

We really must decide! (28<sup>th</sup> March 2010)

Right, everyone agrees we have a problem with the number of cars and the number of options provide a solution is almost as numerous as the number of Vehicles.

We need to go back to basics. Do we want to accommodate the 'need' (bit like housing!) for residents to be able to travel anywhere, anytime using whatever method they like, or do we want to 'reclaim' the town, that even I don't remember.

The second is the ideal, that quite frankly, will be unacceptable without a major change in residents attitudes, although I really don't see that happening to the members of the human race who come to live here - after all, that is what most of you have done. So we are left with trying to resolve the unresolvable. See, I do just like a challenge!

Let's start with the conservation area and that it would be nice if emergency vehicles, dust carts - old school, I'm afraid - and even public transport could actually travel along the public highway reasonably easily. That means that at least 8ft (2.44m, if you must) is available between the kerb and any obstruction the highway, for example the extremity of any 'parked' vehicle.

Taking my vehicle as average, it is 6' 4" (1.93m) wide so any highway less than 14ft 6" (4.50m) wide should not have parking allowed at any time. Highways between 14ft 6" (4.5m) and 21ft 6" (6.4m) wide (kerb to kerb) could have parking allowed on one side only and only on highways over 21' 6" ( 6.4m) wide (kerb to kerb) could vehicles be allowed to use both sides to 'park'.

Before all the clever clogs start going on about only legally being allowed to park in 'designated' parking spaces, I'm trying to be practical as most of the 'designated' parking spaces in the town are not 6' 4" (1.93m) wide by 15' (4.58m) long (size of my average car) and that rare thing called discretion is usually employed.

You will notice I have not even considered 'residents' parking as that is an emotive issue even in those areas where garages and drives are available. It's even got the point where the motorist will not even cross the road as witnessed by the number of cars providing a slalom course along residential roads. I even had one the other day which had blocked the road. I found a householder who explained the vehicle belonged to his daughter. She apparently couldn't reverse down the available drive, so just 'stopped' and went shopping taking the keys! It was 'bumped' so that vehicles could pass.

The above is as good a starting point as any I have seen and could be combined with a change in planning attitudes over converting garages to habitual rooms as well residents learning how to use their drives - another lost ability.

What sort of time scale should we be looking at? Well, the final decision would need to be taken by the highways authority - Herts County Council - who would not even think of trying to resolve the problem without a 'cunning' workable plan proposed by either the Town or Borough Councils. We had new County Councillor (Cllr Ian Reay) elected last year, who just happens to be a Town Councillor and Portfolio holder for planning and regeneration on Borough Council. Once we get the general election out of the way, both Town and Borough councils are due for re-election in May 2011, plenty of time to knock this idea into shape and a good platform to get re-elected with a mandate to implement a viable plan to 'ease' the one sad thing about our town, caused by residents and resolved by our Councillors in co-operation residents.

I have just thought of another solution which is not quiet as good. Remember when cars had to be 'parked' facing traffic, on the left hand side of the road and show a front/rear light on the offside during lighting uptime?

Now about those residential boats 'illegally' parked on the second main transport route through the town. Yellow lines should solve that one easily!