

Abbey Neighbourhood Association Proposal

Improving Vehicular Passing & Parking
On Abbey Street & Abbey Place
In Faversham Kent



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1. Summary

1.1 Who We Are.

Abbey Neighbourhood Association (ANA) is our residents association in Faversham, Kent. The Association embraces a significant part of the historical heart of the Town. The purpose of the Association is about working, maintaining and enhancing the special character of the Neighbourhood and the surrounding area. Please peruse our Association website at www.AbbeyNeighbourhood.org for further details.

1.2 The Issue Outlined.

Abbey Street and Abbey Place are two of the finest streets in Southern England and act as major attraction in bringing visitors to the mediaeval market town of Faversham. These roads provide the only access to approximately 200 residential properties in the neighbourhood, and the only vehicular link to the 1000 pupil Queen Elizabeth Grammar School and Faversham Creek.

Currently these roads are 2 ways, yet due to the physical constraints of the existing houses, the roads allow only 1 vehicle to pass down substantial sections of the roads at a time. Consequently, vehicles are commonly required to use the few unintentional “passing zones” in Abbey Street to allow oncoming vehicle to continue their journey. Inevitably this requires drivers to “second guess” if the oncoming is going to give way and where.

This clearly is unsatisfactory. Inevitably this leads to driver frustration, misunderstandings and, in many cases, vehicles (including vans and occasionally lorries) having to reverse down these narrow streets. This situation in turn provides additional safety and environmental concerns.

It is felt that improvements could be made to the passing points and parking on both Abbey Street and Abbey Place. It is anticipated that access will become more acute if the Head Teacher at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School fails to encourage a change in habit amongst parents taking their children to school as well as the growing commercialisation (retail and housing developments) at Standard Quay.

1.3 Queen Elizabeth Grammar School

As you will be aware, this facility has nearly 1000 pupils and approximately 100 staff members. Whilst acknowledging that the substantial majority of students travel to the premises by foot and public transport, a significant number are brought by parents in their cars. During the peak time of this “school run”, the queuing traffic can extend from the junction at Court Street; right the way down Abbey Street to Abbey Place. In addition, the school car park accommodates approximately 50 staff parking spaces.



ANA met the Facilities Manager of the School, Tiffany Henderson, on 4th April 2019 to discuss the issue. The School accepts that their location is problematical and

creates increased pressure on the road network in their immediate vicinity. To their credit, they have undertaken various measures to mitigate their impact on the congestion in their locality, such as prohibiting 6 form students parking on site etc. Nevertheless, they acknowledge their limitations in ameliorating the problem that they are contributors to.

The meeting concluded with an undertaking that QE would produce a Transport Plan in the near future and we await this document with interest.

1.4 Standard Quay

In recent years, Standard Quay has been transformed from partially used sheds into a thriving commercial hub adjacent to the Creek. The sheds now embrace a café, numerous shops (including a newly opened Butchers of Brogdale) and the possibility of a gym (subject to the Planning Application being approved).



The owner has tarmacked the land and marked out 90 car parking spaces to accommodate the visitors. Additionally, in the last 2 years the owner has built 5 terrace houses on New Creek Road and has a Planning Application for a further 6 houses adjacent Standard House.

Collectively, this growing commercialisation of Standard Quay has substantially increased traffic volume in a street that was never intended for this quantity of vehicles. Clearly the situation is unsatisfactory and needs to be addressed by all responsible.

1.5 Remedial Action To Date.

Following a number of discussions and meetings with:

- Tiffany Henderson, Facilities Manager - Queen Elizabeth Grammar School 4th April 2019;
- Tim Stone - 20's Plenty Faversham 24th May 2019, and;
- ANA 3rd June 2019.

1.6 Desired Outcome

ANA's Committee and its members have determined that, in the interest of road safety, environmental concerns and convenience, the Authority;

- Considers remedial works that would improve the vehicular passing and parking in Abbey Street and Abbey Place in Faversham;
- For the purposes of budgeting, undertakes its own feasibility and derive associated cost for the proposed improvements to vehicular passing and parking;
- Submits the proposal and associated costs for approval for the next available budgeting round, and;
- Regular feedback to ANA progress and next step(s) between approval(s) and implementation.

2. Introduction

ANA is the reconstituted community organisation, which arose out of the moribund Abbey Street Residents Association (ASRA), which ceased to exist in circa 2014.

The inaugural meeting of the current Association took place on 3rd December 2018 at Creek Creative, 1 Abbey Street Faversham, which adopted a new constitution and elected its current Committee. The Constitution (see the Association website) denotes the geographical scope of the Association within the historical central part of Faversham and its aims and objectives.

The Association meets quarterly and is well attended by its local residents as well as the Abbey Ward Councilors.

The principal purpose of the Association is to protect, improve and promote the best interests of the neighbourhood, in particular the environmental conditions. The Association is run entirely on a voluntary basis, all residents are eligible to join and participate without paying any fees. The Association has no political alliance or bias and strives to maintain its political independence.

3. Community Requirement

ANA, representing the residents of the historical center of Faversham have considered a range of options that may help to alleviate the issue outlined under 1.2, namely vehicular movement and associated passing and parking provisions.

Residents attending ANA meeting, 25th February 2019 at Creek Creative, unanimously voted to adopt and promote the 20's Plenty for Faversham in their neighbourhood (see minutes of the meeting on the Association's website (www.abbeyneighbourhood.org)).

Without doubt, if adopted by the Statutory Authorities (Town Council, Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council), this will assist in some small way to reduce the problems outlined in 1.2 above. However, this will not significantly alter the underlying issues. Therefore, the Association considered additional ways that may be beneficial to the solution of the problems.

4. Goals & Objectives

ANA, being acquainted with the obvious problems of passing and parking in Abbey Street and its surroundings, decided to explore options to help alleviate the current situation. These options are outlined in section 6 of this proposal.

The preferred option (see item 6.4 and 7 overleaf) was unanimously approved and adopted at the Association meeting held on 3rd June 2019 at Creek Creative (approval referenced in meeting notes on Association website).

Thereafter, we were requested by the Abbey Ward Councilors to formulate a comprehensive document denoting the issues in question and proposed solution.

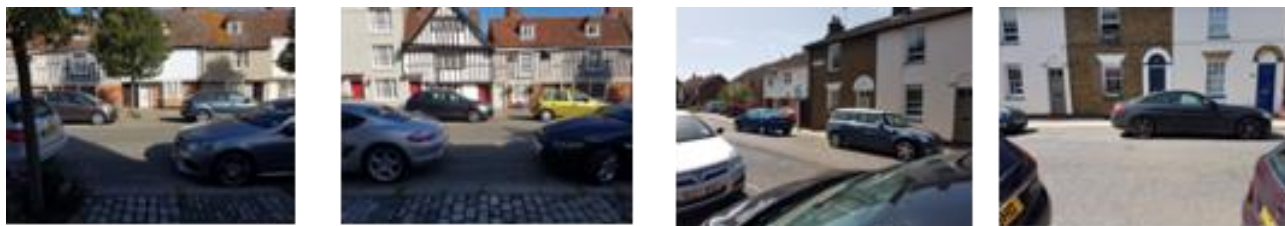
ANA's Committee intends to submit this proposal, in the first instance, to the Abbey Ward Councilors and Town Clerk for discussion for adoption. It is anticipated that subsequent discussion may take place to focus on procedural matters, budgets and plan to provide a way forward through the Town Council as well as a blueprint through both Swale Borough and Kent County Council.

5. Scope

The scope of this proposal principally involves the streets most severely affected by the current unacceptable traffic congestion and associated parking issues, namely in both Abbey Street and Abbey Place.

Clearly, the benefits of improving the vehicular circulation in both streets will also be beneficial to the adjacent streets (including Abbey Road, Church Street, Vicarage Street, New Creek Road Chambers Wharf and Standard Quay) and Faversham as a whole.

6. Options & Recommendation



6.1 Belvedere Road/ Abbey Street one-way road system

This proposal is far from novel. In the Association's opinion, this suggestion may solve one issue but creates many more. Namely, the increased traffic entering Belvedere Road from Quay Lane (particularly those vehicles turning right from Quay Lane onto Belvedere Road in the direction of South Road) will cause increased congestion and likelihood of accidents. Additionally, the recent Planning Permission granted to the former Oil Depot Site renders the possibility of a successful compulsory order of the necessary land through this development extremely **unlikely**.

6.2 Widening Abbey Street

Widening Abbey Street would allow 2-way traffic to pass in a safe way. However, the suggestion is, in the view of the Association, impractical and undesirable. Whilst widening Abbey Street may be feasible within the southern (mediaeval) portion of the road, it is not an option at the northern end (Victorian) due to the width between the house facades. Equally, it is **undesirable**, as any widening would inevitably require the removal of the existing trees and adjacent granite setts.

6.3 Parking on one side of Abbey Street only

This proposal would allow Abbey Street to be a sustainable 2-way road. However, this would result in the loss of 50% of the residents' parking bays. In consequence, some 50 of the 100 properties in Abbey Street would have no immediate car parking facility to their property. This outcome could not be considered viable as a resident's amenity is sacrificed to alleviate a problem to which they are only a **minor contributor**.

6.4 Identifiable parking & passing zones



Picture adjacent clearly illustrates a parking space as well as the end or start of potential passing zones in Abbey Street and Abbey Place. This option is the **best solution** as it provides the:

- Least disruption during construction;
- Most cost effective route, and;
- Least contention versus 6.1.

Following the Association meeting on 3rd June 2019, ANA commends 6.4 as its recommended solution.

7. The Analysis

After surveying Abbey Street and Abbey Place over a number of weeks, the Committee found that, on average, there was a loss of between 10 to 12 potential car parking spaces in Abbey Street alone at night due to badly parked vehicles. The solution that considered most advantageous to maximising the street parking was to create identifiable parking spaces, thereby helping and encouraging drivers to park responsibly.

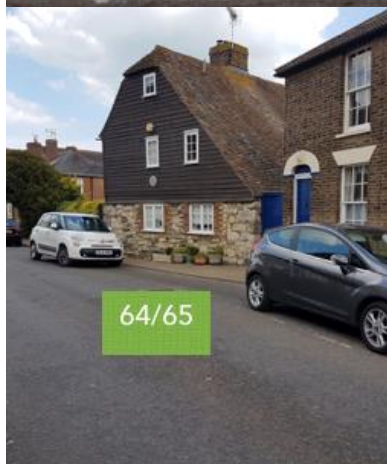


The Committee met with Tim Stonor – 20's Plenty Faversham on 24th May 2019 and conducted a walkabout and subsequently reviewed the proposal. It was agreed that in order to maintain the quality of the streetscape:

- white lines should be kept to a minimum
- bay markings could, preferably, be denoted in slightly raised brickwork, or
- granite setts coming out at right angles from the pavement

By increasing the number of car parking bays in this manner, it would then give rise to improving the passing zones on Abbey Street without the loss of an amenity.

The Association would like to see the 2 existing (unintentional) passing spaces outside



The Phoenix Public House and No 92 Abbey Street upgraded and enlarged, with double white lanes and suitable lighting and signage. Additionally, the introduction of a designated passing space at the lower end of Abbey Street (at the pinch point where the street curves and creates a blind spot) outside No's 64/65.

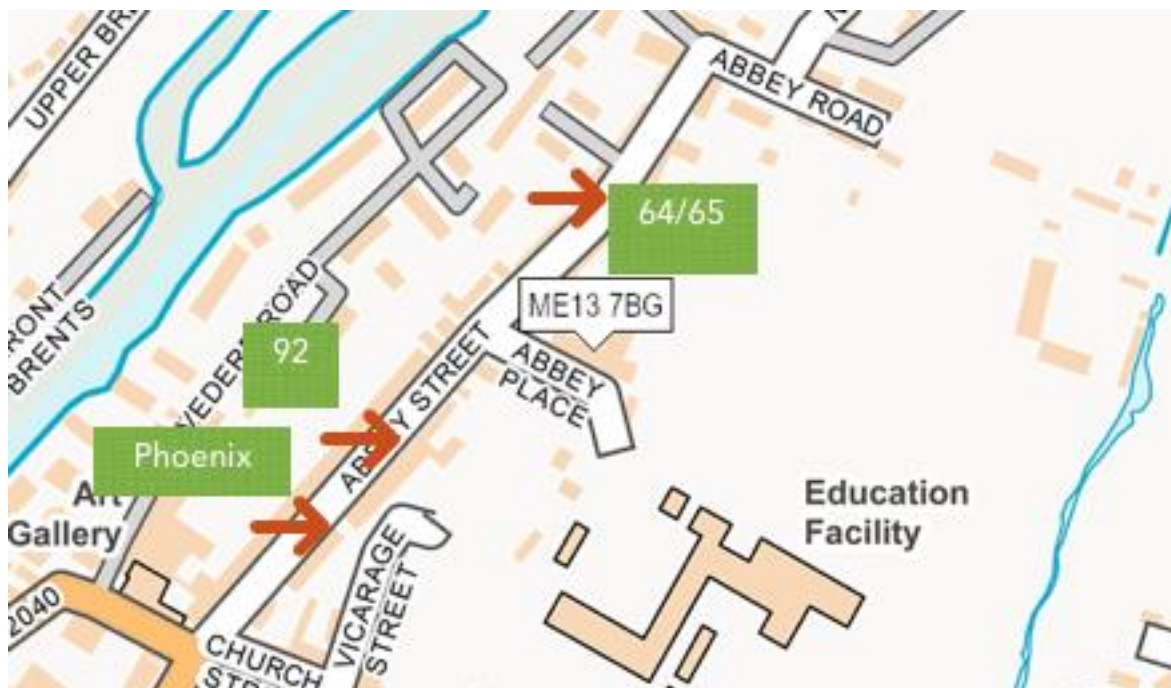
The potential loss of parking spaces at these passing spaces can be further overcome by creating more spaces in Abbey Place. This can be achieved by increasing the size of the bay (by approximately 2m) outside the Fighting Cocks Cottage, making

it a triple bay and creating a double bay at the entrance to Abbey Place next to the first grass verge.

The Association believes that these proposals are viable, low cost and will enhance the existing streetscape. They could result in a net gain of parking spaces yet provide meaningful and obvious passing spaces which could go a long way in helping the traffic movement problems. The presentation of the analysis was approved at the Association meeting on 3rd June 2019.



We sincerely hope that the relevant authorities will constructively evaluate our proposals which the residents have formulated, debated and believe is the way forward to help overcome the very real problems that the Abbey neighbourhood is currently experiencing.



8. References

This proposal was drawn up using the Kent Planning Officers Group's "[Community Led Plans Guidance Note](#)" document as a guide.

In brief, Kent's community led plan is a Swale Borough Council initiative, led by local people planning for the future of their village, town, parish or neighbourhood. They do this by producing a common vision of how their community should look or develop in the future and, importantly, set an agenda for working together and with other partners to deliver this through the statutory planning system and/or other means.