

HOLCOT PC NOTES ON 3 MEETINGS WITH HIGHWAYS & OTHER AUTHORITIES 29 JAN 2021 & SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY OF MAIN OUTCOMES:

- PARKING IN HOLCOT FOR RESERVOIR (etc):** Following the meeting, Anglian Water has generated a requisition for quotes to extend the car park near the causeway, and is meeting with a contractor this week to look at the work. Police now checking registration numbers of walkers' vehicles parked in Holcot* to identify those infringing either parking- or lockdown-regulations (= non-local-exercise)
- NON-COMPLIANCE WITH 7.5t LIMIT:** Police agreed in principle to bring the detector van back, and in meantime are providing 1 hour observation sessions with follow-ups of rule breakers*.
- SYWELL ROAD FLOODING BY WASHBROOK:** HW agreed they need to maintain the gulley on a more regular basis, but also need to find a long-term solution. Agreed to arrange a site visit and to invite HPC to attend.

**Residents invited to submit photos – see below for details*

FURTHER DETAILS OF EACH MEETING, AND OF ALL OUTCOMES DURING AND SINCE MEETING.

MEETING 1: PARKING FOR RESERVOIR (etc) IN HOLCOT BY NON-RESIDENTS

Present:

Anglian Water (AW)	Dave Rose	Head Ranger, Pitsford, Ravensthorpe & Hollowell Water Parks
Police	Sgt Matt Moore	Daventry Neighbourhood Policing Team
	PCSO Jo Wright	Brixworth-based (resp for villages in east of DDC etc)
Highways (HW)	Ian Boyes	Asst. Community Liaison Officer (Daventry & Kettering Area)
Holcot resident	David Neal	No 15 Glebe Close
HPC	Martin Wilson (MW)	Councillor resp for Brixworth Rd
	Phil Scordellis (PS)	Councillor resp for HW-liaison & road safety

HPC BRIEFING TO MEETING:

(A) Issue has been cumulative over 10 years, but now reached a peak. Apparent causes:

- When AW initially introduced car parking charges at the Causeway Car Park in C.2011
- When parking *on* the causeway itself was prevented by AW erecting bollards
- Most recently, parking on verge on hill to Brixworth (*to west* of causeway) closed off by Police & HW.

While the Pitsford Water is a welcome amenity, it's becoming increasingly popular with people from a wide area (especially during the current leisure-restrictions), and the infrastructure is no longer adequate to serve it.

(B) HPC's concerns

- Number of cars parking on Brixworth Road grass verge (west of Glebe Close):
 - causing damage to Highways' grass and footway, a mudbath for pedestrians, and an eyesore for village residents
 - restricting vision for residents, or their visitors, exiting the two houses next to that verge --> **ROAD SAFETY**
- Number of cars parked in Glebe Close (including illegally on the pavements) which risk blocking drives, and (when permitted) parking by personal visitors to residents' homes.
- Now, overflow cars also parking kerbside on the highway between the crossroads and the Glebe Close junction reducing Brixworth Road to one lane leading to congestion.
As this effectively makes Brixworth Road near the crossroads a single-track road, the Parish Council is grateful for the traffic calming effect, but is more concerned about the added **CONGESTION** and **ROAD SAFETY** issues this will cause if it becomes the norm. The crossroads has already become a hotspot for RTC's in recent years.
- Need solutions which don't just move the problem elsewhere within the village.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

Solution	Discussion
Solutions specific to parking on Brixworth Rd verge	
(1) Signage/bollards on the grass verge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who will make it happen and who will pay? Would just move parking onto the opposite verge or onto the road → simply adds to concerns 3&4 above
(2) Add kerbing along grass verge	
(3) A 'verge-parking order'	As above + how/who will motivate compliance? (HW said it'd be their responsibility but poorly resourced)
(4) As well as (1), (2) &/or (3), extending the Clearway to Glebe Close junction	Just moves the issue further into the village (other verges, other kerbsides, existing small car parking areas for church, pub, village hall)

Solutions which address the causes		
(5)	Re-open parking on verge on hill to Brixworth to west of causeway	Police & HW confirmed that this closure is indeed only temporary, and will be re-opened when that verge has recovered (spring/summer?)
(6)	Remove bollards on causeway to allow parking (chargeable?), and also, ideally, extend the old parking areas to cover whole of causeway	AW response: bollards were put in because of the number of collisions as drivers suddenly slowed when they saw a space; also because all the spaces are in the 'wrong' side of the causeway, so too many pedestrians were having to cross the road. Others queried whether the bollards pre-dated (?) the 40mph limit, and so was this still a risk? AW said it's 'still a race track'. Sgt Moore kept pushing in favour of this solution, and offered increased frequency of speed-gun to address non-compliance with 40mph limit
(7)	Abolish charging in Causeway Car Park or Introduce tiered time-related parking charges (eg pay by the hour or half-hour)	AW refused to consider abolishing or tiering car parking charges. Reasoning: annual cost of maintaining the amenity aspects of the reservoir [track (surface & protection-banks), 3 staff members, etc] = £100,000's whereas the income from parking charges = c. £30,000, ie scarcely 1 member of staff
(8i)	Extend the Causeway Car Park to the south, ie further along reservoir bank	AW response: this IS planned, but 2 constraints: capital cost & would require re-location further south of picnic area, but that land narrows [<i>but see * below</i>].
(8ii)	Extend the Causeway Car Park further to the west by purchase from adjacent landowner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the landowner sell? (NB it's 'only' sheep-grazing) • Much higher capital cost due to both buying the land and terracing into the hill

OUTCOMES:

- (A) AW agreed to pursue both options for extending the Causeway Car Park.
 There was general discussion that part of increase in usage was result of increase in population (esp. new developments)
 This led to following suggestion from HPC in response to cost issue of both (8i) & (8ii):
- Ideally bid for internal funding from AW'S own capital resources.
 - In parallel: investigate if AW might qualify for CIL or S106 funding from developments to north of Northampton, based on this being a case of local infrastructure no longer being adequate to serve increased population

HPC reminded AW that this was becoming a major issue for residents, and they would expect to see that this was being taken seriously: would AW therefore agree to provide evidence of that by keeping HPC informed at every stage when AW made any step towards a solution? AW agreed.

First result, email of 5th Feb from AW: "We have generated a requisition for quotes to extend the causeway car park and I am meeting with a contractor next week to look at the work. When we have received quotes back from interested contractors, we will consider our options and make a decision. We are looking into whether or not we can claim monies in relation to local development."

[Research by MW after meeting:

- *that there doesn't seem to be any sign of notices at the car park about AW's £45 annual car parking permit, so recommended that we suggest to them to publicise this*
 - ** there appears to be still plenty of space for picnic tables along the open bankside of the reservoir*
- PS will communicate these two findings to AW, together with any other comments from HPC 15/2 meeting]*

- (B) It was accepted that it would be a waste of resources for HW to repair the grass verge until the cause of the damage had been resolved as above;
 however, a solution to the pooling of water in the adjacent footway should be investigated, eg raising the footway.
 To avoid issues 3. & 4., solutions (1)-(4) should only be considered once additional parking outside Holcot is made available. Parish Council is also following-up options for signage on verges with Highways.
- (C) Police are only able to take action for two things:
- (1) traffic offences: people who PARK illegally
 [eg clearway, no-parking zone, wheels on pavement or other footway, or (perhaps?) seriously obstructing visibility]
 - (2) flouting covid-regulations: thanks to their access to the vehicle-registration database, police might be able to identify parkers whose travel-for-exercise is not 'local' (however that is defined?)
- They agreed to start checking this area as their workload permitted, and also that *they'd accept photos from Holcot residents of any car parking in the village which might qualify for either of the two action as above - please send photos as email attachments with note of date and time to phil.scordellis@gmail.com.*

MEETING 2: NON-COMPLIANCE WITH 7.5t LIMIT

Present:

Police	Sgt Matt Moore PCSO Jo Wright	Daventry Neighbourhood Policing Team Brixworth-based (resp for villages in east of DDC etc)
Highways	Ian Boyes	Asst. Community Liaison Officer (Daventry & Kettering Area)
Holcot resident	David Neal	No 15 Glebe Close
HPC	Martin Wilson Phil Scordellis	Councillor resp for Brixworth Rd Councillor resp for HW-liaison & road safety

HPC impression: detector van briefly some years ago, but nothing since, and issue perceived by residents to be getting worse.

Police response: the limit has an exception for access; their recollection is that a large majority of those 'caught' by the detector van were able to show a justifiable reason based on that exception. This was largely because the exception does NOT mean access to a location within Holcot Parish, but rather within the whole zone - which is large.

Nevertheless, the police were prepared in principle to bring the detector van back; however, to help them justify that, asked that HPC first gather one week's worth of evidence of the issue, eg by organising for an HGV-watch of c.1 hour a day for a week, recording registration numbers and incl company logos (ideally with photos to show vehicle appearance).

To help avoid reporting of vehicles which *are* permitted (ie, not over 7.5t) they showed a website with illustrations. Link: https://www.google.co.uk/search?hl=en&sugexp=gsqvhc&xhr=t&q=7.5t+truck&cp=4&pq=7.5t+truck&wrapid=tljp130149058793730&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=univ&sa=X&ei=mSuTTcCaCcXoOZOq0ZEB&sqi=2&ved=0CEQQsAQ&biw=1260&bih=832&tbm=isch&gws_rd=ssl

Other clues are the smaller wheel size, and the number of wheel-nuts & axles:

ie, anything with more than 6 wheel nuts &/or more than 2 axles, or articulated, is probably **OVER** the 7.5t limit.

Following the meeting:

- PCSO Jo Wright emailed on 4/2 to amend the request for an HPC-organised HGV-watch, saying it would breach current lockdown regulations. This should therefore be postponed until the regulations were relaxed to the extent where residents were permitted to leave their house for non-essential/exercise reasons.
- Sgt Matt Moore emailed HPC Clerk on 10/2: "I have asked for some proactive patrols for the next four weeks to target HGV's. The resulting data will inform how we proceed. I will ask the local Officers to keep you updated." This has now started.

Police will also accept photos from Holcot residents of any HGVs in the village: please see above for definition of an HGV and these need to show the whole vehicle with registration number and ideally company logos.

Please send photos as email attachments with note of date and time to phil.scordellis@gmail.com.

HPC also asked about Holcot creating its own equivalent of the Guilsborough HGV-zero-tolerance banner

[price quoted by Guilsborough's supplier for 3m x 1m £65 each +delivery, or delivery free if more than one]

Highways said this was not permitted, and (given Holcot's position on the road system) their Regulations Team would not be able to turn a blind eye.

MEETING 3: SYWELL ROAD INCREASE IN FREQUENCY OF FLOODING BY WASHBROOK

Present:

Highways
HPC

Ian Boyes (IB)
Phil Scordellis (PS)

Asst. Community Liaison Officer (Daventry & Kettering Area)
Councillor resp for HW-liaison & road safety

IB was unaware of the issue and had not been involved in the road closure, nor the eventual gulley-clearing the previous day. He explained that these issues are handled by the Maintenance Dept, so I asked that he pass on our thanks to that team.

PS explained the options as we see them:

Either HW commit to drain-clearance on fixed pre-agreed dates every year + ADDITIONALLY as needed? (= long-term cost)

Or invest now to address causes (NB FixMyStreet was now saying "The location is under review as to a long term solution")

Residents' suggestions posted on FixMyStreet:

- "Enlarge the drain and the culvert under the road so they don't get blocked with the annual debris and mud."
- "Reduce volume of debris and mud by kerbs down Sywell Road from farm gateway above Foxhill Farm access (Roadside ditch cannot handle either volume of water, or full of greenery, causing water to spread onto road, bringing greenery onto road surface.)"

OUTCOMES:

(A) IB said it was OK for us to work direct with the Ian Smith, Maintenance Manager at Brixworth Depot (IS), and provided his contact details.

(B) PS subsequently phoned Brixworth, and (in absence of IS) spoke to Martin Jenkins (MJ) who was fully aware of the issue, and HW current thinking, as follows:

- In addition to the usual drainage from the road surface, the gulley was having to handle major run-off down Sywell Rd from the field immediately to the southeast of the riding school (and to a lesser extent from the car boot access)
- MJ agreed that HW needs to maintain the gulley on a more regular basis, but also needs to find a long-term solution
- His understanding is that the gulley drains firstly into the washbrook, and then from there via the stream in a ditch into the larger ponds below Poplars Farmhouse.
His impression was that these ponds were the bottleneck because they drain towards the reservoir through an underground culvert, and so HW should be looking for an alternative route for the outfall from the Sywell Rd gulley.

PS tried to query this impression based on the gradients etc, but eventually MJ said he'd been looking to arrange a site visit anyway, and agreed to let PS know the timing so that he could attend.