

Protecting South Hinksey from undesirable vehicle use

At the Council's April 2016 meeting there was a lot discussion about traffic and parking in the village of South Hinksey. In the course of this, comments could perhaps be grouped around three themes:

- Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) entering the village when they are not supposed to do so
- Non-residents parking in the village as a way of getting into the City without paying for parking
- Inconsiderate parking, by no means necessarily by non-residents!

Heavy Goods Vehicles

Nuisance from HGVs is usually dealt with by weight restrictions, which can be of two types:

- Environmental – to protect an area from HGVs
- Structural – to protect weak structures such as bridges.

OxonCC's website contains information about the two types of restriction, a simplified guide to lorry types and weights, and an online form for reporting weight restriction breaches. These can be viewed here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/weight-restriction-enforcement>.

OxonCC has mounted numerous prosecutions for breaches, generally of structural weight restrictions, for example:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2015/dec/lorry-drivers-fined-weight-restriction-breaches>

Contrasting examples of how two other county councils describe the law and their approach to enforcing it may be viewed here:

- https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/business/trading_standards/weight_restrictions/default.asp
- <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/traffic-management/road-weight-restrictions/>

The village of South Hinksey is appropriate for a weight restriction on environmental but not structural grounds but requires an access exemption for deliveries, for example to the General Elliott.

Enforcement does not appear to be a major consideration as the HGVs that have been entering South Hinksey all appear to have done so, in a sense, unintentionally and a fine would not be needed to deter them from returning.

So if improved signage fails to deal with the problem, the next step would presumably be to look at how changed road design might further discourage HGVs from entering the village.

Outsider parking

There are various types of parking restriction possible but all depend ultimately on a degree of enforcement. Restrictions could, for example, be used to seek to stop vehicles parking in:

- Particular places where they cause a nuisance – for example, by means of parking and/or loading restrictions
- All or most parts of the village unless displaying a resident's or visitor's permit (Residents' Parking Schemes or Controlled Parking Zones).

Much of the concern expressed at the Council's April meeting was about South Hinksey becoming a "park and ride" site for the City, albeit currently on a small scale. So this could be addressed by limiting parking to residents:

- Controlled Parking Zones work by having signs at the outer boundaries of the zone rather than signs everywhere throughout the zone. OxonCC's website, however, explains that only the City currently has any Controlled Parking Zones:
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/controlled-parking-zones-cpzs>
- Residents Parking Schemes operate, for example, in Abingdon and Bicester. Whereas the Bicester one is operated by Cherwell District Council, the Abingdon one is operated by the Town Council, not by VoWHDC.

In either case, OxonCC is the responsible authority with which an agreement has to be reached and enforcement is typically contracted to a company, with issues about the balance between the cost of enforcement and the penalties actually collected.

Inconsiderate parking: painted restrictions

Nuisance parking can, according to the advice we received, be dealt with by Police Community Support Officers but it can also be handled through signage, cones, painted lines and other means.