

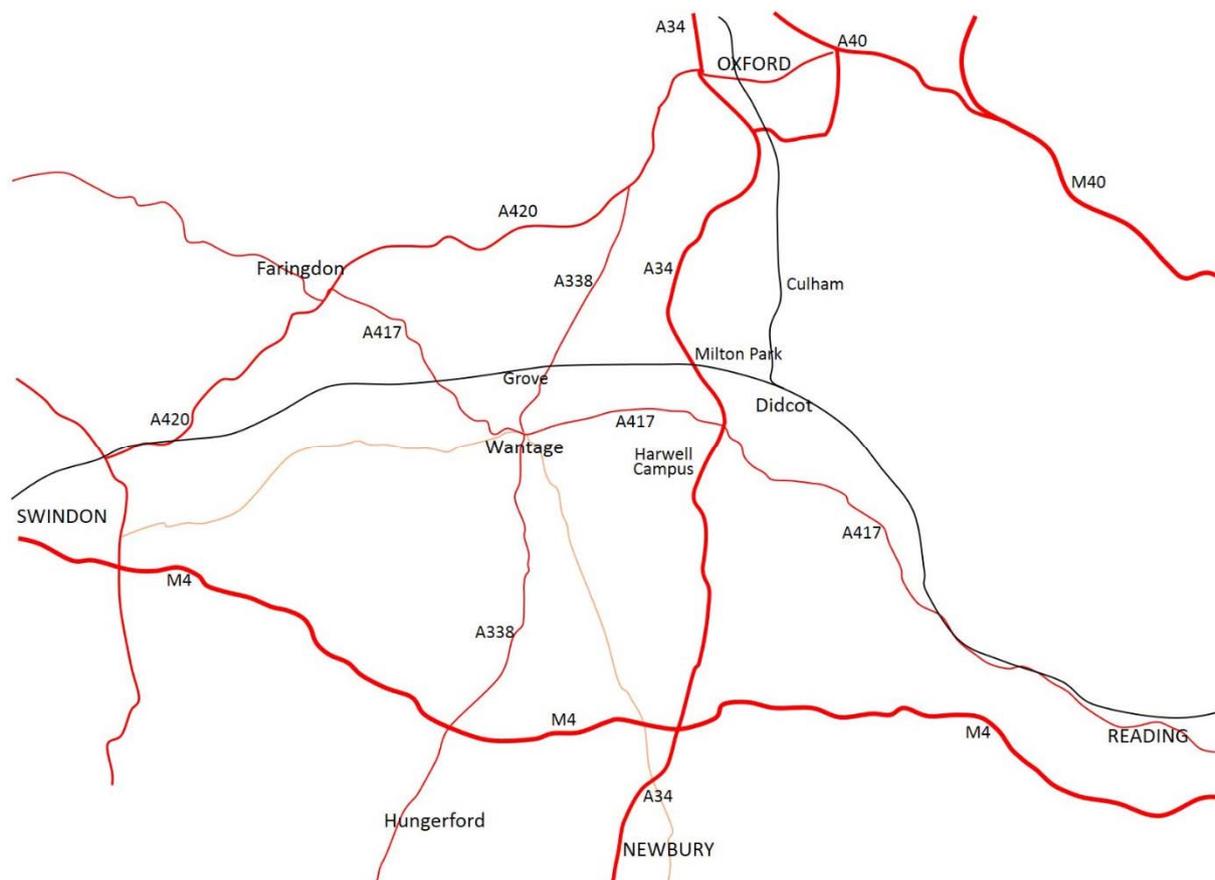
Wantage Neighbourhood Plan

Car Parking Requirements: Town Centre & Residential

Analysis

Wantage is a small market town with a population of approximately 10,500 people (2011 census). It is situated in the Vale of the White Horse, between Swindon, Reading, Oxford and Newbury. It has two main A roads which cross in the town:

- A 417 from Faringdon to Reading (connecting the A420 and the A34)
- A 338 from Hungerford to Oxford (connecting the M4 to the A420)

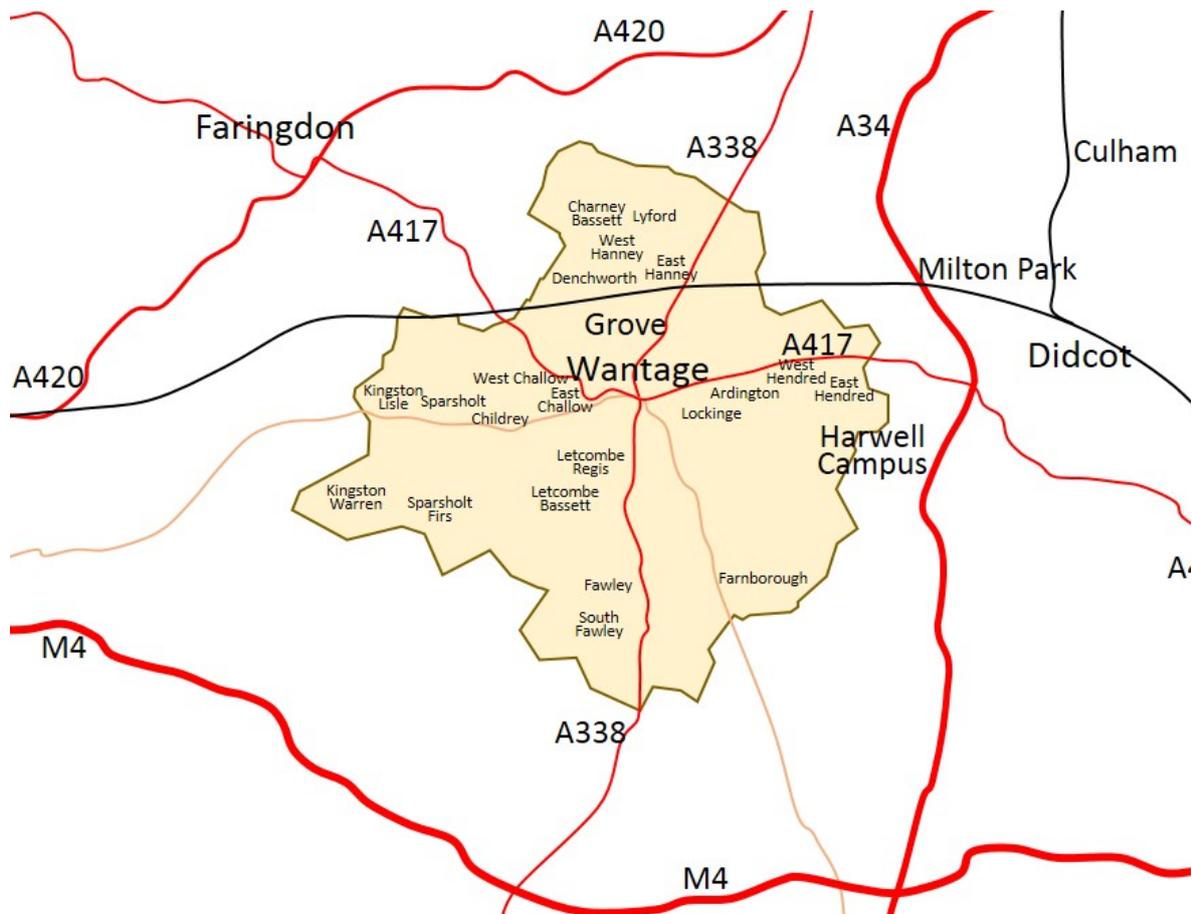


It also has two B roads (the B4494 to Newbury and the B4507 to Swindon).

At the time of the last Census in 2011 there were relatively frequent bus services to the major areas of employment at Oxford, Didcot, Milton Park and Harwell Campus. Of these, only the service to Oxford can now be considered suitable for commuting.

In 2011, 40 percent of those in employment travelled less than 10km to work (including local employment in Wantage and Grove). A further 44% travel further (to Harwell Campus or Milton Park – both 11km and other areas further afield). Nine percent work at or mainly from home. Figures from Nomis (table LC7402EW - Distance travelled to work by car or van availability).

The catchment area for Wantage can be considered as primarily the OX12 postcode area, although many people do use the facilities of Wantage from further afield. OX12 contained 10,421 households and 25,229 residents at the 2011 census. This is expected to increase by at least 5,500 households and approximately 13,500 new residents.



In the latest draft Oxfordshire Strategic Transport Plan it stated that:

Within Oxfordshire’s towns, bus networks are relatively under-developed, offering slow, infrequent routes that are more suited to shoppers than commuters. The quality of cycling and walking networks is variable, with some towns having had very little investment in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. Although there is a charge for most town centre parking in district council car parks other than in West Oxfordshire, many of the trips within the towns are to workplaces with ample staff parking, edge of town retail, or schools. This means that even for internal trips, a very high proportion are still made by car.” (paragraph 34).

Paragraph 153 of the draft Oxfordshire Strategic Transport Plan states: “The present bus strategy emphasises and gives priority to north-south ‘Premium’ routes and services as this is where the greatest demand and modal potential currently lies. While we would also like to see Premium level bus services on key east-west routes within the area there is currently insufficient actual and potential demand for increased/improved services. Realistically our goal given present circumstances is to develop and maintain services at a ‘Connector’ standard (i.e. at least 2 buses per hour) on the priority routes mentioned. The key factor that might enable the achievement of Premium standard east-west bus routes would be additional residential and/or employment development on a sufficiently large scale in the Grove/Wantage area (perhaps linked with the development of a new railway station at Grove).”

To cope with the increase in population, Wantage will need an improved bus service to Oxford (the

07.30 bus to Oxford is almost full each morning now before the new homes are built or occupied). We will also need a service with a direct link to hospitals. It currently takes between 1-2 hours to get to the Oxfordshire Hospitals on public transport.

Two buses per hour to Didcot at peak times is not sufficient incentive to encourage people to wait for a bus, when the choice is between a car journey which would normally take less than 30 minutes and a wait of up to 30 minutes for a bus. Buses to Oxford are popular because they provide a reliable service, buses to Didcot take an hour and are not reliable. Part of the reason for a lack of demand may be the poor service on the current route.

There are currently three public car parks in Wantage run by the District Council. These are Portway, Limborough Road and Mill Street. These car parks offer two hours free parking and charges for stays over that time. In addition, both supermarkets (Sainsbury's at Limborough Road and Waitrose (between Seesen Way and Wallingford Street) have customer parking. There is also limited time parking in the Market Place on all days except market days (Wednesday and Saturday). Outside the Market Place, most streets are no parking or have restrictions between 8am and 6pm.



Public car parks are already at capacity at certain times and average about 75% utilisation at most times yet development on most of the housing sites in Wantage and the associated village of Grove specified in the emerging Local Plan have not yet been started. Work places in Wantage and Grove centres have little parking and buses are limited. Schools have little parking and there are no joined up safe cycle routes for children to get to school so a VERY high proportion of journeys are made by car. See evidence attached as Appendix 1.

The "Review of free two hours parking scheme 2014" Report provided to the Vale District Council Scrutiny Committee in June 2014 concluded that most of the indicators show that the introduction of the free two hours parking has had a positive impact on the towns in the Vale district. The car park usage data shows a large increase in the number of people staying for short periods, although it appears that this is to the detriment of those people who used to stay longer.

In terms of the economic benefits of the introduction of the free two hours parking, in some of the towns, the effects on footfall and vacant units has been positive in 2013 with footfall significantly increasing in Faringdon for example. Vacancy levels have dropped considerably between 2012 and 2013 across the Vale from nine per cent to five per cent, in particular in Wantage where the drop has been from 15 per cent to six per cent. Businesses in the towns have also stated that the free two hours parking has had a positive impact on their business.

This does mean that car parks in the Town centre are now full at certain parts of the day/week and this is before more than 5,500 additional homes are built in the catchment area for the town resulting in an additional 7,500 cars on the roads.

The Chamber of Commerce have stated that the shortage of low cost long term parking in the town centre available for employees is having a negative effect on local businesses. They propose that space should be made available in the areas identified in the Neighbourhood Plan for future commercial use to make provision for more such parking.

The plans to encourage growth of the retail offer in the town will require additional parking and the residential survey has already identified that more than 60% of respondents want more short term parking in the Town Centre and more than 35% also wanting longer term parking outside the town centre. More than half of the respondents to the Commercial survey also said that the most important improvement required in the town was the need for more parking.

Research carried out by the District Council has demonstrated that 5,500 new homes (the estimated figures for new homes in Wantage and Grove) means 9,314 jobs and 6,986 people driving to work from Wantage and Grove. See

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Analysis%20of%20travel%20patterns.pdf>

The current guidelines for residential car parking in new developments in Oxfordshire are:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/transport-new-developments>

Parking standards are also covered in paragraph 39 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#). Yet recent updates to government guidelines require the following text to be read alongside that paragraph: “Local planning authorities should only impose local parking standards for residential and non-residential development where there is clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage their local road network.”

As the Minister stated at the time “The imposition of maximum parking standards under the last administration lead to blocked and congested streets and pavement parking. Arbitrarily restricting new off-street parking spaces does not reduce car use, it just leads to parking misery.”

There are many parts of Wantage where the lack of parking simply leads to congested streets and pavement parking. Thames Valley Police have responsibility for parking enforcement but freely admit that they have no resources to consistently enforce on-street parking regulations in Wantage.

Streets close to the town centre are regularly congested with cars parked in no-parking zones and residential areas are crowded with parked cars outside working hours (and in residential areas close to the town centre in working hours as well) – *photographs to be added of Mill Street, Newbury Street, Wallingford Street, Garston Lane, Stockham Park, Elizabeth Drive, Foliat Drive, Orchard Way, Springfield Road, and Harcourt Road.*

Thames Valley Police have also stated that lack of parking is a significant contributor to disputes in the community and sufficient private parking within the dwelling boundary can help to reduce this. Public car parks should be open and well lit to deter criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.

<http://www.securedbydesign.com/professionals/guides.aspx>

From Thames Valley Police perspective, they believe that this report is well balanced and reflects their local policy towards on street parking and the concerns it can raise within our communities.

They state that the issue surrounding Anti Social Behaviour in and around our current car parks is also a valid point and appropriate measures should be put in place in any new developments to reduce the vulnerability of new locations to ASB.

Conclusion

All commercial development should be resisted without sufficient space being provided for employee and customer parking (either on site or through contributions for additional parking provision in the Town). Further public car parking in the town centre will be required within the life of the plan and there are limited locations available. *Use of King Alfred's School parking outside school hours in the medium term is an option that we are progressing. Other options may emerge from the Carter Jonas Study.*

All residential developments within the Town Centre Policy Area defined in the Neighbourhood Plan should be resisted without sufficient space being provided for residential parking (either on site or through contributions for additional parking provision in the Town).

All other residential developments within the Town must have sufficient residential parking spaces must meet the requirements of the residential area. The current maximum guidelines provided by Oxfordshire County Council should be treated as minimum guidelines with additional spaces required on all new developments within the Neighbourhood Planning area with at least one additional space per household.

Given the rural location and lack of local employment and public transport around Wantage, residential car parking standards required by Oxfordshire County Council should be increased by one space per household and development will be resisted where this increased standard is not in place unless significant contributions are made to enhance the footpaths, cycleways, public car parking and public transport facilities of the Town.

All new car parking areas (public and private) should incorporate the principles of Secured by Design (SBD) and, where appropriate, seek to achieve SBD accreditation to ensure that a safe and sustainable community is maintained.

Appendix 1

Wantage Town Council

Wantage Neighbourhood Plan - Car parking survey analysis - May 2015

Location	Survey dates/times		Fri 01-May-15			Thurs 07-May-15			Fri 8th May			Sat * 9th May			
	Spaces	Empty	08.10 - 08.30	10.15 - 10.30	12.50 - 13.15	9.00 - 9.30	14.15 - 14.30	10.20 - 10.45	11.00- 11.30	12.10- 12.40	14.40 - 15.15	9.40 - 10.00	11.15 - 11.45	11.58 - 12.30	12.45 - 13.20
Portway car park	116		99	15	19	25	29	23	31	34	25	76	3	3	17
Opposite portway CP entrance	4		2	2	1	0	2	1	3	2	2	0	0	0	0
Alfred's Head Area	8		1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Market Square	34		10	3	0	6	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
McColis Market Place	4		2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Undercroft	34		17	13	10	9	8	12	11	10	8	3	6	0	5
Bistro 14	3		0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waitrose	100		84	11	22	30	25	5	1	13	5	8	0	4	7
Duces Court	3		1	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Willow Grange	4		4	2	4	4	4	1	0	3	2	1	1	1	0
DC car park by bridge	18		15	13	12	15	13	9	14	13	13	10	8	9	9
DC car park south of Bushbuy	16		16	10	11	11	10	14	11	12	12	11	10	8	8
Lay by opposite Bushbuy	3		3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Kings Walk car park by lorry turn	33		32	22	27	30	28	26	25	23	23	28	18	16	22
Former waste recycling area	8		8	5	5	7	8	7	6	3	6	6	4	1	2
Sainsbury's car park															
Line adjacent to building	23		16	1	8	9	7	1	1	1	6	2	0	3	6
A - small area by entrance	16		7	1	1	5	2	1	2	2	6	2	0	0	2
B	36		29	7	12	23	9	4	4	10	7	6	1	2	8
C	35		32	9	7	22	13	19	6	10	9	7	1	2	8
D	36		29	11	10	24	8	2	3	3	7	2	0	1	7
E -	35		25	2	7	13	6	0	0	2	1	2	0	1	0
F - one from Mill Street	35		22	0	6	13	14	1	8	3	10	3	0	1	5
G - closest to Mill Street	30		25	4	7	17	11	3	2	3	9	0	0	2	1
Brookside north	14		11	3	6	5	3	4	2	4	5	1	1	0	2
Brookside south	18		0	6	6	18	16	2	7	4	5	2	0	1	3
Argos etc car park															
adjacent to roadway	33		32	19	10	25	14	12	12	15	12	21	6	7	6
adjacent to buildings	55		47	14	13	37	16	20	11	13	11	18	10	6	2
Family Bargains car park	65		64	55	55	57	52	37	45	50	52	54	18	30	38
Newbury Street	2		1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	821		634	228	260	408	302	206	208	236	237	263	87	99	159
% full			23%	72%	68%	50%	63%	75%	75%	71%	71%	72%	94%	92%	85%
Illegally/unofficially parked															
Police station			0	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Mill Street			0	0	3			1	2	0	4	0	1	0	1
Newbury Street			2	3	6			3	5	6	4	3	4	4	4
Wallingford Street			0	3	3			5	9	6	8	9	7	9	8
Church Street			3	3	0					4		0	2	1	0
Total unofficially parked			5	30	33	21	26	34	34	39	38	31	37	35	34
% full after adjustmet			23%	76%	72%	53%	66%	79%	79%	76%	76%	76%	98%	96%	89%

* Saturday % adjusted to reflect market in market square