

Parking pleas 'being ignored'

Disgust over restrictions 'stifling' town

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A town councillor says that over-zealous painting of yellow lines is not working for residents or businesses in Tenterden.

Town councillor Sue Ferguson, is calling for Ashford Borough Council (ABC) to suspend parking charges for a month to create a climate for growth.

Her comments come in the wake of the collapsed scheme for Bridewell Lane Car Park, which had envisaged a system of business permits at a parking rate of £2 per day.

A member of the Tenterden Parking Forum, which consults with ABC on parking matters, Cllr Ferguson said that the business scheme was not attractive to ABC because it would have meant the council losing money.

Cllr Ferguson said: "There is so much wrong with parking in this town that it's depressing.

"The parking forum has been going for a couple of years and it isn't doing any good. "We are just not getting on with it.

"There is far too much intervention with parking. "Ashford [borough council] is keen to put yellow lines in but they are not making life easy for residents, shoppers or workers."

Smallhythe Road resident Sue Denton says that parking restrictions make her life difficult. "With a single yellow line and

parking restrictions outside her home from 8am to 6pm, Mrs Denton had been parking in nearby Austens Orchard until ABC painted double yellow lines in the road on January 11, leaving just three places where residents can park.

The shop manager said: "When I brought my house 20 years ago I could park outside 24/7 and I did.

"Now I have nowhere to park and must cross the High Street to Westwell Court or further on to Rogersmead.

"I worry that if I park in Westwell Court it will soon start to upset residents there, but I can't afford to put my car in a car park all day so I don't have a choice."

The 53-year-old wrote to ABC with her concerns when the scheme was proposed only to receive a reply the day after the lines had been painted in Austens Orchard, stating that they were necessary to allow large vehicles to turn in the road.

She said: "My house has been devalued because there is nowhere to park and my insurance premiums will go up because I have to park away from home."

She added: "I think residents here have been completely ignored [by ABC] and I'm quite disgusted by what has happened."

Cllr Ferguson said: "Tenterden is a vibrant town but parking restrictions are stifling it.

"I would like to see a complete suspension of parking restrictions for a month to see what positive effects it has."

What do you think would solve Tenterden's parking problems? Write to Kentish Express, 34-36 North Street, Ashford TN24 BJR or email kentishexpress@thekmggroup.co.uk



Cllr Sue Ferguson wants parking fees suspended; rubbish lorries struggled to get between parked cars in Eastwell Barn Mews, where yellow lines have since been painted



While a business parking scheme failed to materialise at Bridewell Lane car park, workers in the town are parking, with trepidation, in residential streets



YELLOW WARMLY WELCOMED

In some parts of Tenterden the introduction of yellow lines has been welcomed by residents who were fed-up with visitors and people working in the town centre parking outside their homes.

Last summer we reported that residents plagued by inconsiderate commuter parking had said new yellow lines had made a huge difference. After years of campaigning, they have parking restrictions in roads including Eastwell Barn Mews, Turners Avenue and Haffenden Road.

The Rev Jolyon Vickers, of Eastwell Barn Mews, said at the time: "The lines have made a huge difference to our quality of life."

'WE'RE WORKING ON IT'

An Ashford Council spokesperson said: "Officers from our parking services team will ensure that Cllr Clokie, chair of the Tenterden Parking Forum, and Cllr Bernard Heyes, the portfolio holder, are aware of the views expressed by Cllr Sue Ferguson.

"However, these are her personal opinions and should be addressed through the Forum, which has been working productively with the council on various Tenterden parking projects. The council will not be commenting outside of the established, formal process."

Sympathy as workers face risk of anger

Concern over the problems created by shop and office workers parking in residential streets was expressed on the Tenterden Forum last week by Billintheden.

He posted: "Over the past week I have spoken to some people who work in the town.

"During general chat the subject of parking comes up. These people like working here but hate having to park on the road where, unfortunately, they get abuse and conflict.

"They know residents don't like it and settle off hoping that no one will catch them.

"During the day if you walk around the public and private car parks they have plenty of spaces. One worker today said they are waiting for a permit scheme but it hasn't materialised.

"I don't think the council even know how many cars on average come to the town due to people who work here. Wouldn't that be a start?"

"The council appear to be ignoring the problem and making it worse with their obsession with yellow lines. "I do not hold the answer but as a community we may be able to find a solution.

"Car share schemes, park and ride, driveway rental - if you're not using your drive 8am to 5pm why not let someone else?"

"Removal of grass area along A28 to provide spaces, free parking spaces allocated to businesses.

"These people keep our town businesses open."