

WICKHAM RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION – Sept 2024



DOMESTIC PARKING CHALLENGES IN WICKHAM

In 1964 the Rookesbury Estate concluded the sale of the School Road allotment site for redevelopment into what is now Wykeham Field. That year a pint of milk cost 3.3p, a gallon of petrol cost 22.5p, an average house cost £3360 and 25% of households lacked a basic hot water supply. In the UK there were **7.5 million cars** including the iconic VW Beetle, the BMC 1100 and the Ford Cortina. For the new residents in Wykeham Field there was so much space, green areas for children to play safely and for those few with cars, convenient easy parking.

Today 60 years later a pint of milk is 95p, petrol is £5.50 per gallon and the average house price is £285,000!!! In the UK we now have 44 million cars and since 1964 average car width has increased by 30 cm and the average length by 40 cm. In Wykeham Field the estate footprint is the same but many of the garages are unused as they can only accommodate small cars, and the once open spaces are dominated by residents' vehicles.

Over the past 60 years there have been massive changes in the way we live, but change has not been uniform and often there has been no change at all.

Nationally and locally there is massive focus on new housing developments, but aging developments are neglected, facing the increasing challenges of a changing world.

Private vehicles are a fact of life, so it is up to every one of us to manage how they are parked to minimise their impact on our village environment. **WRA is setting out to support residents to improve their local environment with additional parking provision and improved parking practice.**

Having made a preliminary review of Wickham we find that **apart from the village centre** the capacity for household parking in many areas is adequate to meet current need, this view may change as we gather more evidence. However, we already know that there are several parts of the village where parking provision is nonexistent or inadequate.

We have chosen to start in Wykeham Field where some houses on the estate still have no hard-standing or safe roadside parking at all. The only sensible option for some is to park on verges however showing good community spirit they are reseeding these with more robust grass strains. Unfortunately, the Wickham clay along School Rd quickly turns to mud again.

There are already some well-informed Wykeham Field residents actively looking at solutions and we will now be supporting them. The first step is a full review of current and future needs of residents of Wykeham Fields. This will involve a survey conducted by a small team of residents. We will also evaluate the impact of outsiders parking there to visit the Water Meadows and the Meon Trail.

From there we will look at possible solutions and for this **we need help**. We would value your expertise in, for example, town planning, construction, quantity surveying, accounting, traffic management, project management, public surveys. **If you have relevant knowledge or skills, please step forward to help create innovative parking solutions for our mature housing areas. Please head up your communication – I CAN HELP – and e mail to My Voice @ wickham residents.org.uk**

We frequently hear the mantra “good idea but there is no money”. This may be true, but too frequently it is an excuse for doing nothing. Our view is that until we know the extent of the requirement, the range of solutions, and the benefit of the changes, we cannot convince others of the need and get a shift in the priority of fund allocation.

There is already support from our WCC Local Councillors who have already had conversations with relevant departments in Winchester. We thank them for their support so far. Their active support will be very important as proposals head towards the decision makers in Winchester CC and possibly Hampshire CC. We will keep our Parish Council informed and seek their support for the submission as they do not have direct jurisdiction over verges, garages and roadways.

This is an initiative driven by the residents in the community to solve an increasing problem which will fundamentally impact Wickham. What we learn in Wykeham Field can be quickly applied to other areas with parking challenges. So please TALK TO US if you have parking problems. We need to know so that we can roll them into our review and start to look for solutions.

As always you can contact us on myvoice@wickhamresidents.org.uk - Head your e mail PARKING and we will get straight back to you.

OTHER NEWS

Speedwatch Milestone: This week we reached a total of 1000+ motorists caught speeding since we started. Our most persistent speeder appears to be taking another route and there are indications that average speed has dropped slightly. This may be a “false dawn” so watch this space. Our data demonstrates the high level of speeding particularly on Winchester Rd. The addition of the SID machines, fixed to lampposts, which have now been approved by the Parish Council, will, when installed, give us 24-hour data to underpin our traffic calming proposals.

We also have new volunteers joining us. Thank you and welcome to the team.

Neighbourhood Plan: You will be receiving information regarding the Neighbourhood Plan from the Parish Council during September. This is an important initiative as it will be a key document for the future of the two Villages.

WRA Membership is available to anyone 18 years or older who lives in the PO17 postcode area. Joining is simple and FREE just e mail your name, address, and contact number to membership@wickhamresidents.org.uk OR visit our website at wickhamresident.org.uk.

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER - JOIN US AND HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Mike Perkins

WRA Press Officer