

HITCHIN PARKING SURVEYS

Objective

- In two areas to learn about residents' perceptions of whether there was a non-resident parking problem – was there an issue with vehicles owned by people who did not live in the street or immediate area being parked in the street.
- In two other areas, where a parking permit scheme exists, to assess whether residents would support extending the permit scheme to Saturdays.

Method

Surveys were distributed to a total of about 2,000 households in four areas of Hitchin in a period from Monday 5th to Wednesday 7th September.

Area 1 included West Hill, Grays Lane and nearby streets.

Area 2 included Ickleford Road and Lancaster Road and nearby streets.

Area 3 included the Triangle (current zone F)

Area 4 included Benslow Lane, The Avenue and nearby streets (current zone E).

There were two different questions.

- In areas 1 and 2 the question was “Is there a non-resident parking problem in your street that you would like the Council to address?”
- In areas 3 and 4 the question was “Would you like the Council to extend permit parking controls to Saturday?”

Residents could respond in several ways

- Fill out the form and send it back to the Council.
- Fill out the form and leave it in a box at either Hitchin Library, Blakes Corner Stores (Ickleford Road) or S&K Stores (Walsworth Road).
- Request an electronic copy of the form and send it back to the Council.
- Emailing either YES or NO with their house number and road and no further comments.
- Texting either YES or NO with their house number and road and no further comments.

Those using the first three methods could add further comments on the back of the form. Many did but not all.

It was possible for more than one person from the same address to respond though this was rare.

The closing date was 30th September. By Wednesday afternoon 5th October 520 responses had been received or collected.

147 came on paper by post (28.27%).

80 were collected from the Hitchin Library Box (15.38%).

53 were collected from the Blakes Corner Stores Box (10.19%).

59 were collected from the S&K Stores Box (11.35%).

28 were on forms sent electronically (5.38%).

86 were emails – generally yes or no answers (16.54%).

66 were text messages – yes or no answers (12.69%).

One came via Lagan (0.19%).

The method of distribution means that the responses were from residents rather than, for example, commuters or visitors parking in these areas.

The responses, including any further comments, were recorded and marked on maps of the areas.

Results

Of the 520 responses received 515 were valid. The five were from addresses outside the survey area. In addition one very late text response was received which did not include an address and one electronic form was received a week late..

515 means that more than 25% of the eligible households responded. That is high for a cold survey.

Overall 236 (45.83%) replied YES, 276 (53.59% replied NO and 3 (0.58%) didn't know or gave unclear answers. However one question was asked in areas 1 and 2 and a different question in areas 3 and 4. Thus breakdowns by area are more significant and, indeed, the number of replies means that street totals are useful in some cases.

Street Totals

Area One

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Majority
Grays Lane	35	6	0	YES
Old Park Road	2	3	0	NO
Upper Tilehouse Street	0	4	0	NO
Walsh Close	7	1	1	YES
West Hill	29	13	0	YES
Westfield Close	5	2	1	YES
Westfield Lane	2	0	0	YES
Totals	80	29	2	
	72.07%	26.13%	1.81%	

(Pirton Road and Winston Close were outside the specified survey area so the small number of responses from those streets were disregarded).

Area Two

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Majority
Baliol Road	12	2	0	YES
Bearton Avenue	3	0	0	YES
Bearton Road	5	27	0	NO
Bunyan Road	13	3	0	YES
Dukes Lane	1	2	0	NO
Fishponds Road	5	2	0	YES
Ickleford Road	22	9	1	YES
Lancaster Avenue	8	6	0	YES (narrow)
Lancaster Road	7	6	0	YES (narrow)
No address	1	0	0	N/A
Periwinkle Lane	2	2	0	Tied
St. Augustine Close	2	0	0	YES
Water Lane	0	2	0	NO
York Road	11	4	0	YES

Totals	92	65	1	
	58.23%	41.14%	0.63%	

(Bearton Green, St. Mark's Close and Strathmore Lane were outside the specified survey area so the small number of responses from those streets were disregarded).

Area Three (Zone E)

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Majority
Alexandra Road	4	5	0	NO (narrow)
Convent Close	4	10	0	NO
Dacre Road	7	4	0	YES
Florence Street	0	12	0	NO
Forge Close	0	1	0	NO
Garden Row	1	1	0	Tied
Kings Road	5	13	0	NO
Nightingale Road	3	8	0	NO
Radcliffe Road	4	6	0	NO
St. Anne's Road	2	1	0	YES
Verulam Road	5	7	0	NO (narrow)
Walsworth Road	4	2	0	YES*
Totals	39	70	0	
	35.78%	64.22%	0%	

(* All three in the Area 4 part of Walsworth Road voted NO).

Area Four (Zone F)

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Majority
Benslow Lane	9	15	0	NO
Benslow Rise	10	24	0	NO
Chiltern Road	0	23	0	NO
Highbury Road	1	10	0	NO
The Avenue	3	29	0	NO
The Finches	2	8	0	NO
Walsworth Road	0	3	0	NO*
Totals	25	112	0	
	18.25%	81.75%	0%	

(* Another part of Walsworth Road is in Area 3. Altogether the road voted no by 4 to 5).

As well as the YES or NO responses several issues were raised in the comments sections. Some were not immediately relevant to the questions asked but many were linked and should be considered by the relevant people.

A summary of the qualitative comments follows in Appendix B.

Conclusions

In the areas which already have parking permits (Areas 3 / Zone F and 4 / Zone E) there is little support for extending the scheme to Saturdays and an additional charge would be resisted. 82% in Area 4 did not want an extension. The suggestion is for no change in those areas.

The outcome in areas 1 and 2 is less clear. While 72% in area 1 and 58% in area 2 said there a "non-resident parking problem in your area that you would like the Council to address" it became clear that many were saying "yes" there was a problem with parking but either saying they did not know whether it was caused by residents or non-residents (or both) or indeed saying that some households had too many cars.

Amongst those that agreed there was a problem there were doubts about parking permits and some who said "no" said they would say "yes" if any permits were to be free.

Some parts of area 2 did not agree that there was a problem.

Residents had different perceptions of what resident meant. For some it was their street only for others there was a recognition that those in the next road may have particular problems with existing restrictions.

It appears that further work is needed in areas 1 and 2. Perhaps more than one question is needed to break the issues down. For example Q1 "Is there a parking problem in your street?;" Q2 (if you have answered "yes" to Q1 "Is this problem caused by vehicles owned by people in this street, or by vehicles from outside this immediate area, or a combination of the two?"

And some background information could be sought. For example Q3 "How many vehicles are registered at this address?" Q4 "Do you park a company car, van or truck in the street?" Q5a "Do you have a driveway or garage?" Q5b If you answered yes to 5a "How many cars in total can you park on your driveway and / or in your garage?"

We could also consider something like Q6 "If a permit parking scheme was introduced in your street (a) would you need a permit (b) would you be prepared to pay about £80 a year for a permit.

The suggestion is to commission a number plate recognition survey in part of Area 2, and if the charging structure is favourable part of Area 1. This will establish what proportion of parked cars belong to non-residents. We will obtain costs and availability. Ideally this work will be done before half-term.

Many residents took the opportunity to raise a number of other issues. We should consider the provision of H bars at driveways with particular problems and a number of junction protection measures. The other issues should be considered by the planning policy team or forwarded to others in NHDC, or to HCC., as appropriate.

