



DRAFT response by TWG of the RTW Town Forum to the consultation on the proposed alterations to restrictions within Permit Parking Zones A and C

(TWBC consultation 15 December 2016 – 6 January 2017)

The Transport Working Group of the RTW Town Forum has prepared this response which has been endorsed by the Management Committee of the Forum. Town Forum members have been encouraged to make representations on their own behalf.

The RTW Town Forum welcomes the improvement to residents parking arrangements within Royal Tunbridge Wells that help to redress the current imbalance between the needs of residents and other drivers parking on street in the town centre.

The increase in resident permit holder only parking times is welcomed as it recognises the inconvenience caused to residents of the current arrangements, particularly as it

- Recognises the need for extended permit holder only times in the morning and evening Monday to Saturday to enable residents who vacate a parking bay during the day to have a better chance of finding a permit holder only parking bay on return from work, for example.
- Introduces permit holder only times Sundays from 11am to 3pm
- Increases permit holder only parking times that go beyond the proposals in the TWBC Parking Strategy 2016-26 towards meeting the Objective OB1
- Standardises permit holder only parking times across these two zones to improve consistency in regulations.

However, the TWG of the RTW Town Forum remains concerned that these changes alone are insufficient to curtail drivers from 'cruising around to find a free space' which both adds to congestion and pollution. There is an increasingly strong case to remove all 'free' on street parking places in the zones A and C, (and B, D and G) to reduce congestion and limit frustration of residents. In particular:

1. Newton Road, York Road, Dudley Road should be resident permit holder only parking throughout to limit circulating traffic from exiting directly into the 'shared space' area (nearby in the case of York Road) and creating a potential additional hazard to pedestrians.
2. Make all roads in zones A and C that are cul-de-sacs residents parking bays only. This would prevent drivers entering these roads looking for free spaces and having to turn around or back out when none are found. This would include roads leading off Grove Hill Road which are all cul-de-sacs.

We are also concerned that these proposed changes must retain existing restrictions such as 'one hour no return parking for non-permit holders in between these times, no return within two hours' for residents parking bays in Zones A and C, and on single yellow lines.

We also urge that these changes should only be considered part of a package of measures needed to address the imbalance in the needs of residents permit holders over others who want to park for free. We argue that there is considerable benefit from making other changes at the same time.

In our response to the TWBC Parking Strategy 2015-26 we highlighted some of the key issues surrounding residents parking in the RTW town centre.

- a) Reduce the size of the parking zones to enable residents to park nearer their homes*
- b) Remove 'free' on-street parking in the central zone/s and elsewhere extend the restrictions on 'free' parking..*
- c) Limit the issue of residents permits to align with the number of available spaces within the zone, and/or offer residents car park season ticket permits as an alternative (see 4.4 below)*
- d) Residents parking permits should also cover overnight and long term parking in MSCPs. (see 4.4 below) . Consider differential rates for residents parking if they choose to not park on the street but park in the car parks instead.*
- e) Abolish or reduce fees for Sunday parking in car parks to reduce congested on-street parking (outside the proposed no 'free' parking zone/s)*
- f) Enforce zero tolerance of pavement parking on red bricks in the conservation area and use enforcement and parking income to help fund repairs these historic features in RTW.*

We welcome some action on b) and d) and feel that some others could be addressed as part of these changes to Zones A and C, and other zones in due course.

We welcome the proposal made earlier to offer holders of residents permits in Zones A, B, C and D, free overnight parking in certain town centre car parks. We hear that this offer has been welcomed and some residents have acquired parking permits specifically to take advantage of this benefit.

Pavement parking continues to concern the RTW Town Forum as it hinders pedestrians in their lawful use of pavements. The RTW Town Forum has consistently called for zero tolerance of pavement parking, and particularly on the red bricks in the conservation area and beyond due to the damage caused and potential risk to pedestrians. We suggest that enforcement is increased and fines and parking income be used to fund repairs.

Residents have a number of other concerns related to the operation of the parking permit system in their particular streets in Zones A and C. We understand that several groups of residents and individuals have submitted their own consultation responses which highlight issues of concern, and we have encouraged them to respond to the consultation.

RTW TOWN FORUM
www.townforum.org.uk

6 January 2017