

REGULATORY COMMITTEE
11th SEPTEMBER 2002

**MERE: PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES AND WAITING
RESTRICTIONS - OBJECTIONS**

Purpose of Report

1. To consider objections to the advertised orders and to recommend implementation of the proposals with certain amendments.

Background

2. In 1995 the then Area Traffic Engineer arranged for the removal of all waiting restrictions in Mere. Currently, the only restrictions remaining on parking are in the time limited on-street bay on the south side of The Square. Additionally, a prohibition of vehicles restriction remains in force to the south side of the Clock Tower island to prevent its use as a through route. Since the removal of the waiting restrictions the Parish Council have expressed concern about the inappropriate parking that takes place and have requested the provision of a formal crossing facility in the village centre.
3. In April 2000 the Environmental Services Sub-Committee agreed to fund a zebra crossing and associated measures once a suitable site for the zebra had been agreed with the Parish Council. Negotiations have been ongoing since that time with a location being agreed in March of this year.
4. In discussion with the Parish Council and local bus operators, a need to improve the bus stop facilities and prevent obstruction of turning buses was also identified. Of particular concern was the school coach movement from Boar Street turning right onto Salisbury Street which requires the coach, when vehicles are parked on the north side of Salisbury Street opposite the junction, to shuttle backwards and forwards to achieve the turn. The opportunity has been taken to include in the advertised proposals measures that will assist in providing a safe turn.
5. The Parish Council has recently achieved funding from Salisbury District Council to enhance the traffic island around the Clock Tower. This work also includes a slight enlargement of the island on its northern and southern sides and the inclusion of an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facility. The advertised proposals include measures to keep the crossing points clear and prevent vehicles from parking.
6. The advertised proposals are shown on the plan at **Appendix 1**.

Objections

7. Fifteen letters of objection have been received. A summary of the points of objection together with officer comments are given in **Appendices 2 and 3**. Full copies are available in the **Members' Room** and from the Environmental Services Department prior to the meeting.
8. One hundred and nine letters of support with one hundred and thirty five signatures have been received. A list of supporters can be found in **Appendix 4**.

Scheme proposals

9. The scheme proposals are intended to provide comprehensive measures to address the concerns raised about inappropriate parking, safety when crossing the road, bus stop provision, and facilitate the enhancement of the Clock Tower island. More detail on the individual aspects of the proposals are given below.
10. **Waiting restrictions** - The proposed restrictions are intended to prevent obstruction of the new crossing points and improve visibility for both pedestrians and drivers. The length of single yellow line on the north side of The Square has been provided to allow overnight parking when traffic flows are lower and are intended to be of benefit to local residents.
11. **Zebra crossing** - The crossing has been sited at the junction of The Square and Salisbury Street and will be of benefit for those wishing to use the bus service and the Post Office. The associated zig zag markings to the west of the crossing extend far enough to keep an area clear for large vehicles turning right out of Boar Street to do so without being obstructed by parked vehicles. The site of the crossing was subject to much discussion with the Parish Council and is in their view the most satisfactory location of those considered.
12. **Bus facilities** - The proposed facility will enable both east and west bound buses to stop at one location. Eastbound buses will undertake a full 360 degree manoeuvre around the small traffic island and continue eastwards along Salisbury Street. The proposed facility replaces the existing bus stop to the south of the Clock Tower island.
13. **South side of Clock Tower island** - As the current bus stop is to be relocated, a loading bay can be provided for the use of businesses on the south side of The Square. The current prohibition order which restricts access to any vehicle loading or unloading and public service vehicles is frequently ignored by motorists who use this route as a short cut into Church Street at undiminished speed. The opportunity has therefore been taken to promote a more onerous restriction that only allows goods vehicles wishing to use the loading bay and vehicles requiring access to off-street parking to enter. Furthermore a one-way order has been promoted so that eastbound vehicles in Church Street cannot pass to the south side of the island but must pass to the west of the island and use the T junction provided.

14. **Clock Tower enhancement** - As mentioned in paragraph 5 above, the Parish Council has recently gained funding from Salisbury District Council to carry out enhancement work of the Clock Tower island. This work will include the provision of uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points on both the north and south sides of the Square. The crossing points will provide dropped kerbs and be highlighted by the provision of timber bollards. Dropped kerbs and timber bollards will also be provided on the footways opposite the island to match. The island is to be widened on both its northern and southern sides. On the north, the widening will take place in the area currently covered by hatched road markings and will be 1.8 metres at its widest point. The widening on the southern side will be 0.75 metre at its widest point and is intended to narrow down the carriageway past the loading bay and make this route less attractive to unauthorised use. From an aesthetic point of view this widening is also required to balance that on the north side of the island.
15. **Time limited on-street parking bay** - No changes are proposed to the current arrangement that allows parking for 30 minutes with a 30 minute return period between the hours of 9.30 am to 4.30 pm, Monday to Saturday.

Summary of Objections

16. The substantive issues raised by the objectors are listed below:
- (i) Parked vehicles currently control vehicle speed, the removal of these vehicles will result in an increase in through-traffic speeds;
 - (ii) Location and likely use of zebra crossing
 - (iii) Mere is an attractive location and yellow lines will spoil it and affect the commercial viability of the village;
 - (iv) Location of the bus stop;
 - (v) Widened pavements will cause difficulties for turning HGVs;
 - (vi) Loading and unloading activities.

Consideration of objections

Parked vehicles and vehicle speeds

17. Whilst it is acknowledged that through-vehicle speeds are controlled by parked vehicles, it is not considered that speeds will increase upon the introduction of waiting restrictions. The scheme proposals allow for the widening of the footway outside the 'Costcutter' stores by approximately 0.5 metre. This, together with the widening of the Clock Tower island, will reduce the available carriageway width. The use of timber bollards to highlight the crossing location has been used to good effect elsewhere in the

County and provides a good visual guide to the presence of a crossing point and will help control vehicle speeds. Similarly, the introduction of a zebra crossing and the kerb realignment required to accommodate it will provide a visual deterrent to drivers whilst allowing pedestrians to cross the carriageway in a controlled environment.

It is considered worthwhile to measure speeds before and after installation of the restrictions to see if any significant increase in speed takes place, and consideration could be given at that time for additional measures. It is also considered that the proposed single yellow line restriction on the north side of The Square could be relaxed from the advertised 9.00 am - 6.00 pm to 9.00 am - 5.00 pm. This could help residents and also accords with the opening hours of the Chinese takeaway located within the length of the proposed restriction.

18. The extent of double yellow line in Castle Street is not considered excessive. In fact a number of letters of support indicated that the lines should extend for much of the length of Castle Street to address parking problems near the Castle Hill garage. On the south side the restrictions extend to cover the access to Talbot Hotel car park. On the north side the lines extend to the visibility cut off point where pedestrians waiting to cross from the north side of The Square at the proposed uncontrolled crossing can see and be seen. Furthermore the lines cover the vehicle access to the Old Ship Hotel.

Location and use of Zebra crossing

19. The proposed zebra crossing is sited at the current location as a result of much consultation and discussion with Mere Parish Council. It is recognised that pedestrians at the western end of the village may not be prepared to walk to the zebra crossing. However, the uncontrolled crossing point to be located by the Clock Tower island is intended to cater for the western side of The Square. The crossing point will include timber bollards to ensure the crossing is visible to both pedestrians and motorists. The buildout sited by the Clock Tower will reduce the carriageway width resulting in a shorter crossing distance.

Environmental and commercial viability

20. As no restrictions exist in the greater area of the centre of Mere vehicles are parked in inappropriate locations for long periods of time creating congestion and manoeuvrability difficulties, particularly for heavy goods vehicles carrying supplies to local stores. As a result of this, vehicle pollution levels are likely to increase. Whilst it is recognised that the proposed measures may create a more urban aspect in the village, it is considered important to control inappropriate parking, improve pedestrian facilities and create a more pleasant environment in which to shop.
21. Mere currently has two car parks located in the vicinity of The Square. The first being close to Barton Lane on the western side of the village. This car park has a capacity of 35 vehicles and is approximately 160m from the Square. The second is on the eastern side of the village located on Salisbury Street between Boar Street and Water Street. This car park has a capacity of 65 vehicles and is approximately 200m from the Square. Both car parks are currently running at around half capacity. It is not considered that either of the car parks in question is located 'some distance' from the Square. There is

provision for between 8 to 10 short stay spaces in the Square itself and these are intended for short trips to the shops. Disabled car users are able to park for up to three hours on single and double yellow lines provided they display their blue badge.

Bus stop

22. Service buses currently stop in the designated bay to the south of the Clock Tower island. When pulling away from the stop, buses turn immediately right around the western end of the Clock Tower island to rejoin the main carriageway. Some of the larger buses have difficulty in completing this turn. Eastbound buses are expected to complete this manoeuvre in reverse. However, due to the difficulty of the left turn into the southern side of the Clock Tower island they choose to stay on the main carriageway and stop on the northern side of The Square wherever there is space to do so between parked cars. This stop position causes difficulty for following vehicles in that due to the bend in the road they are unable to see fully past the bus and proceed, only to be faced by oncoming vehicles. The proposed bus stop will overcome these difficulties and makes use of an under-utilised area of the Highway. There are no plans to introduce a bus shelter at this time although a shelter could be provided in the future by the Parish Council after due consultation with residents. Unlike National Express who use the Salisbury Street car park as a drop off and pick up point for their two services a day, service buses need to load and unload in the centre of the village to maximise the attractiveness of using the bus. It is expected that approximately 20 buses a day, a proportion of which are mini buses, will use the proposed bus stop. The turning circles into and out of the proposed bus stop have been checked and these show that the turns can be achieved. It is considered that the proposed bus stop offers a considerable improvement over the current situation.

Turning and manoeuvring HGVs

23. It is considered that the footway widening at the Clock Tower will have minimal impact on turning vehicles. The introduction of waiting restrictions will keep the Church Street/Castle Street/Manor Road/The Square area clear of parked vehicles which may well serve to ease any turning problems experienced at present by HGVs. Similarly, the restrictions in Boar Street will keep this area clear and allow HGVs and the school bus to negotiate this area safely.

Loading and unloading

24. There are no loading restrictions attached to any of the proposed waiting restrictions and therefore vehicles can load and unload on single and double yellow lines for the period that that activity requires. Disabled blue badge holders are able to park for up to 3 hours on single and double yellow lines whilst displaying their badge.

25. Particular concern has been raised by two of the objectors. Mr Squires of the Fruit Shop, 6 The Square is concerned that as the vehicle he uses for deliveries is less than 3.5 tonnes in weight he will be time-limited to 30 minutes whilst loading. His shop falls within the extent of the existing time-limited bay and vehicles over 3.5 tonnes are exempt from the time limit whilst loading and unloading. Mr Squires claims that he regularly takes 2 to 3 hours to load and unload his vehicle.

To overcome this, a relaxation of the exemption from 3.5 tonnes to 1.5 tonnes would be required to allow Mr Squires to continue to use the bay for periods longer than 30 minutes. Mr Squires has been able to exceed the 30 minutes previously, due to lack of enforcement. However, if the proposals are adopted, a more vigorous enforcement regime is expected from the Salisbury District Ambassadors. It is recommended that an appropriate amendment to allow vehicles of less than 3.5 tonnes to wait whilst loading and unloading is pursued.

26. Mr and Mrs Durkee of 4, The Square are concerned that they will be unable to drive to their frontage to load and unload due to the proposed prohibition of driving which only allows goods vehicles or vehicles gaining access to off-street parking to enter. The only way to overcome this would be to relax the prohibition to allow any vehicle to enter for loading and unloading in the proposed bay. This would also require the bay usage to be relaxed to allow all vehicles to use it rather than just goods vehicles as proposed. Mr and Mrs Durkee have also requested that the proposed double yellow line outside their house be relaxed to a single yellow line to allow overnight parking. The relaxation in the parking Order over a length of approximately 8 metres would be acceptable if the prohibition of access is relaxed to allow all classes of vehicle to access the length. The 8 metre length would be available for anyone to park, not just Mr and Mrs Durkee. However, the relaxation of the prohibition of access to permit all vehicles will reduce the effect of the Order and is likely to result in more abuse.

Summary of recommended actions

27. (i) Vehicle speeds be monitored before and after implementation of the waiting restrictions;
- (ii) The advertised single yellow line restriction be relaxed from 9.00 am - 6.00 pm to 9.00 am - 5.00 pm Monday to Saturday;
- (iii) An appropriate amendment to allow vehicles of less than 3.5 tonnes to wait whilst loading and unloading be pursued for the existing time-limited on-street parking bay;
- (iv) The advertised double yellow line adjacent to No 4, The Square be relaxed to single yellow line with operational hours of 9.00 am - 5.00 pm Monday to Saturday;
- (v) The proposed prohibition of driving order and the use of the loading bay be relaxed to permit any vehicle use.

Conclusion: Options Considered

28. Implement the proposals as advertised.
29. Implement the proposals as proposed and amended as recommended in paragraph 27 above.
30. Abandon the proposals.

Recommendation

31. That:-

- (i) The proposals be implemented as proposed subject to the amendments recommended in paragraph 27 above.
- (ii) The objectors be informed accordingly.

Reason for Recommendation

32. It is considered that the proposals as amended will still achieve the overall aims of the scheme, namely removal of inappropriate parking, increasing pedestrian safety, improving bus stop provision and facilitating the enhancement of the Clock Tower island.

RICHARD J. LANDER

Director of Environmental Services

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Letters of objection

Environmental impact of the Proposal contained in this Report:

The introduction of yellow lines and associated signs may be considered to have a negative environmental impact but they will allow measures to be put in place which will improve the environment generally in the centre of Mere.