hotels at these meetings. Need to prioritise the key points of TP, must not lose sight of Buxton's USP – a quiet, spa town with all the additional attractions. Look at opportunities for more parking. Want to reduce danger on roads before there are fatalities.

Answer: DCC understands feeling behind community consultation and engagement. Agree that TP must be a living document. TP only 1 part of picture; HPBC is planning auth & also have important input. DCC's TP can only fit in with overall HPBC's plan.

ACTION:

DCC to look at existing accident sites & address where we know there are known accidents; aim to be more proactive. Buxton kept under constant review from both DCC and HPBC. Will keep Buxton up-to-date with developments.