

PUBLIC CAR PARKING IN ALBRIGHTON

In the Shropshire Core Strategy, it is stated that Albrighton aspires to being a “Small Market Town”, - as opposed to its status 50 years ago as a commuter village feeding initially the West Midlands conurbation, and later Telford New Town, and with the arrival of the motorway, access to northern towns.

The Shropshire Core Strategy plans 200 to 500 new houses in Albrighton by 2026. The siting of these houses will be beyond normal walking distances from the services provided in the main streets

All this will happen irrespective of what happens at Cosford.

To become a “Small Market Town”, Albrighton has to attract custom from surrounding villages, and this can only be done by having high quality shops and businesses in the main streets, **with adequate free public parking.**

Later this year, the housing development in Burnhill Green will be completed. We want to attract the new residents to support the businesses in Albrighton. The first development of 80 houses at the eastern side of the village beyond The Old Smithy, is planned for building to start in 2011. **There will be insufficient public parking in the village centre to cope with this.**

A list of potential sites for additional parking is attached. **None are easy options**, and the cost per additional parking space is going to be far beyond that which can be afforded by the Parish Council. A great deal of co-operation will also be required by several other bodies and owners – and it may well be that compulsory purchase powers may need to be invoked.

It should be noted that none of these are being proposed here but they are sites which, after a first look, appear to be feasible and worth further examination. Some may not be real options for practical, or legal or other reasons, but in order to start the discussion going it was felt that it would help the debate to focus on possible locations which in turn may identify other more practical solutions.

Albrighton businesses already suffer because there is already insufficient public parking. It is only going to get worse. That is why urgent discussion and consultation should be carried out as soon as possible to find ways to resolve the situation.

A Land behind Jubilee Cottages on village green

Access may be possible beside The Harp. It may not be necessary to tarmac the site. There are eco-friendly solutions for light vehicle standing using plastic track which allows the grass to grow through and drainage not to be affected.

The Harp has tentative plans to install a micro brewery which would inevitably increase its custom. The site would provide off street parking for its Jazz Club 90 events on Sundays and Tuesdays. More importantly it would provide off street parking for all the businesses at the eastern end of the village, and so attract custom into the village. It may also be possible to encourage householders to park here instead of being unsightly on the village green area.

B Put a small layby on the village green for 3 or 4 parking places.

This would not be popular, but is an option if “A” is delayed.

C Involves the purchase of the old building behind the empty Barclays Bank and demolishing it.

This would provide up to 8 additional parking places for shoppers to Station Road.

D This requires the purchase of a derelict garage and adjacent waste land.

This would provide an extra 3 parking places in the Crown Car Park.

E This requires the purchase of these old garages.

F This requires the removal of the hedge.

This will provide an extra metre width to the Crown Car Park, and enable additional parking spaces to be provided.

G This requires the removal of the existing trees and lawn

It is suggested that replacement trees of a more suitable type eg. Sorbus, be planted adjacent to the wall fronting the High Street, releasing more land for parking. It may be possible to have an access lane to pass the front door to Aroma restaurant.

H Re-site the floodlighting masts.

None of these are easy options and involve a great deal of cost, but this is the most important site in the village centre, and every extra parking space will provide the most benefit to the village.

J This involves the re-alignment of the footpath deeper into the Ashfields Green Space.

The idea is to deepen the existing parking area to allow end-on parking and adding extra spaces, in a similar manner to that at the top of Station Road. By making the service road one way, similar provision can be made, with places for the householders, but still leaving additional public parking spaces. The trees would remain in situ.

This is one of the more cost effective solutions.

K The caravan site behind Gibson’s garage.

Access is presently a problem. The viability of this site is probably dependant on the expected life of the temporary homes. It might be possible to access this from the Crown Car Park, by removing one mobile home. The Methodists will probably not be willing to have a one way access from the High Street.

Again, the green site could be preserved using products which will support cars, and so not need new drainage solutions, as in option A. Ideally, the removal of the mobile homes marked on this plan would make this a more attractive proposal, by allowing two way traffic into the Crown Car Park, and one way access to Station Road.