

Framlingham Parking Strategy Update

In 2018 Framlingham Town Council agreed that a new strategic approach was required to help solve the growing problems with parking in the town.

Following a number of surveys and consultations with both local businesses and the public the Town Council started to look for the answers to a problem that would, as a result of the growth in the town's population, get worse as time passed.

There are four basic reasons why we have parking problems and they are not unique to Framlingham:

- Insufficient 'Off Street' parking capacity
- Lack of a 'town wide approach' to parking management
- Abuse of parking regulations
- Lack of law enforcement

The 6 car parks in Framlingham are all held under different ownership and therefore different approaches to parking management, tariffs and operating rules for enforcement have been implemented. To try and implement a plan that required all owners to 'buy into' a common approach was the first challenge. The 6 car parks being Market Hill, Fore Street, The Elms, The Co-op, St Michael's and the Castle (English Heritage)

Being able to enforce 'off street' parking regulations first requires a clear preference from the car parks owner, as to how they would like to 'manage' their car park. Only 1 of the 6 car parks in Framlingham was designated to be a 'Public designated Car Park' thereby allowing the local authority to enforce regulations; that was Fore Street. The new arrangements include Fore Street, Market Hill and The Elms as 'Public designated Car Parks' and the Co-op will work alongside the Town Council and the local authority to enforce their own regulations with their own security personnel.

St Michael's and English Heritage will continue to operate independently and not be included in either pay and display or CPE.

Identifying opportunities to expand capacity has proven very difficult and it is no secret that the idea of expanding the Elms car park was evaluated and proven possible but met with the objection of Historic England, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and a number of residents interested in protecting the environment in and around the Mere.

Lack of 'Off Street' parking capacity has meant more people parking on the streets, both in the town centre and out of town and we can see the growing trend to ignore parking regulations as enforcement by the Police is virtually non-existent.

Parking surveys and questionnaires identified that over 40% of the current 'off street' parking capacity is taken up by local businesses employees working in the town.

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) is in the process of being introduced nationwide – this involves the transfer of powers from the Police to the Local Authority, thereby decriminalising parking offences and making them a civil offence. Legislation allowing this to happen is currently in preparation and, if on time, CPE will be introduced in Framlingham for both ‘Off Street’ and ‘On Street’ parking at the end of this year.

A pre requisite for the transfer of responsibilities from the Police to the Local Authority is the necessity to complete and publish an inventory of all current traffic/parking/unloading restrictions. Framlingham Town Council has completed this work in readiness for CPE implementation.

Suffolk Coastal District Council was our Local Authority, so we could not do very much without their guidance, involvement and eventual approval. Running in parallel with our needs was the planned merger with Waveney District Council to form East Suffolk Council, which was completed in April 2019, this has undoubtedly led to delays in implementation but now we are working closely with ESC and their new team.

We have now agreed with ESC and gained consensus among the independent car park owners in Framlingham that the following strategic approach will be implemented in Framlingham towards the end of this year:

Increase overall parking capacity wherever possible, both in town and on the edge of town.

Manage and enforce the ‘free for 2 hours’ parking policy in agreement with the Co-op

Introduce, manage and enforce pay and display scale of charges on The Elms car park with the same tariff structure as that to be implemented on the Fore Street car park.

Introduce, manage and enforce a ‘free for 1 hour’ timed ticket display policy with a fixed tariff for the second hour and a 2 hour-no return policy on Market Hill

Introduce Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) throughout the town – for both ‘off street’ designated public car parks and ‘on street’ parking, where and when required.

Create additional car parking capacity at Framlingham Sports Club with low cost, permit only parking for employees of Framlingham businesses.

Install new and improved signs for all car parks and new ‘on street’ parking restrictions.

Implement ‘controlled parking permits’ for residents in the inner town zone of Castle Street, Double Street, Fore Street and part of Fairfield Road as part of a shared use parking scheme including ‘on street’ pay and display.

Where we are now – June 2019

- Elms car park extension – halted
- Additional parking capacity continues to be explored
- Framlingham Sports Club- discussions continue, Memorandum of Understanding for business employee parking is in preparation, pathway and lighting is to be evaluated
- Co-op agreement – independent enforcement of ‘2 hour policy’

- Tariffs agreed for Fore Street/Market Hill and The Elms
- Service Level Agreement with ESC/SCN Ltd in preparation for implementation of CPE – ‘Off Street’
- CPZ – Controlled Parking Zone – in discussion with ESC prior to public consultation
- All financials relating to pay and display understood and agreed – parking machines on order
- Draft ‘On-Street parking proposals completed December 2018 and submitted to ESC for comment prior to Framlingham Town Council approval/public consultation.

Framlingham Town Council June 2019