

# A residents parking scheme for Cotham South

## Sustainable Redland Briefing Sheet Oct 11



No meters



Meters



Prices quadrupled

### Summary

Residents of Cotham have asked for a residents parking scheme in their area extending on from the existing, and successful, Kingsdown scheme. Bristol City Council is therefore consulting on proposals for this to happen.

Sustainable Redland believes that well-managed residents parking is a positive and important step which;

- relieves traffic congestion (one cost of 'free' parking is the cruising vehicles searching for a space. These make up 30% to 40% of traffic. With managed parking this melts away)
- improves streets for walking, cycling, and conviviality
- ensures good availability of short term parking for customers of local businesses, with first 15 minutes free
- balances as fairly as possible the competing needs of long term residents, student residents, commuters, local businesses, visiting service providers and social visitors
- improves provision for people with disabilities
- makes it easier and safer for children to travel independently.
- improves the visual appearance of our streets and public spaces.

Kingsdown residents are strongly in favour now that their parking scheme is in operation. A great deal has been learned from the Kingsdown experience and the detail of how to implement a good scheme for the benefit of residents and businesses has improved as a result.

Doing it right, as well as it being the right thing to do, depends on detail. We encourage residents and businesses to read the information, attend meetings if they can, and speak to Council officers about concerns or suggestions.

Inevitably there will be displacement of parking into neighbouring streets. This will last only until the extension of residents parking to further areas. Patch by patch implementation is necessary in order to get consultation and detail right.

## **Why have we produced this briefing sheet?**

A more sustainable transport system for Bristol is a key concern for Sustainable Redland. It has also come out as a top priority in our Neighbourhood Partnership (Bishopston, Cotham Redland) and also in citizens and residents surveys across Bristol.

We therefore want to support the City Council's implementation of residents parking, and we want to help residents and businesses to be involved in shaping the fine detail for the benefit of all.

## **Why have residents parking schemes?**

Parking in some areas of Bristol is so dire that residents cannot even load and unload near their house, emergency vehicle access is often blocked, driveways are frequently blocked, and shops suffer because customers cannot park. Commuters bring vehicles into the city rather than using park and ride, car share, buses, bikes or walking. Permit parking schemes for the worst affected areas are the best way of balancing the competing needs of residents and commuters.

A staggering amount of precious city space is currently lost, being occupied by rows and rows of cars waiting for the occasion when their owner happens to need them. Regulation and management of parking is one element of creating a better system. Use of car-clubs, car share schemes, better bus and suburban train services, and walking and bikes for short trips, will reduce the need for multiple cars per household dramatically, and will reclaim significant amounts of space back to walking and cycling routes, and for conviviality. In many parts of Bristol it is feasible to have access to a car when you need it, without the burden of owning and maintaining one.

It took just 27 years from when the first mass produced Model T Ford rolled off the assembly line in 1908, until the first use of parking meters in Oklahoma City 1935. Europe survived without meters until 1958, when the first was installed outside the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square (see picture on page 1 - the price increase was necessary to achieve an occupancy rate that enabled short term visitors to find a space).

Since then the adoption of a 'systems approach' to managing parking has been steadily gaining ground. Several European cities such as Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Zurich and Freiberg have led the way. Combined with other key measures including designing cities for walking, providing reliable efficient, affordable public transport, controlling vehicle speeds and access, and making bicycling safe and easy, this has shown how cities can function without becoming gridlocked, car-bound, polluted, tarmac wastelands.

In 2004 in the US Donald Shoup wrote his classic book 'The High Cost of Free Parking'. Every form of transport has vehicles (eg trains engines and carriages), rights of way (eg rail tracks) and terminal capacity (eg train stations). With cars, the provision of terminal capacity ie car parking spaces,

is far greater than with other modes because for each car you need a space at home, near work, and near services. By providing ever more 'free' parking, instead of factoring it in as a direct cost to the transport user, you create a classic 'system trap' that stimulates sole occupancy car use above all other modes, leading to further pressures on parking and a never ending need for yet more parking provision.

Shoup estimated that in the US in 2002 the cost of installing and maintaining this terminal capacity for cars was between \$135 and \$386 billion, all born by the public through taxes or built into prices. For comparison the US defence budget in 2002 was \$349 billion.

Bristol City Council is following best practice by getting a grip on parking. The key measures include provision of real time information for drivers telling them where there is car parking space, consistent pricing of all on-street parking and off-street parking with prices varying by time of day, efficient and fair enforcement, and policies by City businesses that incentivise the least-congesting travel modes by employees. Businesses that provide 'free' spaces to employees are undermining progress. Many City employers, like the NHS and the Environment Agency, have stopped giving 'free' parking except for staff with particular needs due to disabilities. The proposed 'workplace levy', which charges businesses that provide more than ten spaces, is an important mechanism for tackling congestion.

Experience from other cities shows that parking along commercial frontages needs to be variably priced by time of day so that the quick stop by customers is always possible. At present in Bristol we allow much of this valuable commercial frontage space to be occupied 'free' by vehicles that can stay there indefinitely, thus losing the opportunity for rapid turnover shoppers parking.

## **What is the history of residents parking in Bristol?**

Bristol City Council introduced the residents parking scheme for Kingsdown in January 2011. It covers some 2,800 homes and 300 businesses. Initially, the proposal for a scheme attracted numerous objections submitted to the City Council, but many of these were from people outside Kingsdown and some were fraudulent. A survey of people actually resident in the area was finely balanced with 203 residents in favour, 200 against. Once the scheme was fully implemented the residents survey was repeated. Responses were that 146 support the scheme, 60 would like minor changes, and 10 were against the scheme. Cabot also has residents parking and support there has gone from 56% before, to 79% after.

## **What are the reasons against having residents parking?**

There are lots of arguments voiced about residents parking. These need looking at carefully. Only one is against the whole principle. Most are about how to make it work best, and are not actually against the idea. We have summarised below all the arguments we could find;

## Summary of Arguments;

Argument	Our comment
<b>Against permit parking in principle</b>	
The 'keep parking free' standpoint argues that highways are for vehicles and it is nothing to do with residents how they are used, therefore on principle anyone should be allowed to drive anywhere and park anywhere.	This argument ignores the true social and economic costs of so-called 'free parking' and of unfettered vehicle access. It also highlights the double standard whereby people tend to want to park, and drive fast, in other people's streets but few will admit to welcoming this outside their own home.
'Thin end of the wedge' argument that once the Council is allowed to charge for parking then the fee will escalate, and could get increased for bigger or more polluting vehicles.	This argument does not actually say how or why the principle is wrong, it just says that although the proposal may look reasonable now it could get more expensive especially if you have a large and highly polluting vehicle.
<b>Against priced permits in principle</b>	
Residents have a right to park free in their street, outside their home and they should not be charged for this.	Space in urban streets is valuable, and £30 a year is a small price to pay for occupying a parking space for a year. If all residents permits were free then those who do not need on street parking could argue that they should receive a benefit in kind.
<b>About the way the scheme operates</b>	
The scheme will put pressure onto the adjacent areas that do not have residents parking permits.	This is not a reason for not doing it; it is a reason for getting on with rolling it out widely.
Enforcement may not be fair, and may not be well explained.	We can require regular reports on how enforcement is being done and we can influence our parking and policing services through the Neighbourhood Forums and our local Councillors.
The scheme will mean lots of ugly signage and street clutter.	Experience in Kingsdown has resulted in development of neat unobtrusive signage.
It is a waste of money and just means more administration.	The benefits justify the initial cost of establishing the schemes, and it then becomes self-financing.

Argument	Our comment
People will abuse the scheme by getting disabled badges unfairly.	It will be important to have checks and safeguards in order to keep it fair.
Local businesses will suffer because customers won't be able to park.	The opposite is true – customers can park more easily as there is meter parking with first 15 minutes free and priced thereafter so that there are always vacant spaces.
Staff of local businesses won't be able to park.	There is allowance in the scheme for businesses to have permits for vehicles needed for business use in the daytime.
What about off-street parking and garages.	The rules are clear and the officers discuss this in detail with residents during implementation.
A range of concerns are voiced such as 'I won't be able to have visitors, I won't be able to park near my house, the place will be full of towaway trucks, the new yellow lines will look awful, where will people park for a funeral etc'.	Permits for visitors and tradesmen eg plumbers, builders, decorators, are part of the scheme. Experience is that all of these factors are far worse before residents parking, and disappear once there is residents parking.
What about flats and student houses.	Each household eg. self contained flat with own separate postal address, has a right to a permit. A shared student house will have the same right to a permit so the scheme will mean less students will bring a car to Bristol.
What about special circumstances like areas near sports stadiums, churches, events venues etc.	Residents parking is Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Parking around stadiums for events will be the same as now.

Prepared by Sustainable Redland  
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*Sustainable Redland is a community group constituted since 2006, and is a registered 'Transition Initiative'. Sustainable Redland elects a representative to be on the Neighbourhood Partnership for Bishopston, Cotham and Redland.*

[www.sustainableredland.org.uk](http://www.sustainableredland.org.uk)

## How can I find out more?

Information about the Kingsdown scheme is on the Bristol City Council website, and details for Cotham will be published soon. Residents in the zone will all get letters.

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/kingsdown-residents-parking-scheme>

Information about the Neighbourhood Partnership and the Forums and dates of meetings are on the Bristol Partnership website (and linked from Bristol City Council website)

<http://www.bristolpartnership.org/neighbourhood-partnerships/bishopston-cotham-a-redland>

A detailed report about evidence from different cities in relation to parking is 'Europe's Parking U-Turn: from Accommodation to Regulation' Michael Kodransky and Gabrielle Herman Spring 2011. Institute for Transportation and Development Policy

[http://www.itdp.org/documents/European\\_Parking\\_U-Turn.pdf](http://www.itdp.org/documents/European_Parking_U-Turn.pdf)

Slides from a talk by Michael Kodransky are here;

[http://www.itdp.org/documents/061311gp1\\_2\\_02\\_michael\\_kodransky.pdf](http://www.itdp.org/documents/061311gp1_2_02_michael_kodransky.pdf)

Another useful report from ITDP is about the overall approach to sustainable transport in cities, not just parking. This is '8 Principles for Transport in Urban Life' Here are links to the webpage;

[http://www.itdp.org/index.php/news/detail/eight\\_principles\\_for\\_transport\\_in\\_urban\\_life/](http://www.itdp.org/index.php/news/detail/eight_principles_for_transport_in_urban_life/)

and to the document;

[http://www.itdp.org/documents/OCO8principlesBook\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.itdp.org/documents/OCO8principlesBook_FINAL.pdf)