

Comments from Halstead Parish Council

HALSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

www.halsteadparish.org.uk

PARISH CLERK

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21 February 2012

Mr Gary Connor
Parking and Amenities Officer
Sevenoaks District Council

BY EMAIL

Dear Mr Connor

Parking Scheme London/Sevenoaks Road, Halstead - Review

Please will you accept my apologies for Council's late response to your letter dated 2 February. The Parking Scheme was discussed at the Parish Council meeting on 13 February but it completely slipped my mind that you required comments by 17 February.

1. Council believes that the safety issues have been addressed by the installation of this scheme.
2. Council notes that there has been displacement into Shoreham Parish at Badgers Mount.
3. Council would be interested to know what monitoring has been undertaken to assess how the scheme has impacted on the neighbouring properties and station users.

Yours sincerely




Gillian King Scott

Clerk to Halstead Parish Council

Comments from the Badgers Mount Residents Association

Sent: 23 January 2012

I write further to our correspondence in late November 2011, when you indicated that we would be able to offer us a chance to make comments on the current parking situation in Badgers Mount since introduction of Pay & Display bays and parking restrictions around Knockholt Station.

We have had discussions with residents within Badgers Rise, Badgers Mount and understand that they have submitted comments direct to you in relation to their concerns and that they have suggested possible ways that they would like to see the parking issues resolved. We hope that you will be taking these into consideration when reviewing the parking situation around Knockholt Station. As a Residents Association we have not been involved with their plans as we understand that they have been receiving assistance from Cllr. John Grint. These residents are the most affected within Badgers Mount from the introduction of parking restrictions. From talking to a resident from that road within the last week I gather that twice in one day when trying to turn out of Badgers Rise onto the Old London Road, she had near misses of her car being hit due to the poor visibility available to road users where vehicles are parking right on the Badgers Rise junction.

We also have a concern that several Badgers Mount residents (children and some elderly included) cross this section of the road twice daily to board public/school transport. They now have to walk out in between parked cars to be able to see what is coming along the road as some days vehicles are now parking beyond the bus stop to the east of Badgers Rise. We are fully aware that despite a 40 mph speed limit being in place along the Old London Road very few vehicles actually adhere to this and these residents are being put at increased risk by trying to cross the road due to the now decreased visibility they are afforded.

Having considered what we would like to see implemented in relation to the station parking situation we feel that we can do no more than attach a copy of our letter submitted to the initial consultation process and ask that once again, you give consideration to our comments. It is a major concern to many residents that if people cannot park reasonably close to the station they will find an alternative station to travel from that can provide this facility and our station will once again be under threat of closure due to poor use. With extremely limited bus services, the station provides a much needed alternative form of transport that Badgers Mount can ill afford to lose. Knockholt Station provides the only direct link to Orpington for Badgers Mount residents as requests for bus services running in a neighbouring village to easily include a route through our village have been met with refusal by the bus company.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Secretary, Badgers Mount Residents Association

Comments from a Shoreham Parish Councillor

Sent: 19 February 2012

I recently rang to speak with you regarding the parking issues round Knockholt Station, however, you were not at your desk so I spoke with your colleague Andy Bracey, whom I have copied into this correspondence.

In that conversation he informed me that KCC were responsible for the parking issues that arose in Old London Road because it was considered there was considerable potential risk for public safety. He also said that they had the funding for resolving this type of situation and SDC did not. He went on to explain that the proposal originally put forward by the Badgers Mount Residents Association was a sensible solution and if KCC had taken the responsibility for the situation, this option would most likely have been introduced there. He stated that as SDC were left to deal with the risks to public safety and that

your department had no budget to deal with it, so SDC considered they had no alternative but to introduce a self-funding scheme.

Should money be the basis on which such important environmental issues are decided?

It seems, due to the excessive amount of parking displacement that is going on at the station since the introduction of the 'pay for parking scheme', your solution is not going to be self funding anyway. It would have been far more economical to have simply put parking restrictions on the golf course side of the road and to leave the parking free on the station side of the road. The scheme your department has introduced is not only left at least 50% redundant of 'paid for parking', but has also moved the dangerous situation further up the road, having made the area around Badgers Rise extremely dangerous for the residents in the properties immediately before Badgers Rise and residents trying to exit Badgers Rise. Cllr Abbot and I visited a resident from Badgers Rise, to find out first hand what problems were being encountered. He informed us that your office had instructed the resident from Melesworth, Old London Road that as they are having problems with seeing traffic approaching the Close due to all the displaced parked vehicles, they should reverse out of their driveway onto Old London Road. I wonder whether your office is aware that this is NOT advised by the Highway Code. I would draw your office's attention to the Highway Code which specifically states: 'Do not reverse from a side road into a main road'. I would ask you to be extremely careful about what advice you provide to the community, particularly when it conflicts with the Highway Code.

I have done as Andy suggested and consulted with KCC regarding this matter. I have asked them why they did not take responsibility for the risks that your department agreed had been identified at this location, and they say that as far as they are concerned, the parking issues did not present any risk to public safety. They also say they have no reports to send me which indicate any studies they conducted to establish this but they seem to stand by their decision of not taking responsibility for the parking problems around the station.

Cllr Abbott and I are concerned that the community is not being best served by either SDC or KCC with regards to this matter. We would expect both councils to work together to find a sensible solution to the problems there. Both Councils are funded by the public and should therefore hold their best interests as priority, and any preferences they provide for a solution to the problem should take precedence over funding. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that the public have already contributed to resolving such problems via their Council Tax levies.

Would you please be kind enough to provide information regarding under what legislation or regulations do you have the power to turn a 'free parking' section of the highway into a 'pay to park' area?

We would request that both councils reconsider the problems of parking around the Knockholt Station area, and work together to find an acceptable solution for the risks that are currently occurring there. We would also like information about when the Joint Transport Board intend to meet to discuss this matter? We would also like information about how the public can interact with the JTB to make their views known. How should the Badgers Mount Residents Association contribute to the JTB meeting? Are they able to attend the meeting to present their views personally?

We look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Best regards, Cllr Liz Dallimore - Shoreham Parish Council

Comments from a resident of Badgers Rise (on behalf of other residents)

Sent: 09 January 2012

Attached is a final document compiled by some residents in the Badgers Mount area after a meeting with Counsellor Grint. We would very much like you to review this document and use the points when the 6 month period for review comes up re the parking displacement situation. We have sent this document to Counsellor Grint who will be raising the issues at the various parish council meetings. Please let me know if this is ok and if you require anything further.

Solutions to Knockholt station parking displacement in Badgers Mount

The below issues and solutions have arisen from meetings with Counsellor John Grint, residents in Badgers Rise and residents on the corner of Badgers Rise on Old London Road, Badgers Mount. Residents are extremely worried about the Knockholt station displacement parking that is taking place in Badgers Mount as it has caused a dangerous area of parked cars on Old London Road near Badgers Rise.

The main issues are :-

- 1) Poor visibility when pulling out of Badgers Rise onto Old London Road because of the cars parked on the bend on Old London Road. There have already been a few narrowly avoided accidents and the residents feel that it is only a matter of time before a serious accident occurs.
- 2) Poor visibility for the houses affected by the parked cars on Old London Road. They are unable to get out of their driveway with a clear view of fast oncoming traffic and again residents feel that an accident will happen.
- 3) Cars that park along the Old London road where the yellow line finishes are turning around in Old London Road in the morning and evening. They are also reversing, on the wrong side of the road all the way back to Badgers Rise in order to turn around. The traffic on this road usually exceeds 40 mph speed limit.
- 4) Cars parked and left all day in Badgers Rise especially at the bottom of the road cause obstructions on the corners and force cars to take the turning wide which is perilous when traffic is coming down the road.
- 5) Cars are sometimes parked on both sides of the bottom of Badgers Rise and left all day which blocks most of the road and would most certainly prevent larger emergency vehicles such as fire engines, from access.

Solutions :-

- 1) Continue the single yellow line with time restriction parking from where it currently stops along Old London Road all the way up to the roundabout.
Put single yellow line with time restriction parking into and all around Badgers Rise.
Put Double yellow lines on the corners of Badgers Rise leading into Old London Road like all other road junctions near Knockholt station.
- 2) As above for solution No.1 but in addition to also continue the double yellow lines on the opposite side of the road of Old London Road all the way up to the roundabout.
- 3) Continue the pay and display parking bays from where it currently stops along Old London Road all the way up to the roundabout.
Put single yellow line with time restriction parking into and all around Badgers Rise.
Put Double yellow lines on the corners of Badgers Rise leading into Old London Road like all other road junctions near Knockholt station.

- 4) As above for solution No.3 but in addition to also continue the double yellow lines on the opposite side of the road of Old London Road all the way up to the roundabout.
- 5) Take out the pay and display around Knockholt station.
Take away the single yellow lines with time restriction parking on same side as Knockholt station.
Leave the double yellow lines on the opposite side of the road.
Continue the double yellow lines on the opposite side of the road all the way up to the Roundabout on the one side of the road.

Please be aware that we have spoken to many of the commuters that park on Old London Road near Badgers Rise and they have told us that they travel here from Chelsfield and Orpington (Borough of Bromley) as it is easier to park for free here. We need them to either start using the pay and display parking bays or to return to their own local train station and allow the local residents of this area the safety required on nearby roads.

Sent: 24 January 2012

Also just to let you know that 2 cars were also parked In Badgers Rise today and left all day by commuters. Again notes have been put on their windscreens asking them not to park here, we should not have to be doing this in an attempt to make it safer around here.

Could you please provide an update on where we are at present re any discussions on changes being made here.

Sent: 26 January 2012

Re the below email and doc that you received from the Badgers Mount resident association, I have thanked them for helping us residents in this situation and hopefully also you can see how this is effecting a lot of residents in Badgers Mount. I do however have one concern with their original doc that they sent you and attached again to you. I feel that now that the pay and displays are installed, if the yellow lines are removed from the area where the sheds are on Old London Road all that will happen is that the cars that are currently parking in the Pay and Display will just move a bit further back to save £3.00 a day and will probably end up meeting with the cars that are currently on Old London Road near Badgers Rise and thus not really solve the dangerous issue we have here, thus I believe that now the pay and displays are installed any of the ideas on the attached doc would solve the problem .

Comments from a resident of Badgers Rise

Sent: 24 January 2012

I would like it also noted with you that I am getting increasingly concerned about safety pulling out of our road.

I have had a couple of 'near misses' in the past few weeks, as has my visiting mother, as it is so deceptive with all the cars parked to see round the corner for on coming cars and judge speed etc.

I really feel that it is only a matter of time before someone pulling out of Badgers Rise collides with someone coming along Old London Road and at even 40 mph it could be very nasty. With my young 2 year old son so often travelling with me I hate having to put him in unnecessary danger like this especially when we are all aware that a solution could be easily brought in.

Comments from a resident of Old London Road

Sent: 11 October 2011

I live at Melesworth, Old London Road, Badgers Mount and am concerned about the revised parking on my road. This week there have been very few people parking in the bays now the machines are operating which has meant they now park outside my house.

When coming out of my drive, I have no visibility of what is coming down the road anymore as the cars completely obscure my view of traffic from the direction of Knockholt station. The cars park right up to the edge of my driveway so I am unable to see if I reverse out my drive way anymore. It is also difficult for me to reverse into my driveway each day.

I have a son of 17 who is currently learning to drive and so I am concerned also about his safety. Can something be introduced to give some visibility down the road? If cars parked with some distance from my drive then I could see traffic. If nothing happens I will have to put up some sort of sign explaining to people the danger of parking right up to the edge of my drive and hope they appreciate my concern.

I have pictures of the problem if you would like me to send them. If you would like to contact me on I would be happy to show you the danger.

Sent: 17 November 2011

For your information - today the cars stopped one car distance from my driveway. The last car parked was a Zafira, so as this is a taller car, the lack of visibility was still dangerous from our driveways.

This fits in with the general pattern - cars are parked all the way up to Badgers Rise from Monday to Wednesday and then Thursday to Friday the car numbers decrease as we get closer to the weekend so there can be up to between 1 and 3 spaces.

Most cars park against the traffic facing down the road towards Knockholt Station. Many do U-turns in the evening to get back on the road.

Sent: 24 January 2012

Usual update - the cars are parked right up to my drive each day (apart from Fridays).

Tonight they are just over my driveway so I had to drive around the back of a car to swing into my drive. Impossible to get out without someone guiding me.

I have left a note on their windscreen asking them not to park over the drive and also explained that blocking our visibility is a safety issue on this fast road.

Still lots of illegal parking and 3 point turns on a busy road each evening.

Any update on the madness?

Comments from a local resident

Sent: 12 October 2011

As you may well imagine the issue of the displacement parking on London Road, Badgers Mount has caused most of the residents in Badgers Rise to write and complain to you. Those who have not taken the time to write may well do so in the coming days.

I would support all the comments made by my fellow residents so far and would like to add mine to the mix.

1. It should not have come as a surprise to anyone involved in the decision making process to alter the parking arrangements at Knockholt Station this would happen.
2. Someone, I would presume Kent Highways, went to the trouble and expense of re-doing the lines on the whole of London Road recently. This included the marking of a cycle lane that is now quite frankly useless. Anyone who wants to ride a bike on this part of London road is in my opinion putting their life at risk.
3. The parking issue has been moved from a straight part of the road onto a bend and considering motorists generally ignore the speed limit on London Road also adds to the danger.
4. I don't know the cost of erecting the new pay and display machines but on the face of it the evidence of use so far would suggest it will take some time to recover the investment.
5. I hope that it does not take a serious accident or fatality to ensure that this issue is taken seriously and change it from a low priority in the eyes of the council and as you stated the police.

I have attached images of the view from my perspective when sitting in my car at the junction of Badgers Rise and London Road. Please remember that this is a 40 MPH speed limit that is generally ignored.

All this to accommodate motorists who are prepared to jump in their cars and drive to Badgers Mount, causing pollution on the way, to save a couple of pounds in parking fees.

At least you have encouraged free enterprise from all of this with a new parking lot, in a field, at £2 per day that undercuts your fees. Pity you cannot do something to make the motorists use it!

Comments from a local resident

Sent: 12 October 2011

PARKING AT KNOCKHOLT STATION Comments: Hello, with the new yellow lines on old london road (with i must say has sorted out the double parking problem very well) about 20 cars are parking at the end of the yellow lines going towards sevenoaks, they are parking in the clearly marked cycle lanes, are they allowed to park in the cycle lanes? Many Thanks

Sent: 12 December 2011

parking at knockholt station **Comments:** hello, i think you need to extend the yellow lines on london road for parking at knockholt station, around 30 cars park on the bend, it's dangerous because the cars pull out into the middle of the road on the bend, could be a bad crash soon.

Comment from a member of public

Sent: 13 October 2011

I am pleased to see the new parking restrictions in Old London Road, Halstead by Knockholt station are now in force. It appears that the cars have now moved approximately 1 mile up the road towards Polhill roundabout and are parking in the advisory cycle way, and are obstructing the cyclists.

Could you please let me know how Sevenoaks District Council are proposing to deal with this problem.