

Petition to review parking restrictions in Conyer Road,

ME9 9ED

May 2018

History:

- A parking resolution was promised after planning was granted for the development of houses behind Bridge Cottages, i.e. Selby Court. This never happened.
- A single yellow line has been on both sides of the road, however restrictions only enforced on the opposite side for Monday-Saturday 830am-630pm.
- No consultation has ever carried out with the residents of Bridge Cottages/Conyer Road regarding parking restrictions.

Background information:

- According to recent correspondence with Glenn Insell, Operations Office (Maidstone Borough Council), in response to an email from one of us, it was the local Parish Council that requested the restrictions to allow larger farming vehicles to negotiate the junction into Conyer Road to access the farms off Conyer Road.

Current situation:

- We have not been given the opportunity to have our points of view heard and without warning a new restrictions plate has been put up and restrictions have now been applied to the side of the road of the cottages (Monday-Friday 830am-630). So in affect, restrictions on both sides of the road. This means we have nowhere to park that will not cause inconvenience/congestion in other roads and potential safety risks.
- Whilst we realise the Council's main concern isn't to provide parking spaces outside our houses, but to maintain traffic flow and safety measures, the knock on affect of these new restrictions have done the complete opposite simply by moving the congestion problem on beyond the bridge, and in addition creating potential health and safety issues in this lane.

Basis of objections:

1. *Parking obstructions*

We have nowhere to park other than over the bridge. This has huge congestion implications, as it is a narrow lane in parts and our cars will either partially block a farm gateway, partially block neighbouring drives, inconvenience the Scout Hut and/or cause a potential obstruction for the farm machinery that apparently have trouble negotiating their way into Conyer Road. Buses and bin men may also find negotiating past us difficult but perhaps more importantly larger emergency vehicles such as fire engines may also have trouble.

2. *Unclear on current problem*

We have observed that large farm machinery and articulated lorries have no problem negotiating this junction on a Sunday or an evening after 630pm when we are all parked (sensibly and considerately) on both sides of the road. We see no reason why they can't continue to negotiate this road in the week and daytime – particularly as we all use our cars for work every day and the road would be part/fully clear anyway. Congestion problems only seem to arise when cars from other roads park in Conyer Road or the road opposite without consideration for other road users and we feel we are being penalised for this other road users.

3. *Health and Safety/Dangerous road considerations*

Come winter/darker nights, many of us will now face the stressful experience of parking in the dark on an unlit country lane in rush hour where cars whizz up and down and walking back alone to our houses.....this in itself presents health and safety concerns, as this road can be very dangerous at times.

4. *Damage to our cars*

Some of our cars have been vandalised parking them at the Scout Hut or near to it in the lane.....it is unreasonable that we have nowhere safe to park our hard earned assets. Damage to cars affects our insurance premiums or is a personal cost and puts an additional financial strain on already tight budgets. There is also an emotional cost to fearing repeated damage and time required to fix any damages.

5. House value/saleability

We are worried that the fact we have nowhere to park will affect our house prices and ability to sell/rent. Number 1 is currently up for rent and viewers have asked where to park – it must be off-putting to hear there is none!

Lastly:

Clearly if the parking restrictions were to be completely lifted then other houses and perhaps commuters would start filling the road up with their cars, so it would seem sensible to have some sort of restrictions in place. We are totally in support of local businesses and farming and have no wish to compromise anyone's business but we would like to be able to have our concerns and objections heard. We would welcome a discussion on what might work better for all parties.

Suggestions:

In order of preference –

1. 24/7 Residential parking – as well as giving us places to park thus clearing the lanes of our vehicles, this would also stop other people parking in "our" road causing congestion. Other cars parking in 'our' road has been a big issue for all parties in terms of creating congestion and we are very much in favour of this option for both sides of the Conyer Road and hope the Council would be too.
2. 8am-8pm part time residential parking – this would hugely limit the number of cars parked in Conyer Road at busiest times of the day and have the benefits of above.
3. Relax current restrictions – for Monday to Friday start restriction later and finish at 430-5pm and remove Saturday restriction. This would help enormously as at the moment we mainly arrive home at 430-530pm, have to park in the lanes in rush hour creating more congestion and then have to rush out at 630pm to grab the spaces outside the cottages before anyone from any other street takes the spaces. When this happens it has meant returning our cars to over the bridge when other streets have taken the spaces and the congestion in the lane continues. It will also remove the need of having to walk along the unlit lanes in the dark come winter times.

Individual Objections:

1 Bridge Cottages

Myself and my work colleague both got parking tickets when we were redecorating the property whilst parked outside recently. I've had the cottage since about 2010 and not received a ticket in that time while parking there. This came as a surprise until I saw a very small new sign at the end of the road angled at 45 degrees.

A couple of ideas that have come to mind are:

1. If its used by commuters for the station, then a simple no parking between say 1-1.30 pm would solve that issue as they couldn't leave their car there all day.
2. Maybe permit parking outside for the use of Bridge Cottage occupiers only.
3. As parking was promised when Selby Court was built, this would seem a good course of action to pursue as it would keep the road free from congestion, be safer for farm vehicles to pass and be local parking for us.

2 Bridge Cottages

Working in the NHS means that I arrive home at all different times and I am unable to park outside my own property because of the waiting restrictions that have been implemented. Coming home late at night/once the clocks change, and being on my own I feel very vulnerable, even more so now after knowing that a person was attacked getting in to her car on the lower road recently.

I have been living in this property since 2007 and there have never been restrictions on this side of the road before. I feel that as a property owner, I should have been consulted on this matter.

When I moved to the area I was informed that when they built Selby Court, there would be parking areas for the residents of Bridge Cottages.....which never materialised.

Because of the restrictions that have been implemented, I have parents that are elderly and have difficulty mobilising, they are unable to visit, because there are restrictions on parking. I would welcome Parking Permits for all residents that live in Bridge Cottages, which would ease the congestion because there are lots of people that park in the area that are not residents of the community.

3 Bridge Cottages.

The country lane on the far side of the bridge; whilst there are no specific parking restrictions it is not a safe place to park, there is no pavement and therefore no safe exit from the passenger side of a car, it is unlit therefore visibility is poor, this leaves both drivers and pedestrians vulnerable, in parts there is not even a grass verge but a bank and so in addition to having no safe place to walk there is also no place at all to stand to avoid oncoming traffic, the lane is narrower in parts than the section outside of the cottages and simply moves the problem on and actually makes it not only worse but possibly more dangerous.

Additional parking of cars on the country lane on the far side of the bridge will add to the congestion and increase the safety risk to people accessing the scouts hut, hindering the visibility of cars exiting the small parking area and forcing walkers into the middle of the lane.

When the residents of Bridge Cottages park sensibly outside their properties (as they do in order to access their properties and the shared rights of way) there is no visible impact on the ability of large vehicles and buses to get through, this is evident from our experience of these vehicles passing by in the evening and at weekends, a residents permit scheme would allow this to continue.

Any vehicle wishing to travel into Conyer Road needs to arrive via Lower Road or The Crescent both of which are currently holding the overflow parking of these new parking restrictions, we feel that this is another example of simply moving the problem on, again, a residents permit scheme would alleviate this.

Since we have been unable to park in Conyer Road, the 'foot print' of the parking in Lower Road and The Crescent has become much more congested and haphazard making visibility along the street poor and access to pavements when crossing the road dangerous.

This new scheme was installed at the request of the Parish Council to solve the problem of large machinery negotiating access to Conyer Road, this was carried out without consultation and in our opinion has allowed a superficial fix, the cars still need to be parked and are being parked in the immediate area which is not fit for purpose, any of the alternative solutions we have offered would allow both residents and local businesses a safer way to operate side by side in the local community.

4 Bridge Cottages

Whilst we understand that there has to be a workable solution that works for everyone one, what thoughts and plans have the Parish council put in place to provide parking within the parish that is safe for everyone to use? If they make it so that we can't park in front of our houses are the council prepared to put in street lighting and pavements down Conyor Road to ensure the safety for everyone if we are forced to park the other side of the bridge?

The need to have access for lorries is understandable, but please can we have figures on the amount of lorry movements conducted to the farm, the times they enter and leave the road at the junction with Bridge Cottages? We would also like a list of when they haven't been able to gain access to the road.

Based on this data being provided by the Parish council be just, I would propose that a restricted resident parking scheme be introduced along with a restriction on lorry movements to coincide with the restrictions.

5 Bridge Cottages

My primary objections to these restrictions are the chaos and potential dangerous parking alternatives over the bridge in the narrow country lanes. I already see articulated lorries trying to squeeze past parked cars and worry about potential damage to my car. I don't want to be an obstruction to bin men or emergency services. In terms of congestion, the perceived problem of vehicles in Conyer Road has just been moved over the bridge to the country lanes, which are unlit and not at all safe to walk along, especially in rush hours.

I am also particularly worried about my safety come winter when I will have to park in the dark in these lanes and walk home alone along the unlit lane at rush hour until the restriction finishes at 630pm when I will have to negotiate the lanes again to move my car to outside my cottage. I am more worried since reading about the poor lady in Teynham who was attacked whilst in her car.

I see a lot of cars from other streets park outside the cottages at times, which I think are the main problem to Conyer Street parking/congestion.

I was surprised no consultation process took place for these restrictions, which would have raised the problems now occurring.

I would welcome residential parking (24/7) arrangements. I believe residential parking would stop other streets parking in Conyer Road and vastly reduce the number of cars parked which would of course help traffic flow with the additional benefit of residents not having to leave cars in unsafe lanes.

Signatures

I object to the current parking objections outside Bridge Cottages/Conyer Road for the reasons in this petition and would welcome a review to consider the alternative suggestions outlined in this petition:

Signed: