

# Walberswick Common Lands Charity

Founded 1901 - Registered Charity No. 206095

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30 November 2017

Mrs Mary Mitson-Woods  
Clerk to Walberswick Parish Council  
Rose Farm Cottage  
Mutton Lane  
Brandeston  
Suffolk  
IP13 7AR

Dear Mary

## **INTEGRATED TRAFFIC & PARKING REVIEW**

The purpose of this letter is to propose that the Parish Council works collaboratively with the Charity and Walberswick Car Parks Limited (WCPL) to undertake an integrated traffic and parking review for Walberswick. This is a subject we have discussed informally with Parish Councillors and our County Councillor over the past months. We believe that with the winter here, now is the right time for such a review to commence.

### **Background**

The Charity first started providing public car parking on its land in 1935. Since then car parking has been organised by the Charity in a variety of ways; via private lessees, via arrangement with Suffolk County Council and even post WWII by the British Legion. In 1996 a traffic review was conducted, similar to the one now proposed, which led to yellow lines being installed in the Village under the leadership of the Parish Council and the Charity forming WCPL.

From the launch of WCPL the Trustees' policy with regard to parking has been "*to strike a balance between profit and traffic management*". That policy remains unchanged today and a good example of that policy in action is the new pay & display machines. The 1996 review recommended that pay & display machines be installed. This was primarily to avoid congestion caused by motorists queuing to pay attendants. At that time the machines were not feasible however subsequent technical advances have made this possible. Therefore when the WCPL Directors proposed the move to pay & display, the Trustees were fully supportive of this investment. While the machines have not been without their teething problems during their first season, the Trustees firmly believe that a combination of

attendants and pay & display provides the best overall solution because it automates the collection of cash and focuses attendants on safety, parking and customer service.

### **Why a review?**

Since the last review in 1996 the number of cars on the road in the UK has risen from 22 million to 32.1 million, an increase of 46%. Just as important, the number of people over 65 has risen by 13%. This means for Walberswick that there are 46% more cars capable of making day trips to the Village, plus 13% more people who are just as likely to come during a weekday as a week-end. All of which adds up to more traffic. In 1996 if there were six cars parked outside St Andrew's Church, there are now nine.

Anecdotally, via the WCPL attendants, there appears to be a growing trend towards parking in Walberswick in order to visit Southwold. Whether or not this is correct, we do know that over 13,000 people used the footpath from Walberswick to Southwold in August alone, the majority of whom would have come by car.

On average over 30,000 cars a year use the WCPL car parks. On a busy summer's day when the car parks are full, it requires 940 traffic movements in order to fill and empty the car parks once. The highest recorded daily number of cars in 2017 was 561, meaning 1,122 traffic movements that day, plus movements within the rest of the Village.

WCPL has attempted to reduce illegal and dangerous parking during the summer season by putting no-waiting cones along The Green. This has largely been successful, but a similar move on the dangerous Potter's Wheel corner was consistently thwarted by motorists moving the cones. Embarrassing for us, often by the Charity's previous tenant of the Potter's Wheel! We have lobbied Suffolk County Council for double yellow lines on this corner, so far without success.

For all the reasons outlined above we believe that 21 years later, the time is right for a further review.

### **Recommendation**

Our recommendation to the Parish Council is:

1. A working group be formed comprising representatives of WPC, WCLC and WCPL ("the sponsors").
2. If there are any individuals within the Village who have special skills in this area they be invited onto the working group.
3. Advice be obtained from Suffolk County Council Highways specialists.
4. A target date of 31 March 2018 be set for a first draft report to the sponsors.
5. Following feedback from the three sponsors a final report be presented to the Village for consultation and subsequent implementation.

We trust that this proposal will be acceptable to the Councillors and we look forward to your response.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Darkins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**James Darkins**  
Chairman of Trustees