

Residents rally round to support call for parking

by Rachael Woods

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The plea of a councillor for an urgent solution to Tenterden's parking crisis has struck a chord with many residents.

Cllr Sue Ferguson spoke out in last week's Kentish Express in response to a flurry of comments posted on the Tenterden Town Forum, that Ashford Borough Council's (ABC) parking restrictions in the town were working against residents and businesses.

Concerns were raised about office and shop workers having to park further out of town to find a space and the hostility they faced from homeowners who did not want their street clogged up with commuters' cars.

Residents also complained about being unable to park outside their own homes as more double yellow lines are painted on Tenterden's streets.

Sue Denton, who lives in Small-hythe Road and who always parked her car in nearby Austens Orchard, said, double yellow lines painted there on January 11, meant she would have to cross the High Street to Westwell Court to park. The 53-year-old complained that ABC had not taken her views into account.

Cllr Ferguson, a member of the Tenterden Parking Forum, also expressed dismay that a scheme that would have allowed busi-



Cllr Sue Ferguson and Caldecott Foundation chairman Richard Harvey

ness users to park for £2 per day at Bridewell Lane car park had collapsed and she called for a suspension of parking regulations for a trial period to free up the town.

Richard Harvey, who lives in Tenterden, has written to congratulate Cllr Ferguson for highlighting the issue.

The businessman dismissed ABC's claim that it has been

working productively on solving parking issues and said its insistence on applying the same parking rules in Ashford as Tenterden was misguided.

He said: "Tenterden and Ashford are entirely different communities, with different parking needs. Tenterden's economy is tourism and shopping-related, and needs much more parking than is available. Ashford has a

greater proportion of office-based and manufacturing activity, and is surrounded by large industrial estates, where parking is easy."

Another letter writer Philip Bradshaw, of Stone-in-Oxney, condemned ABC's response to Cllr Ferguson's criticism, describing it as defensive and bureaucratic, adding that urgent solutions were needed.

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Decision backed by forum

In a more detailed response ABC has defended its decision to not pursue the Bridewell Lane business scheme stating: "The [Bridewell Lane] car park is well-used and this has helped to relieve pressure on town centre streets and residential roads, therefore we believe introducing further concessions at this time may lead to frustration when people cannot find a space. It is important there is enough parking for a mix of users in order not to deter people from visiting Tenterden."

The ABC spokesman said the decision not to go ahead with the Bridewell Lane scheme had been backed by Tenterden Parking Forum.

Countering criticism about new double yellow lines, the council said any such decisions were publicised and subject to consultation.

The spokesman added: "We understand the concerns some Tenterden residents may have over specific parking problems and we are happy to receive information direct from those affected."