Bonds End Lane and Main Street Parking

A community meeting was held in Sibford Village Hall on Tuesday 17th October 2023. This is a summary of that meeting.

Background

Over the years, the topic of parking in Main Street and Bonds End Lane has been a regular talking point as there is limited space, an increasing number of cars, and the need for everyone to have access to their properties, including farm and other commercial traffic.

There have continued to be periodical issues amongst parishioners in this part of the village and the Parish Council agreed to try and help find ways of improving things, if possible. It was agreed to hold a meeting to discuss this issue as it has been some time since the last time this happened.

The Discussion

The meeting was well-attended with 24 residents of Bonds End Lane and Main Street (on both sides of the crossroads) joining the session. Parking is usually a very emotive subject with differing views. However, in order to make this a positive discussion, all participants agreed to allow everyone to raise their points in turn and entered the conversation in the spirit of finding solutions, rather than confronting others.

The meeting was facilitated by parish councilors Alan Berks and James Garstin.

The aims of the meeting were to:

1. Identify any issues and concerns that residents wished to raise
2. Generate potential solutions to help alleviate the issues
3. Agree on next steps to take forward solutions

Issues Raised

The following issues and concerns were raised by residents during the discussion:

- Parking on Main Street opposite the top of Bonds End Lane causes problems for other traffic passing

- Parking at the top left of Bonds End Lane outside the Old Rectory:

    - limits the visibility of traffic around the corner when turning right into Main Street

    - sometimes causes issues for turning vehicles such as council trucks as it limits the space available

- Parking opposite the Old Post Office on Main Street can cause problems for large vehicles needing to pass.

- Parking near to residents' pathways can cause problems accessing the property on foot, especially the elderly

- Parking too near the narrow part of Main Street near Cedar Holme can cause problems for large vehicles needing to pass

- Parking too far away from the grass banks towards the middle of the road

- HGV and van traffic for deliveries can delay other residents – people are not always aware that deliveries are taking place

- Many households have multiple cars, many without dedicated parking, so there are more cars than available spaces

- Previously available spaces outside Pond Cottage are no longer used for parking

- Some problems are caused by visitors or tradespeople who don't know the issues that parking in certain areas can cause

- Many of the issues not only affect other residents but also risk impeding emergency service vehicles should they ever need access

- The hedges and shrubs in a number of places on Main Street are poorly maintained by Highways, limiting visibility of road signs and reducing the effective width of the road

- Road markings do little to impact parking behaviour and in many cases become quickly obscured by mud

- Issues arise with delivery vehicles blocking the road or having to turn in difficult places as the drivers don't know where they are going – road names are often not included in delivery addresses by courier companies

Issues Raised (continued)

The following issues and concerns were raised by residents during the discussion:

- Residents of Backside Lane sometimes use Main Street as overflow parking, further limiting available space in Main Street
- At school drop-off and pick-up, there are regularly issues with buses being unable to turn into Main Street at the crossroads as cars park too close to the crossroads
- At the crossroads, a car is regularly parked at a strange angle away from the kerb and building, obstructing the view of traffic exiting Main Street
- If vehicles are parked which then cause a blockage, it is not always easy to find the owner to have it moved

Consensus Views

On reviewing the issues and considering solutions as a group, the following things were generally agreed upon:

- The removal of green areas to provide additional parking, including the Highways space in front of Pond Cottage and The Old Rectory, should be avoided as it would negatively impact the character of that part of the village
- The use of road markings to control parking should be avoided or minimised where possible to avoid damaging the character of the village
- While there is clearly insufficient space for all vehicles which need to be parked, there is likely to be further growth of vehicle numbers, including when younger residents begin to drive. It is reasonable that this should be accommodated but it is likely that additional parking areas will have to be found

Potential Solutions

The following potential solutions were identified by the group. This was an open discussion where all ideas were captured. These were not all accepted as being agreed or feasible but are items for further investigation before a decision is made:

- Main Street **hedgerows to be properly maintained** by Highways to ensure road signs are visible and traffic is not pushed further out into the road in various places
- Placement of a **mirror** at the top of Bonds End Lane so that traffic negotiating the T-junction can see other traffic more easily
- Mark out a **clear space near the pond showing the left and right limits of the usable parking area** so as to prevent obstructing other vehicles. This should be through something in keeping with the environment such as wooden posts, not road markings
- Add **'Keep Clear' road markings opposite the top of Bonds End Lane** (near the frog sign) to prevent cars from parking in that area
- **Widen the road opposite the Old Post Office** to allow more width for parking – possibly reduction of the grass bank
- **Identify potential sites for further parking in the village**, such as extending the Pound Lane layby to add further spaces
    - As part of this, complete an audit of resident vehicle numbers and expectations to inform likely capacity requirements
- **Discuss potential alternatives to the parking of the vehicle outside the Old Rectory** at the top of Bonds End Lane with the residents – but only on the basis that the space may not subsequently be occupied by others
- Develop a **new simple residents' parking scheme** whereby each vehicle has a badge identifying which property the vehicle belongs to. This would be used for residents, visitors and contractors.
- Consider a **driveway-sharing scheme** whereby residents with driveways could make them available to others when not being used if they wished
- **Develop agreed 'Parking Guidelines'** to help residents inform visitors and contractors including:
    - a plan of the area for residents and visitors showing available parking areas and limits
    - details of the parking scheme

Potential Solutions (continued)

- Establish whether it is possible to **update Royal Mail records** to ensure road name is included alongside house name on the Royal Mail address checker used for deliveries
- Establish a local **WhatsApp communications group** or similar to enable residents to easily inform neighbours of planned deliveries
- Request the resident by the crossroads to **cease parking away from the building/pavement**, blocking the road
- Produce **clear guidelines for Sibford primary school parents** and circulate it via the school at the beginning of each term
- Approach Sibford primary school about the potential to **use the school carpark** at weekends and in holidays, for a fee
- If required, **identify potential funding sources** to deliver initiatives including possible the Town Estates Charity
- Residents to **post a note through neighbours' doors** if any road blockages are possible due to deliveries or contractors

Next Steps

- Parish Council to confirm which solutions can be taken forward by the Council – on November 15th
- Identify volunteers amongst the Main Street/Bonds End Lane residents to take forward other initiatives
- Clear, costed proposals to be developed for each solution, to be agreed with residents and the Parish Council at a future Parish Council meeting