

## **Waiting Restriction Review, Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Common**

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A report by the Borough Council's Head of Communities and Wellbeing to the Tunbridge Wells Joint Transportation Board on 20 April 2015

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### **Introduction**

1. At the January 2014 meeting, members of this Board endorsed proposals for the introduction of new areas of time limited waiting in Castle Road and Mount Edgumbe Road.
2. The restriction included an extension of existing Zone A permit parking into part of the newly restricted area.
3. Included within the recommendation was a request for a review of the effectiveness of the new restrictions after 6 months of operation.
4. This report provides a summary of that review and proposes minor amendments to the restrictions as a consequence.

### **Background Information**

5. Restrictions were imposed on a number of roads around and across Tunbridge Wells Common following a request from the Commons Conservators. The issues raised included hazards at junctions, congestion caused by long stretches of parked vehicles, damage to the edge of the Common and roadside parking continually occupied by long stay users to the detriment of visitors.
6. Following advertisement of proposals and consideration of objections, this Board endorsed the introduction of a range of restrictions at its January 2014 meeting. These included stretches of double yellow lines at critical locations and a 4 hour limit on waiting in Mount Edgumbe Road and part of Castle Road.
7. The new restrictions came into effect in June 2014 and, as per members wishes that we review the restriction, parking behaviour has been observed in the following months. This has included visits on a frequent basis to establish general levels of use, a period of more detailed survey during the late summer of 2014 and contact with residents.
8. In addition to observation of the roads where restrictions had been imposed, visits were also made to other roads where it was thought long stay parkers may migrate to. This was in an effort to determine whether there had been any significant adverse impact elsewhere.

## **Parking Review**

9. Observation in Castle Road and Mount Edgcumbe Road after introduction of the new restrictions showed, much as expected, that it took several weeks before casual visitors realised that parking space was more widely available than it had been for many years. As the summer progressed, better use was being made of the space and detailed surveys were undertaken in late September to better understand the patterns of use. The appendix to this report summarises the findings during the last full week of September 2014.
10. A significant concern during the lead up to introduction of new restrictions was where those vehicles displaced would subsequently park. To that end, general observations were carried out in a number of roads prior to the changes and similar observations were carried out in subsequent months.
11. In addition to this, comments have been made by residents of roads where parking is thought to have become worse. It is apparent from what has been seen during visits and the comments received, that levels of on street long stay parking have increased most noticeably in the Molyneux Park Road/Earls Road/Court Road area. Restrictions are proposed as part of another report on this agenda which cover the more problematical instances of bad parking. In the longer term, the emerging parking strategy will tackle the issue in greater depth.
12. Other areas, such as Clarendon Way, appear to have had some increase in non-resident parking but parking on-street does have a seasonal element so the actual change may be minimal.

## **Other Comments**

13. Residents of Castle Road have expressed concern about a number of issues following the change in parking restrictions. Most notably, they have stated that the restriction introduced does not reflect what they thought had been agreed at JTB.
14. An officer suggestion at the meeting to the effect that the whole of Castle Road could possibly be covered by the same restriction, as opposed to the proposed limited section, was taken as having been agreed. In fact, no Member moved any alteration and the proposals as originally drafted were endorsed at that time.
15. To make the requested change would involve re-drafting the traffic regulation order to provide for a resident exemption within the whole road. This is possible, but it is recommended that this be done as part of other planned changes to areas of permit parking in Zone A. These are proposed to be advertised during the spring.
16. Comments have also been made about increased speed and non compliance with the No Entry signs at the Mount Edgcumbe Road junction. Since the Borough has no powers in respect of either of these matters, they have been forwarded to KCC Highways.

17. The Commons Conservators have expressed satisfaction with the new restrictions, saying that damage to the edge of the Common can now be repaired and that the greater availability of parking has been of benefit to visitors.
18. Aside from complaints received from residents of roads where extra parking has occurred since the restrictions were imposed, one comment was made to the effect that Zone C permit holders now have greater difficulty parking in this area because Mount Edgumbe Road previously offered free all day parking – Zone C abuts Zone A at the London Road/Mount Edgumbe Road junction - with a specific request that the 4 hour limit only apply Monday to Friday. It is not, however, considered that such a change would be appropriate at the present time, but this point can be considered again when the parking strategy is agreed and establishes priorities for further changes to zones and permits.

### **Conclusion**

19. The restrictions introduced last summer appear to have achieved the stated aims in that less damage is occurring to the Common, repairs can be made and there is a turnover of parking which better suits visitors to the area.
20. Adjustments to the restrictions requested by local residents can be accommodated.
21. It was always expected that some long stay parking would migrate to other areas and this has possibly happened. Proposals outlined in a separate report are aimed at dealing with the worst aspects, but it is anticipated that further restrictions may be necessary in the future. Adoption of a parking strategy will help to deal with the less urgent parking issues.

### **Recommendation**

22. That the report be noted and an amendment to the permit parking arrangements for Castle Road be endorsed.

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### **APPENDICES**

- APPENDIX A** - Castle Road Survey Summary
- APPENDIX B** - Mount Edgumbe Road Survey Summary