

Tisbury Parking – Problems and Solutions

This report is a response by the Parish Council to Tisbury residents' concerns about parking in the village. It shows that the problem has no simple fix but that there are solutions – which we will be implementing.

OBJECTIVES:

To keep traffic and parking efficient so that:

- The high street can prosper.
- Residents have adequate parking.
- The Station has a positive, not a negative impact on the village.
- We don't destroy the characteristics of Tisbury that make it attractive to live in.

Part 1. Report Summary

Earlier this year the Parrish Council carried out a 'refresher' survey to add to the one carried out in 2010. From this a number of themes became apparent. Here is a summary of them which we then follow up in more detail.

There is a problem with parking at the station. This is on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays after 10.30am and is related to a small peak which seems to be due to people doing a mid-week commute. On other days there are always spaces.

There is a problem with the Nadder car park which is sometimes full at certain points on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays even though the busiest days in the village are Fridays and Saturdays.

It is thought, although there is no definitive proof that this is related to the station 'peaks'.

In essence – station users are parking in the village car park.

However – we are not talking large numbers here. There are 54 spaces in the car park, it is thought that approximately 10 of those are taken by station users. It's not a huge problem but it does push the car park over the limit.

In the High St parking is adequate. There is a high turnover as people pop into shops and during the week of the survey there was always a space available. There were some complaints but most people felt the high street works well... and is a feature that makes Tisbury so appealing.

There are many contrasting views on parking in Tisbury but there does seem to be a consensus that parking should be free. There is also a strong feeling that it shouldn't be regulated too strongly. It's part of the relaxed atmosphere of Tisbury. Another feature that makes it attractive.

Matching that relaxed attitude with accommodating an increased need for parking has to be carefully managed. For many people the 'obvious' solution is to build a new car park. But if you build a free car park near the station it will be immediately filled by commuters. If you charge a fee very few shoppers will use it because they want free parking outside the shops with a very short walk.

There is the simple geographical fact that there is only one site where we can place a new car park: Johnson's field. This field may seem like a good solution but there are

lots of problems - not least the cost. This is going to be approximately £60,000 for the build with a rental of £5,000 a year. This would have to be paid for by the village. Perhaps this could be considered if there was no alternative but in fact there is an alternative.

A new private car park has been set up next to the 'official' station car park. This is a brownfield site with a potential capacity of 50 cars or more. The Parish council has been in touch with the owner who is very positive about providing the extra capacity needed for the station.

Solutions

The Parish Council believes that the new Private Car Park is the best solution for resolving the need for more station parking. It will cost the village nothing to implement. It provides the same amount of extra spaces as Johnson's Field. We will be supporting a local business instead of creating more (difficult to manage!) responsibilities for the parish council.

There will be no serious environmental impact.

Increased capacity at the station will alleviate pressure on the Nadder car park. This car park's capacity will also be increased by moving the re-cycling bins to another part of the village. However this will have to be monitored closely as the extra spaces may be taken by commuters who are unwilling to pay at the station.

There are other measures that we should take to help the situation (see below) but it is believed that these two main developments; the new private car park and reconfiguring the Nadder car park, will help solve most of Tisbury's parking problems for the near future.

The following puts more detail into the reasoning behind these solutions.

Part 2. Detail Behind the Report

From the 2010 report we learnt:

The High St has 25 shops.

The High St has parking bays for approx 71 cars

The Nadder Car Park has parking bays for 54 cars

The Station has parking bays for 86 cars.

The High St did not have a traffic and parking problem

The Nadder Car Park was nearing capacity use.

The station was nearing capacity use. SW trains expected an expansion in traffic up to 2016 and additional space would be needed. (After 2016 expansion would slow).

The problem of people parking on the road outside the station was highlighted and some double yellow lines stopped some of this.

The results pointed towards the need for an additional car park.

2 Sites were suggested:

1. The field adjacent to the Nadder Car Park.
2. Johnson's field. The field where the fireworks and the fair are held.

Following this up it was found:

1. Expansion of the Nadder Car Park is not viable as the land is not freely for sale.
2. Johnson's field is not for sale but could possibly be rented on a 5 year lease.

2016 survey Up Date.

Earlier this year we spent a week monitoring parking and talked to people about the situation in Tisbury. These are our findings:

Who is parking in Tisbury?

Commuters (using the station)

Shoppers

People who work in Tisbury - Mainly shop workers.

Residents

Tourists

Where are they Parking?

The main point to note here is that there are two separate groups of car parking – The station and the village. No one parks at the station to visit the village but it is clear people park in the village to use the station. This has a knock on effect for village parking.

There is evidence that at least 10 commuters (maybe more) park their cars in the Nadder Car Park. There is anecdotal evidence that commuters also park in village roads where there is no restriction.

How Many Parking Spaces are There in the Village?

There are approximately 71 places in the High St.

54 places in the Nadder Car Park.

There is an un-defined amount of parking down the Avenue and along Park road.

There is also limited parking by the church.

But in terms of regulated parking there are 125 places.

The 2016 Findings

The High Street

The high street usually has some spaces for parking. The situation is very fluid as most people are making short stops 10 - 20 mins. Most people we talked to didn't think there was a problem. However quite a few did and there is anecdotal evidence of no spaces at some point on 'most days'. Also that it clogs up if there is a church service/funeral.

The Coop lorry and other deliveries cause problems.

This raises the question of 'what is a problem?'

Is a 'serious problem' waiting more than a minute for traffic? Obviously there are moments when there are holdups - anecdotal evidence is that it can happen at the school rush hour when tension is already high.

But this is a question of degree. Tisbury High St does not have serious hold ups or grid lock and during the week of our survey there was always a space to park.

Bearing all this in mind – if the function of the High St parking is to service the shops and not cause any loss of business then it is working. In fact many people have commented that the vibrancy of the high street is one of the main attractions of Tisbury.

The Nadder Car Park

Most of the time the car park has spaces – but there are times in the week when it doesn't. On Wed and Thurs late morning it was full.

However on Fridays and Saturdays (busy days) it had spaces.

It is perhaps significant that the car park was NOT full on busy village days but was full on busy commuter days. There is a definite peak in commuter travel on Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursdays. This is reflected in parking at the station.

The Station

Is definitely under pressure. It is generally full by 10.30am from Tuesday to Thursday. Other days there are always spaces.

SW Trains are doing their own survey and back up these findings.

The ticket office staff also had anecdotal evidence that:

There was an increase in traffic since the building of the Wyndham estate - residents drive down and park to catch the train.

They have people complaining that there are no places.

It should be noted that the franchise for the rail service is coming up next year and SW Trains currently have no plan to increase parking spaces.

Another point is that it is not clear by how much train passenger numbers will increase. Commuter traffic is at capacity so an increase in numbers can only come from a rise in off peak travelling. Of course SW Trains are always looking for ways to increase business.

The Private Car Park at the Station

Along-side the station car park is the area owned by Mr. Sealy. He has set up his own car park and is charging £30 a month or £300 a year. This is cheaper than the station.

He has recently re-organised his parking facilities and there is approximate capacity for 50 Cars. This spare capacity could be a solution to the station car park overload.

However one problem to overcome is that there are no day passes. People have to pay for a month or a year. To ease congestion at the station it would be helpful to get long term parkers to use the private car park thereby freeing up space for short term parkers at the station.

SW Trains are sympathetic to this plan. The Parish Council is working with the owner to maximise the benefit to Tisbury.

Other Areas

There is still parking along the road by the station. This is currently free. It could be re-designated for village car parking but it is probably true that this is further than most people want to walk for a quick visit to the shops.

There is a further area near the railway bridge where there is a mechanic's workshop. This too is undesignated.

There are further sites on the other side of the railway line including St Modwen. They are moving towards developing the site but there are no details about what car parking facilities they would provide. However they are working with SW Trains – to keep a space for a second platform for example.

Problems and Solutions

There are two main problems:

The station overload on Tuesdays to Thursdays.

The Nadder Car Park overload on the same days.

The Numbers

The first thing to point out is that we are not talking huge numbers here. 10 more places in the Nadder Car Park would alleviate the pressure there. For the station perhaps 20 plus extra places are needed.

Obviously there can be no definitive target. If you build more places more people park.

Another point to make is that these are two separate groups of parkers. We need to make more spaces near the shops (most people will not walk very far!) and more spaces near the station. This may be obvious but an objection to the Johnson's field site is that it will only serve the station.

So in conclusion: we need to find 10–15 at the Nadder Car Park (or nearby), 20-30 extra spaces at the station.

Where can we find this extra capacity?

Station Parking

Johnson's Field

One solution is to build a car park in Johnson's Field as suggested by the 2010 plan. This would have to be funded by the Parish Council out of the precept.

The PC has investigated this, contacted the owners and commissioned a viability report.

The field is not for sale but could possibly be rented on a 5 year lease.

The report recommended a rental of £5000 a year which the owners have subsequently agreed to.

There will have to be substantial works to make the field viable as it is in the flood plain. The Parish Council have sought quotes and had a 'ball park' estimate of £60,000 for this.

It will have to get planning permission. It is a green field, river meadow in an AONB.

Even if planning permission is granted there will be a lot of constraints.

For example there can be no ground raising within the floodplain.

It should also be noted that flood plains do exactly that. During the survey period the Nadder flooded!

There are a significant number of people who object to using this site.

Private Car Park

Another solution is to encourage and support the private car park next to the station to make up extra capacity.

It has capacity for 50 cars plus. The area is already tarmacked.

It will cost the village nothing.

It will support a local business.

It's already happening!

Arguments against this as a solution are that it does not provide for single day customers. However the SW Trains ticket office are supportive of the private car park taking up long- stay parking to create more short-stay parking at the station.

A more long term plan is being discussed with SW Trains.

The owner of the car park is very positive about providing a solution.

It is possible that the Parish Council could help manage the car park or actively promote it. This has yet to be discussed.

Station Parking - Solution

If the choice is between Johnson's field and the new Private Car Park it seems clear that the private car park is the best solution:

There is the obvious factor of cost.

Both sites provides the same amount of extra spaces.

We will be supporting a local business instead of creating more (difficult to manage!) responsibilities for the parish council.

There will be no serious environmental impact.

One argument in favour of Johnson's field is that it will also provide parking for the village. This is questionable. It is already noted that people do not want to walk far for their shopping. On every day of the survey there were spaces in the 2 hour parking area by the playing field which is nearer to the shops than Johnson's field. This is the limit of how far people will walk!

In addition we feel that better managing of the Nadder Car Park will solve the village parking problem.

Nadder Car Park

We cannot expand the Nadder Car Park. However there is potential for increasing the number of spaces:

By removing the recycling facilities and placing them elsewhere in the village.

By a more efficient use of the space.

A more contentious issue is stopping commuters parking in the Nadder Car Park. However this would require regulation and policing. One clear feeling from both 2010 and 2016 is that people do NOT want regulation. So if we are to get commuters out of the car park we have to do it by persuasion and incentive.

One suggestion was a big, bold sign making it clear that the car park was for shoppers and not commuters. We can also emphasise there is a 24 hour limit. This might persuade some commuters to leave.

The incentive will be to improve capacity at the station.

One factor that is hard to quantify is the people who work in shops. If there are 25 shops it can be assumed that quite a few workers are parking in the village. Anecdotal evidence bears this out. Some park in the Nadder Car Park, some along the Avenue or similar, some juggle their cars outside the shops. It's possible that a more coordinated approach to the parking of Tisbury workers could free up spaces.

Nadder Car Park Solution:

We re-organise the car park and move the re-cycling bins to another part of the village. This will create approximately 10 more spaces.

We 'encourage' commuters to park at the station.

We talk to shop workers to see if we can find alternative places for them to leave their cars... or even share cars!

Solutions?

Of course there is no guarantee that this will make all parking issues go away – but it is a positive move that will not be expensive. In addition it is a solution that doesn't just focus on cars and traffic but on other aspects of the village that are equally valuable. There will still be people who think we are not doing enough about the parking 'problem' but this has to be balanced against what other people want to see in the village.

And of course this is not the end! Things change – and it is certain we will have to keep finding ways of finding this balance.

Looking ahead we already know about some new developments:

The St Modwen site will impact on the station. The Parish Council is monitoring this.

There are new plans to develop Community Rail Partnerships. This includes looking at integrated services – for example - a shuttle meeting trains at the station and servicing passengers from the village. There was strong support for this in the recent village survey.

The new Campus will affect the dynamic in the village.

Tourists are currently an unknown factor. There is probably data for Wardour Castle but it's not clear how many people visit Tisbury as tourists. The opening of the Tithe barn might affect this although it will have its own parking.

In Conclusion

Tisbury is an ancient village. It has a high street with 25 shops. It is inevitable that there are going to be moments when there is a hold up. People park on the double yellow line outside the newsagent while they get their paper. Tractors pass through, lorries deliver stuff. This is what makes Tisbury different, vibrant and special.

It is dangerous to look at the parking and traffic situation in isolation. Yes, we could build car parks, widen roads and go on expanding the capacity for traffic – but this means that at some point we would lose the special environment that makes Tisbury different. And no, this doesn't mean we don't want change. It means that looking ahead we have to be innovative and smart in the way we develop our community. Tisbury Parish Council strongly believes in this and is currently working on a neighbourhood plan (all voluntary work) that will keep Tisbury thriving.