

Wantage Neighbourhood Plan – Workshop 21 January 2015

Getting around Wantage

The limited amount of time available meant that there could only be very brief discussion of any particular topic, with little scope for specific recommendations.

Market Square and adjacent streets

There was a clear lack of consensus on any plan to change road layouts and routes. A few people had strong views, strongly expressed, but there was no commonality.

It was felt that buses should continue to stop in the square, principally for the benefit of the elderly. However, no-one wanted them to stand. Retaining a taxi stand for the benefit of the elderly was also favoured, although less strongly.

A suggestion that there needed to be bus/coach/lorry parking away from the town centre met with approval. That this could benefit tourism by allowing coach parties to visit should be noted.

Buses

Apart from one person, who was concerned to get buses going straight from Grove to Harwell and Milton Park, there was relatively little said on this topic, although everyone wanted buses to be good and regular.

The importance of well-sited stops was mentioned a number of times. It was also mentioned that it was easier to get existing routes improved rather than establish new ones.

The main point of agreement was, as indicated before, that buses should have a site on which to stand away from the market square.

Cycle and pedestrian routes

It was probably no surprise that improvement in these was, probably universally, supported. Who would disagree?

However, what met with most approval was the suggestion that there should be clear and continuous routes for children to cycle to and from schools, which they could use in safety. This was also extended to walking routes, with particular reference to suitably-located, safe, crossings.

The necessity for proper integration of routes (and green spaces and bus stops) was raised, and supported, multiple times.

There was also support for physical separation of cycle routes on new roads, with a low barrier between them and the road. (The need for separation from pedestrians was also raised.)

One person raised the specific need for a crossing over the A417 from the Crab Hill development, and that this should be in keeping with the (AONB) environment.

It was advised that the County Council had funds for cycle routes which could be made available provided there were clear and detailed proposals.

The need for additional secure bicycle parking in the centre was raised, and the difficulty of finding sites acceptable to cyclists was noted.

Parking in town centre

It was again no surprise that everyone believed there was insufficient parking, and that the situation would become worse as a result of the new developments.

However, there was no unanimity about what specifically should be done. Suggestions included:

- New parking at the Magistrates Court / Police Station site
- Ditto at Broadway Motors if the site became available
- Converting parking to two-tier as at Bicester Village
- Expand parking at Leisure Centre
- On-site drop-off and pick-up facilities at schools
- A free-of-charge park-and-walk site for town-centre workers

Parking allocations with homes

The police representatives spoke very strongly about the problems caused for them by inadequate off-road parking: obstruction to emergency vehicles, disputes between neighbours, blocking pavements, etc.

There was a consensus that the area needed homes to be built with more parking.

Although probably outside the scope of the Plan, it is worth noting in this context the problem of unadopted roads which was raised by councillors. These cannot have parking regulations applied and therefore are particularly subject to the problems cited by the police. According to a County Council representative it can take 10 years before they agree to adopt a new road.

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