

Alford Car Park Survey July 2012



Planning and Built Environment Department

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of parking provisions within the central area of Alford for the Alford Neighbourhood Development Plan. Public on-street parking spaces, public off-street parking spaces and private off-street parking spaces were surveyed to determine both the parking supply and parking demand created within the study area. In addition, data was collected for the number of vehicles parked on double or single yellow lines within the study area.

Parking Data Collection Methodology

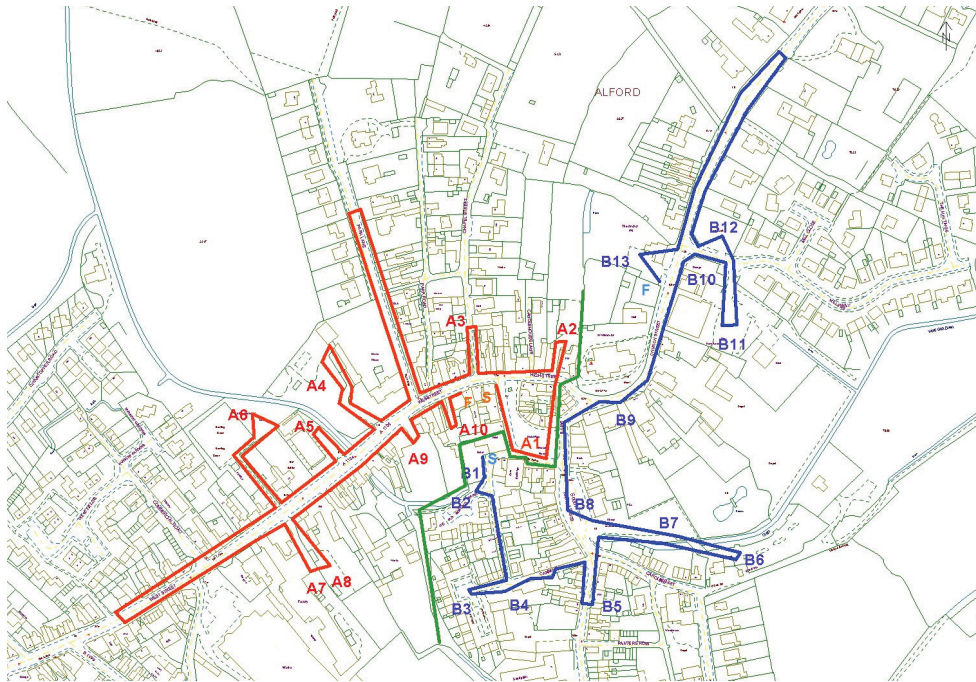
Prior to the counts, a preliminary study was undertaken to check car park capacities (private and public) and on street parking capacities. Two routes were planned.

Where there were no markings available to identify a parking space an estimation was made based upon allowing for a medium-sized car, leaving enough space for it to enter and exit a space. Provisions for disabled, parent and child, motorcycle and cyclists have also been included within the figures. The figures for disabled or parent parking were not collated separately. Data was collected for vehicles parked on single or double yellow lines.

To consider an area close to full capacity, the car park or on-street location had to achieve an occupancy level of 90% or more of the estimated capacity. Areas considered over capacity are those that have an occupancy level of over 100% of the estimated capacity.

Parking data was collected on Tuesday 9 October 2012 and Thursday 11 October 2012. The data was collected between 08.30 and 15.30, on an hourly basis.

The Data collectors walked along two different routes; route A , along the west side of Alford (red route line on map overleaf) and route B, along the east side of Alford (blue route line on map overleaf).



Map of routes used for parking survey (Route A – Red line. Route B – Blue line)

TYPE OF PARKING	I.D	NAME
Street		Lloyds Bank
Public	A1	Market Place
Public		North
Public		Main
Public		Handy Man
Private	A2	George Hotel
Private	A3	Chapel Street
Street		Park Lane
Private	A4	Alford Manor House
Private	A5	Alford Methodist Church
Private	A6	Bowling Club
Street		Commercial Rd
Private		Behind Lloyds Pharmacy
Street		West Street (no 46)
Private		Finvedden
Private		Alford Surgery
Private		Straven
Private	A7	White Horse
Private	A8	Half Moon
Street		West Street
Private	A9	West Street no 9
Private	A10	MBF

Route A (Red line on map) A1 – Start, A10 - End

TYPE OF PARKING	I.D	NAME
Private	B1	Windmill Hotel
Private	B2	Old Bowling Green
Private	B3	Windmill Paddock
Private		Alford Dentist Practice
Private	B4	Don White
Private	B5	White Hart
Public	B6	Library over bridge
Public	B7	Library
		bike racks
Public	B8	Library Front
Street		South Market Place
Street		B Bank - Church St
Private	B9	Church Street no14
Private	B10	Garage (Church Street)
Private	B11	Co-Op
Private	B12	Millers Way
		Bike Racks
Street		Church Street to Mon Ami
Private	B13	Anchor Inn

Route B (Blue line on map) B1 – Start, B13 - End

Results

Type of parking	Overall Capacity			
	Overall Capacity	% Capacity of overall total	Overall Capacity (Excl Bikes)	% Capacity of overall total Excl Bikes)
Public Parking	186	23.74%	178	23.20%
Private Parking	305	57.37%	305	57.64%
On Street Parking	109	18.89%	109	19.16%

Table: Overall capacity and type of parking spaces available

Including cycle spaces, the capacity for the centre of Alford totals 600. The majority of the parking capacity within the centre of Alford is private car parking space (57.37%). Breaking down the data into the two routes shows that Route A has a capacity 266 (44.33%) and route B has a capacity of 334 (55.67%). Private parking spaces accounted for 60.53% of parking spaces on route A and 43.11% on route B. The data also shows that on route A there were no dedicated parking spaces available for bikes and a capacity of eight on route B. That equates to 1.33% of the overall

parking spaces available on the two routes, and 2.4% of parking spaces available on route B.

Type of parking	Route A		Route B			
	Overall Capacity	% Capacity of overall total	Overall Capacity	% Capacity of overall total	Overall Capacity (Excl Bikes)	% Capacity of overall total (Excl Bikes)
Public Parking	36	13.53%	150	44.91%	142	43.56%
Private Parking	161	60.53%	144	43.11%	144	44.17%
On Street Parking	69	25.94%	40	11.98%	40	12.27%

Table: Routes breakdown of capacity and type of parking spaces available

Straven

The entrance gates in to the old Straven Knitwear factory have been locked and the space is on occasions used by some as parking space.

Tuesday 9 October 2012

Tuesday is market day in Alford. Furthermore, the Market takes place on the grounds of the Market Place car park, and therefore figures will be impacted. Also, Manor House and George Hotel held wakes on the day.

Route A

The average occupancy level for route A on Tuesday was 50.80%. 1081 vehicles were counted throughout the day at an average of 135 vehicles per hour.

The Market takes place on every Tuesday at the Main Market Place and runs between 08:30 and 14:30. The Market Place was occupied by stalls and stall holders vans. Two slots on North Market Place were also occupied by market stalls.

Breaking down the Market Place car park into three sections; North, Main and Handy Man, the North section of the car park was either at full capacity or over occupied during Tuesday. Over the day, the average occupancy level for the North section of the Market Place car park reached 118.75%, whereas the main section reached 25.50%, the Handy Man section reaching 50%. The average occupancy level for the day for the whole of the Market Place was 44.44%.

Park Lane and Alford Manor House experienced over occupancy at points during the day. Manor house experienced a spike in use of spaces at 11.30 (90.91%) and was over occupied at 12.30 (113.64%). It doubled between 10.30 and 11.30 (from 10 to 20), whereas at 13.30 it dropped down to 5 vehicles (22.73%). The spike and over occupancy at the Manor House is most likely due the wake that was being held there.

Representatives of Manor House also noted that the car park was used by non-users of their facilities. Alford Methodist Chapel also noted that car parking spaces were being used by members of the public who were non-users of their facilities.

Park Lane had an occupancy level of 60% or more throughout the whole day, with it being over occupied at 10.30 and 11.30 (both 115%). At 12.30 it was at full capacity level, with 09.30 (90%) and 13.30 (95%) the only other two counts when it was close to full capacity. The average occupancy level for the day was 88.75% (17.75 vehicles).

Overall as an average for the day, Commercial Road averaged an occupancy level of 90.63% (7.25 vehicles). Throughout the day it did reach full capacity (09.30, 10.30, 14.30, 15.30), but it was never over occupied.

The George Hotel was also holding a wake on the day of the survey and correlates with higher occupancy levels at points during the day. The occupancy level at the hotel averaged 61.88% (12.38 vehicles) for the day. But it did reach full capacity (20 vehicles) at 13.30, and also saw high occupancy levels at 12.30 (80%) and 14.30 (75%). Furthermore, it is important to note that George Hotel no longer offers free parking on market days. The only other place to no longer offer free parking on market days is the Windmill Hotel.

The data collectors noted that there were several vehicles parked for most or all day in North Market and West Street. The data collectors also noted that there were a number of vehicles parked illegally on West Street, Park lane and Commercial road, even when spaces were available close by.

Route B

The average occupancy level for the route over the day was 58.31% including bikes, and 59.74% excluding bikes. Over the day 1558 were counted, with an average of 195 vehicles per hour.

Alford Dentist Practice (95.83%), Library Front (93.75%) and Millers Way (91.25%) were the only three parking locations that had an average occupancy level for the day that was close to full capacity.

Church Street by Barclays Bank has a single yellow line on either side. There were 5 vehicles parked on the street at 10.30, 11.30 and 12.30. There were no vehicles parked on the street at 14.30 and 15.30. Throughout the day 22 vehicles were counted parked on Church Street.

The data collectors noted that vehicles parked between Barclays bank and the Greyhound Charity shop were a major cause of traffic problems on the day.

The Co-op average occupancy level for the day was 72.50%. At 10.30 (106% or 53 vehicles), 11.30 (120% or 60 vehicles) and 12.30 (102% or 51 vehicles) the car park was over occupied.

There are a total 8 bike racks on route B, 5 in the Library car park and 3 in Millers Way car park. There was no evidence that the bike racks had been used at any point during the survey.

Thursday 11 October 2012

On the day of the survey it was half day closing in Alford, and flu jabs were being administered at the Corn Exchange during the afternoon.

Route A

The average occupancy level for route A on Thursday was 46.80%. 998 vehicles were counted throughout the day at an average of 125 vehicles per hour.

There were times during the day when a number of car parks were over occupied, but other than Market Place North, no other car park had an average occupancy level that exceeded the capacity of the parking space. Market Place North reached an average occupancy level for the day of 108.33%. Other than at 10.30 and 11.30 the car park was either at full capacity or over occupied. It was over occupied during the count at 09.30, 12.30, 13.30, 14.30 and 15.30. At 8.30 it was at full capacity.

Park Lane was over occupied at 10.30, with one more vehicle parked in the car park than the capacity of the car park. At the counts at 9.30 and 11.30 the car park had an occupancy level of 90% (18 vehicles). Outside that period, the car park did not fall below an occupancy level of 50%.

The only other period a car park was over occupied was the Alford Surgery at 10.30. The car park had an occupancy level of 123.53%, which equates to 4 additional vehicles being parked in the car park than the maximum capacity of the car park. Excluding the count at 10.30, the average occupancy level for the day was 59.66% or 10.14 vehicles; just over double compared to the occupancy level for the count at 10.30. If the 10.30 count is included in the average calculation for the day, the average occupancy level for the car park was 67.65% or 11.5 vehicles.

On the day of the survey the Manor House was not open, and as would be expected, the use of the car park did fall compared to Tuesday. Nevertheless, the car park was still being used by motorists, with an average occupancy level of 17.05%. However this figure has been skewed by a spike in use at 15.30. Throughout the rest of the day there were no more than three vehicles parked in the car park at any one time, but at the 15.30 count it shot up to 15, or 68.18%. The reason behind this

increase is unknown, but the time in the spike may suggest it was being used by parents waiting to pick up children from the local school.

Route B

The average occupancy level for the route over the day was 39.52% including bikes, and 40.49% excluding bikes. Over the day 1056 were counted, with an average of 132 vehicles per hour.

Alford Dentist Practice averaged an occupancy level of 97.92%, and was the only car park that got above the ninety percent mark, but there were a number who got close to the ninety percent mark. The Library Front averaged 89.84% occupancy level for the day. Millers Way (84.38%) and South Market Place (83.33%) were the only other two that reached an occupancy level of above 80%, with Church Street No. 14 (60% or 3 vehicles) the only other to average above 50% for the day.

The Library Front was the only car park that was over occupied on route B during the day. Other than at 08.30 (37.50%), 11.30 (87.50%) and 14.30 (87.50%), it was either close to full capacity or over occupied.

At 14.30 the average occupancy level on the route was 50.90%, the only time slot on the route that averaged above the fifty percent mark. The time also saw a jump in the number of vehicles parked in the Over the Bridge car park. It was the only point in the day the average occupancy level reached the fifty percent mark, whereas the average occupancy level for the day in the Over the Bridge car park was 32.89%. The data correlates with the notes made by the data collector, who noted that the car park was used by parents to pick up and drop off children from the schools close to the car park.

Along with increased use of the Over the Bridge car park during the period when children finished school, the data collector also noted that there was congestion on Caroline Street and Hanby Lane, when parents were picking up and dropping off children.

South Market Place average occupancy level was 83.33%. At 10.30 and 12.30 (both 91.67%) the occupancy level was close to fully capacity. The rest of the day, other than at 15.30, the average occupancy level was 83.33%. The lowest level of occupancy was at 15.30 when the occupancy level fell to 66.67%. Furthermore, the data collector also noted that some of the vehicles parked in South Market Place appeared to be parked throughout the whole period of the survey.

The Co-op was not as busy on Thursday as it was on Tuesday. The car park average occupancy level for the day was 45% or 22.5 vehicles. The occupancy level peaked at 14.30 and reached an occupancy level of 82%. Other than the counts at 14.30, 10.30 (52% or 26 vehicles) and 15.30 (56% or 28 vehicles) the car park did not reach half its capacity. Like on Tuesday there was a high turnover of vehicles.

Concerning bike use, like on Tuesday, there was no recorded use of the bike racks.

Key Findings

The key findings from the survey are:

- Greater use of parking facilities on Tuesday than on Thursday
- Market has positive impact on occupancy levels
- No use of bike racks
- Parking facilities across the survey are generally underused

Use of Parking Spaces – Tuesday and Thursday Comparison

Overall use of parking spaces was higher on Tuesday than on Thursday. This could be due to a number of reasons, including the Market taking place on Tuesday, half day on Thursday and the Manor House being closed on Thursday.

Though Thursday was a half day, data would suggest it made little impact on level of use over the day. When the data is broken down in to counts on an hourly basis, there is no big drop off in occupancy level at any point during the day. Furthermore, other than the 12.30 count on route B, all the other hourly counts had an occupancy level above the average for the day. The 12.30 count had an occupancy level of 38.32%, whereas the average occupancy level for the day was 39.52%.

The average occupancy level for Tuesday on both routes was 54.98% and on Thursday it was 42.75%. Overall, 2639 vehicles were counted on Tuesday and 2054 on Thursday. That equates to 585 more vehicles being counted on Tuesday than on Thursday. As a percentage that amounts to a drop of 22.17% in the number of vehicles counted on Thursday, compared to the number of vehicles counted on Tuesday.

On Tuesday on Route A, a total of 1081 vehicles were counted, whereas on Thursday 998 vehicles were counted. On Route B, a total of 1558 vehicles were counted on Tuesday, whereas 1056 were counted on Thursday. But it is important to note, route B does have a greater capacity than route A. Route B has 68, or 26% more parking spaces than route B.

There is a noticeable difference between the number of vehicles counted on Tuesday and Thursday on Route B. In particular, the car parks close by to the location of the Market saw greater number of vehicles parked during the late morning period. In particular, South Street car park and the Over the Bridge car park saw greater number of vehicles parked in the car parks on Tuesday than on Thursday.

Average occupancy level on route B on Tuesday was 58.31% (including bike racks), whereas on Thursday it was 39.52% (including bike racks). Overall, 502 more vehicles were counted on Tuesday than on Thursday. That equates to 32.22% fewer vehicles being counted on Thursday compared to on Tuesday.

Average occupancy level of parking spaces on Route A on Tuesday was 50.80%, whereas on Thursday the occupancy level was 46.80%. Overall, 83 vehicles more vehicles were counted on Tuesday than on Thursday. That equates to a drop of 7.68% in the number of vehicles being counted on Thursday compared to on Tuesday.

Though the overall pattern is of greater use on Tuesday than on Thursday, there were parking locations where there was greater use on Thursday than Tuesday. One of the parking locations that saw an increase in use on Thursday over Tuesday was the Market Place car park but this was due to the use of the car park as the site for the Market. Excluding the Market Place car park, only 5 locations on route A and 3 on route B saw an increase in use on Thursday over Tuesday. Windmill paddock was the only parking location to see no change between the two days. On both days it had an occupancy level of 37.50%.

Use of Parking Spaces - Types of parking spaces

As was noted previously three types of parking spaces were looked at in the survey; on-street parking, public car park and private car park. Combining the data for both routes and days, 21.88% of the spaces in use were on-street parking spaces, 35.36% of spaces in use were public parking spaces and 42.76% of spaces in use were private parking spaces.

On route A, of those spaces in use, 37.61% of parking spaces in use were on-street parking spaces, 14.48% were public car park parking spaces and 47.91% were private car park parking spaces. Whereas on route B, on-street parking spaces accounted for 9.41% of parking spaces used, public car park parking spaces accounted for 51.91% and private car park parking spaces accounted for 36.68%.

Use of parking spaces - based on time

08.30 – 09.30

The first count at 08.30 was when the occupancy level was at its lowest for both routes and on both days. Other than on route B on Tuesday, the 09.30 count saw the second lowest level of occupancy.

Tuesday - 10.30 – 12.30

On Tuesday on route A and route B, the occupancy level peaked during the survey counts at 11.30. The occupancy level gradually increased up until 11.30 then gradually fell back down. On both routes the occupancy levels at 10.30, 11.30 and 12.30 were all higher than the day's average.

A similar pattern does not follow for Thursday, but on route A, at the 10.30 count, there were more parking locations that were either over occupied or close to full capacity than at any other point in the day. Alford Manor House and Alford Surgery were both over occupied, whereas West Street (no. 46) and MBF were both at full capacity. The average occupancy level for the 10.30 count was 52.26%, second only to the 14.30 count. On route B on the Thursday, the 10.30 count saw Alford Dentist at full capacity, and Library Front, South Market Place and Millers Way were all close to full capacity. Church Street (no. 14) reached an occupancy level of 80%, the highest count for the parking location for Thursday. Co-op, Library Front, Over the Bridge and Windmill Paddock all saw above average use at 10.30. On the other hand, Market Place North was at either full capacity or over occupied for most of Thursday, other than during the counts at 10.30 and 11.30.

Thursday – 14.30

Breaking down the figures for Thursday, there does not seem to be a great change throughout the day. On Thursday on both route A and route B the occupancy level peaked at 14.30. On route B it was the only count that saw the occupancy level go above the fifty percent mark. This would suggest, as the data collector noted, vehicles were parked in the vicinity of the schools, primarily to pick up children from school. Interestingly, the data for Tuesday does not correlate with the pattern for Thursday. It is unknown why this is the case. Most parking locations did not see much difference between 13.30, 15.30 and 14.30.

Over the Bridge car park saw a sharp increase in use from 13.30 to 14.30 and at 15.30 there was a drop in use but the drop was not as sharp. The average occupancy level for the day was 32.89% (12.50 vehicles). The occupancy level at 13.30 was 28.95% (11 vehicles), at 14.30 it rose to 50% (19 vehicles), and then the occupancy levels fell back down to 36.84% (14 vehicles) at 15.30. The count at 14.30 was when the highest number of parking spaces were in use at the car park on Thursday.

A similar pattern was seen at the Co-op car park. For the day, the average occupancy level was 45%, and at 13.30 it was 46% (23 vehicles). At 14.30 the occupancy level rose to 82% (41 vehicles), and at 15.30 the occupancy level fell back down to 56% (28 vehicles). Like Over the Bridge car park, the count at 14.30 was when the most number of parking spaces were in use at the Co-op car park for the day.

Impact of Market on parking numbers

The data collectors noted that there were a number of vehicles that were parked for extended periods of time in parking locations on the site of the Market and in the vicinity of the Market. To what extent the figures for the Market Place and those parking locations in the vicinity of the Market were skewed by block parking by traders, shopkeepers and office workers is unknown. But it was noted by the data collectors that it did appear that some of the vehicles were used by traders, shopkeepers or office workers. Furthermore, the data shows that there were a number of parking

locations in close vicinity to the Market that were underused. But when compared to Thursday, the occupancy level was higher.

There is a correlation between the market day and increased occupancy of parking spaces. On both routes there was an increase in use on the Tuesday over Thursday. On route A, the average occupancy level for Tuesday was 50.80%, whereas on the Thursday it was 46.80%. The total number of vehicles counted on Tuesday was 1081, and on the Thursday it was 998. That amounts to 83 less vehicles being counted on Thursday than on Tuesday, or a drop of 8%. The drop on route B was more pronounced. The average occupancy level for Tuesday was 58.31%, and Thursday it was 39.52%. On Tuesday 1558 vehicles were counted, whereas on Thursday 1056 vehicles were counted. That equates to 502 less vehicles being counted, or a drop of 32%.

Looking at the parking locations, the most significant drop can be found in the Over the Bridge car park and South Street car park (also known as library car park).

On Tuesday Over the Bridge had an occupancy level of 72.04%, whereas on Thursday the occupancy level fell down to 32.89%. On Tuesday 219 vehicles were counted throughout the day, whereas the number more than halved for Thursday to 100. That amounts to a drop of 54% in the number of vehicles that were counted.

The drop in use was more pronounced in the South Street car park. On Tuesday, South Street car park had an occupancy level of 51.56%, whereas on the Thursday it fell down to 11.20%. On Thursday 43 vehicles were counted parked in South Street car park, whereas on Tuesday 198 vehicles were counted parked in South Street car park. That equates to a 78% drop in the number of vehicles counted.

Church Street to Mon Ami occupancy level for Tuesday was 21.88 %, with 49 vehicles being counted in the whole day. On Thursday that fell down to 8 vehicles, or an average occupancy level of just 3.57%. That equates to a drop of 84% in the number of vehicles counted.

The Co-op also saw greater level of activity on Tuesday than on Thursday. On Thursday the average occupancy level for the day was 45%, in total 180 vehicles were counted for the day. On Tuesday the occupancy level was 72.50% and a total number of 290 vehicles were counted. That amounts to an additional 110 vehicle being counted, or an increase of 61%.

The only other two parking locations that saw large differences were Alford Manor House and George Hotel. Alford Manor house saw a drop of 46%, from an average occupancy level of 61.88 % to 33.75%. George Hotel saw a drop of 57%, from an average occupancy level of 39.20% to 17.05%.

Parking Facilities Underused

It is important to note that there is some uncertainty about capacity in some of the parking locations, in particular those without markings. Library Front is a prime example of how uncertainty about capacity down to markings has skewed the figures. Though it is noted that there is capacity for sixteen vehicles, there is actually space for seventeen. An ambiguous parking slot in the corner is has sufficient space for a smaller vehicle but may be considered not suitable for a larger vehicle, is readily used. It therefore makes it difficult to calculate the true use of the parking spaces at the location.

Over the two days and the two routes, the average occupancy level was 48.87%. Most noticeably Market Place North was the only parking location that was over occupied on both days and Alford Dentist Practice car park was the only parking location that got an average of above 90% for both days. The only other parking locations to get an average of 90% or above were Commercial Road (90.63%), Library Front (93.75%) and Millers Way (91.25%). All three achieved the high occupancy levels on Tuesday.

Looking at the combined average for parking locations based on results from both days, Market Place North (113.54%) was the only parking location to have an overall average occupancy level of above 100%. Library Front (91.80%) and Alford Dentist Surgery (96.88%) were the only other two parking locations to have a combined average of 90% or above.

Though the figures show parking facilities in Alford are underused, there were parking locations identified in the survey that were on numerous occasions over occupied, had reached full capacity or were close to full capacity. Over the two days, on a total of 84 occasions there were parking locations that were at full capacity (34), close to full capacity (22) or over occupied (28). Therefore, on 87.2% of the counts taken, the parking locations had an occupancy level of below 90%.

Finally, throughout the period of the survey the bike racks were never used.

Recommendations for Future Surveys

The following recommendations are made for future surveys:

- Parking spaces need to be re-estimated to ensure capacities are correct.
- Increase the survey area further out from the area surveyed to take into consideration parking spaces not covered in this survey thereby gaining a greater understanding of parking habits of those within and visiting the town.
- Once the new parking fees and restrictions are enforced a new survey should take place to assess the impact of the

new parking fees and parking restrictions and to assess impact of these changes.

- Consider extending the survey to a Saturday to assess the use of the parking facilities on a weekend.