

Parking survey

Between 28 September and 1 October 2015, Spondon Village Partnership (SVP) ran an online survey, seeking people's experience and opinions on parking in the village centre. 144 responses were received; giving a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 8%.

To supplement the numeric results and investigate some of the text comments, the 3 main car parks in the village centre were monitored for one day (Thursday 12 May) between 8am and 8pm. These are:

1. Village Hall – 42 spaces with no limits on waiting time, including 4 designated for disabled parking plus a "loading area" (limited to 10 minute stay). This is a public car park owned by the City Council.
2. Chapelside – 22 spaces, including 1 designated for disabled parking. This is a private car park, marked "for precinct customers" only with a waiting limit of 2 hours. As this is not routinely monitored, the restrictions are largely ignored. In addition, 2 spaces designated for disabled parking on Chapel Street opposite the car park were also monitored.
3. Poplar Avenue – 36 spaces, including 2 designated for disabled parking (a 3rd has markings that are now so faint as to be unnoticeable). This is marked as "Customer parking" for the Co-operative store on Sitwell Street, albeit with no waiting restrictions. Again, this is not routinely monitored and the restriction is largely ignored.

Survey respondents were first asked for their general view, from a choice of 4:

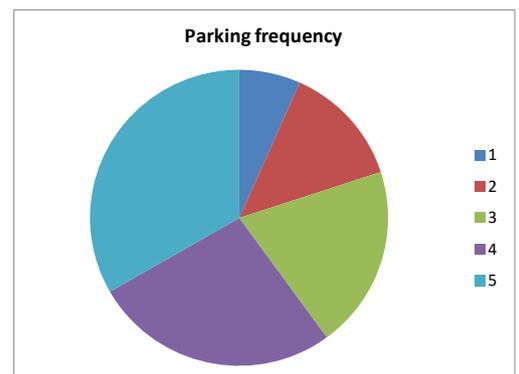
| | |
|--|-----|
| Parking is the single most important issue which deters people from visiting the village centre. | 36% |
| Although a deterrent to visiting the village centre, there are other issues which should have a higher priority. | 26% |
| This is not much of a problem to me, although I have concerns on behalf of others. | 25% |
| This is not really a problem | 11% |
| Other reason | 2% |

Only 2 respondents offered an "other reason":

- I don't think it is a single issue nor do I feel there are other important that have a priority
- I myself feel that other issues are more of a problem putting some people off using the village at other times like in the evening

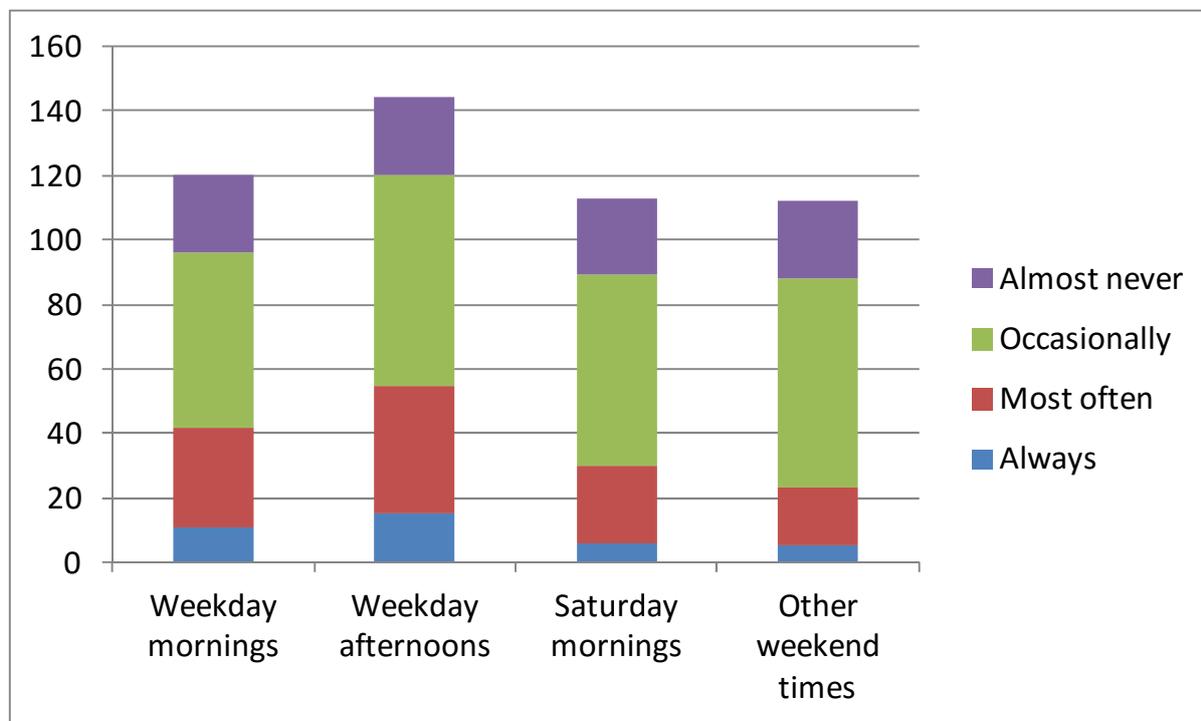
Respondents were then asked how often they park in the village centre:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|---|
| Every weekday at least once | 7% | 1 |
| Several times a week | 41% | 2 |
| More than once a month | 35% | 3 |
| Less than once a month | 11% | 4 |
| Other (please add a comment below) | 7% | 5 |



Of those offering a different frequency, 2 were resident in the centre so had no parking requirement. Others gave a text version of one of the options, with one saying “never” and one “I try not to take my car into the village, as it's already over crowded”.

Respondents were then asked what times during the week they tended to park.



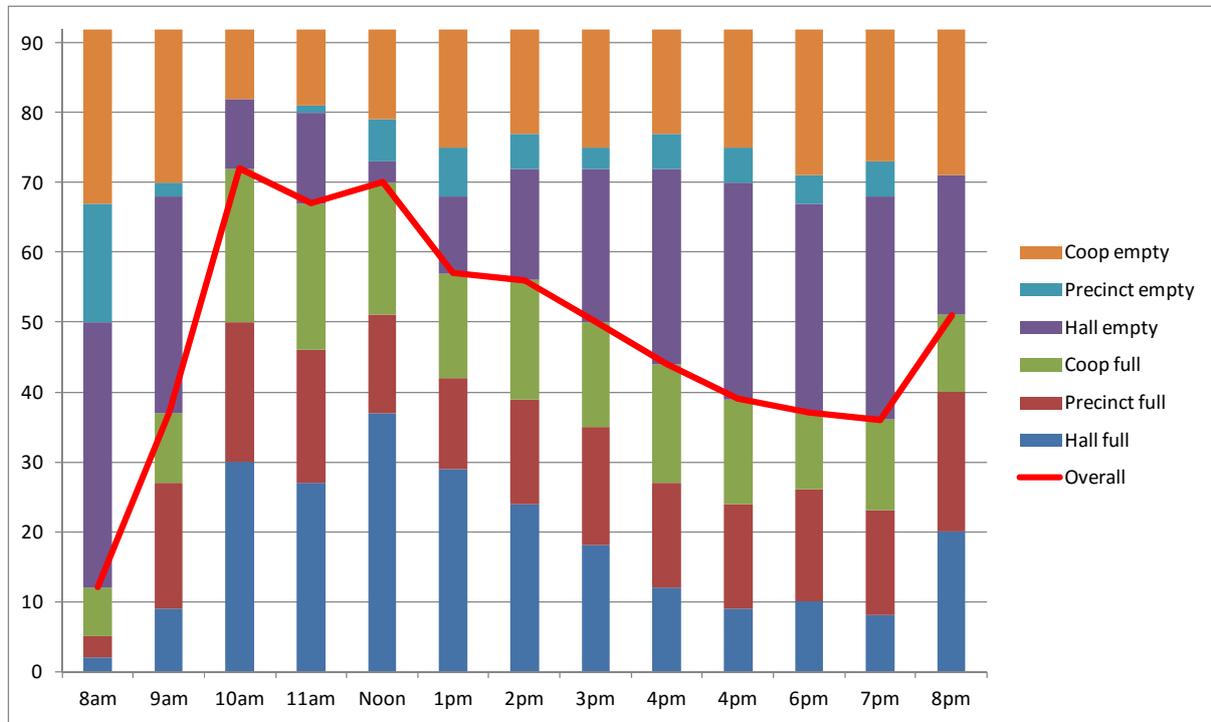
There is a surprising, if slight, preference for weekday afternoons, which contradicted the one day of monitoring undertaken. Thursday 12 May was chosen for monitoring as it is likely to be one of the busiest for the village centre – all shops as well as the Library are open and the Village Hall is heavily used. Detailed results of that are here:

| Spaces ¹ | 8am | 9am | 10am | 11am | Noon | 1pm | 2pm | 3pm | 4pm | 5pm | 6pm | 7pm | 8pm | Avg |
|---------------------|-----|-----|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Hall full | 2 | 9 | 30 | 27 | 37 | 29 | 24 | 18 | 12 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 20 | 18.1 |
| Precinct full | 3 | 18 | 20 | 19 | 14 | 13 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 15 | 20 | 15.4 |
| Coop full | 7 | 10 | 22 | 21 | 19 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 11 | 13 | 11 | 14.8 |
| Hall empty | 38 | 31 | 10 | 13 | 3 | 11 | 16 | 22 | 28 | 31 | 30 | 32 | 20 | 21.9 |
| Precinct empty | 17 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 4.6 |
| Coop empty | 25 | 22 | 10 | 11 | 13 | 17 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 17 | 21 | 19 | 21 | 17.2 |
| Hall %age | 5 | 23 | 75 | 68 | 93 | 73 | 60 | 45 | 30 | 23 | 25 | 20 | 50 | 45 |
| P'cinct %age | 15 | 90 | 100 | 95 | 70 | 65 | 75 | 85 | 75 | 75 | 80 | 75 | 100 | 77 |
| Coop %age | 22 | 31 | 69 | 66 | 59 | 47 | 53 | 47 | 53 | 47 | 34 | 41 | 34 | 46 |

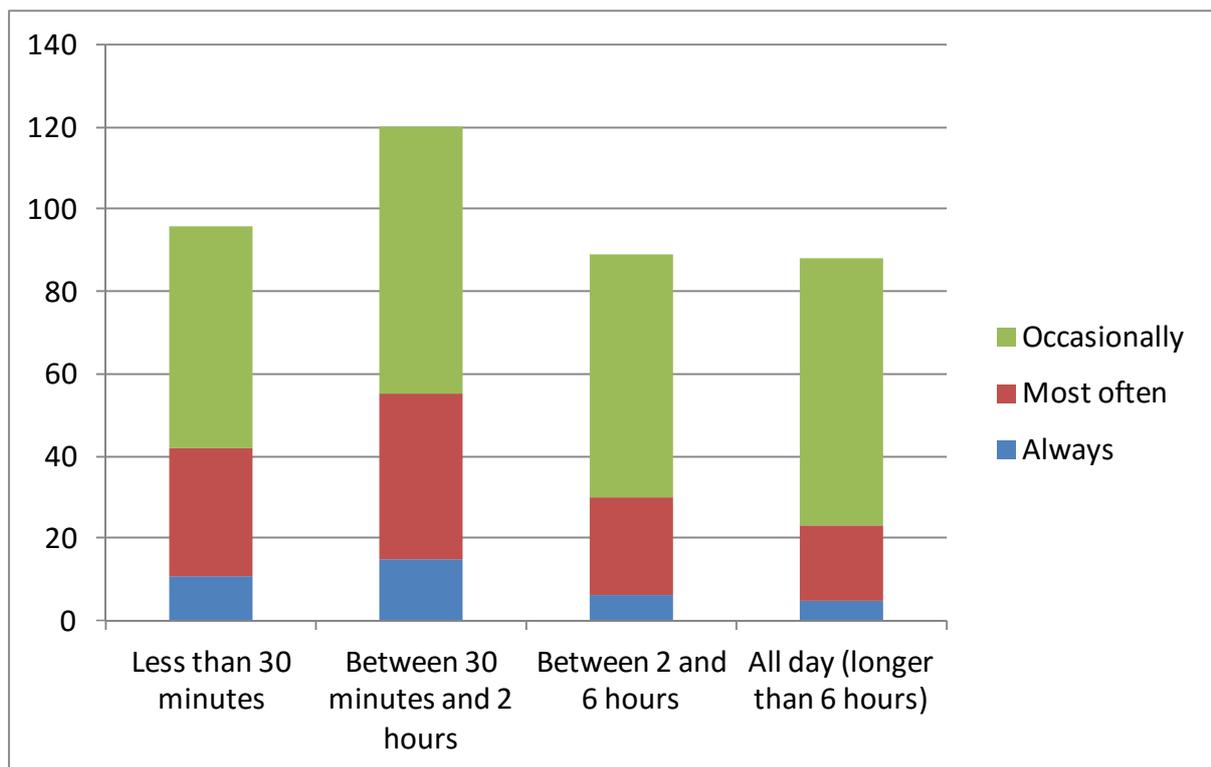
¹ Spaces counted are “general” ones, i.e. not designated for disabled parking or loading/unloading

The busiest period is 10/11am when the precinct car park is 100% and 95% full. However, it should be noted that during those periods there are over 10 free spaces in both the Hall and Co-op car parks.

This can be shown graphically.



Survey respondents were asked how long they usually parked.

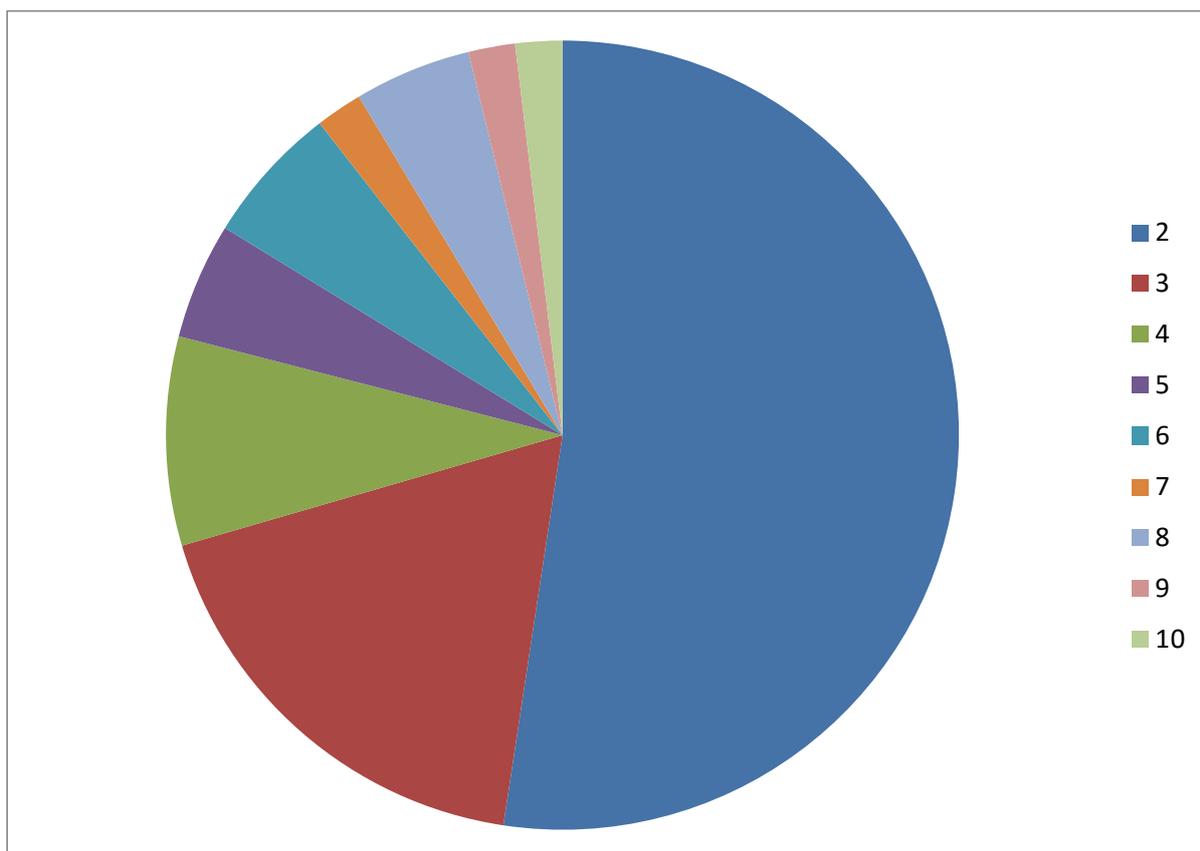


This tends to confirm that the majority of car park users are relatively short-term, with only 13% regularly parking for longer than 2 hours.

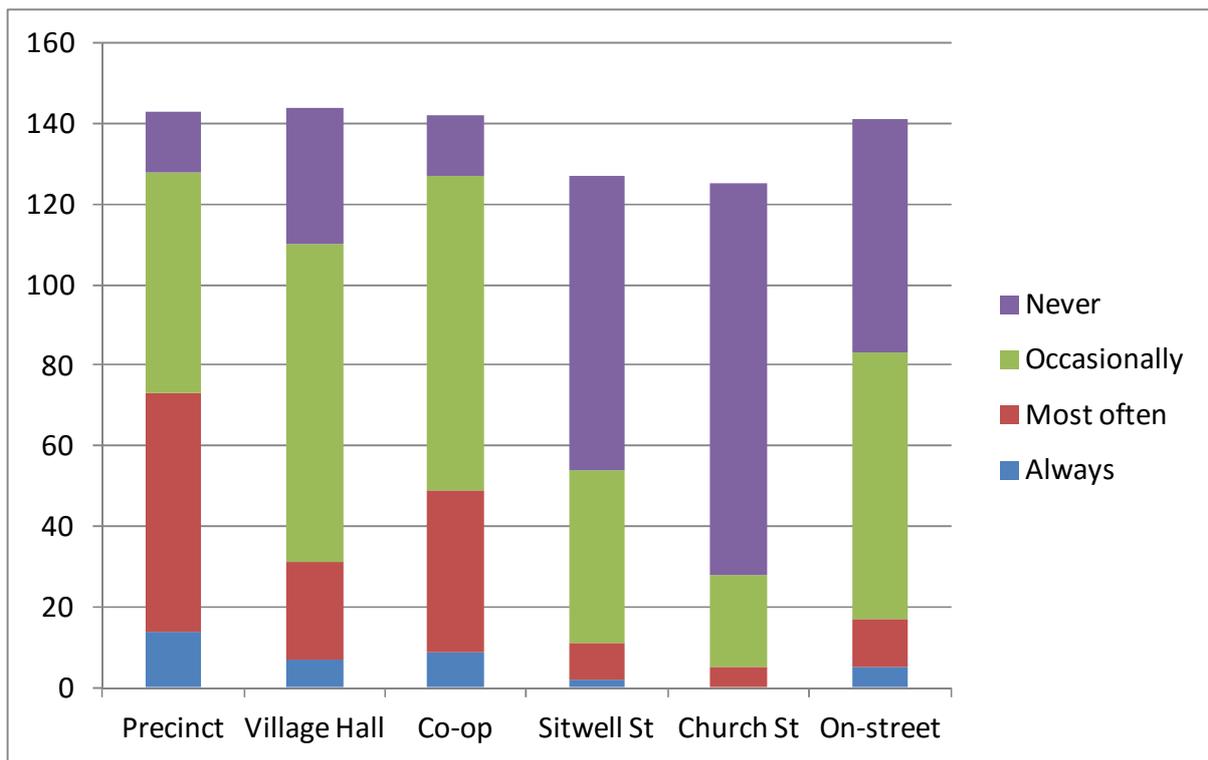
There is a common view that the village centre car parks are “filled” with long-term parkers - those who use them as “park and ride” to get into town or by shop staff. A typical comment from the September survey was “some vehicles appear to be there all day, belonging to people who work in the various businesses in and around the village centre”. The monitoring recorded registration numbers to establish whether this was the case. In fact, the vast majority of cars were only recorded on one occasion (implying a parking duration of less than 2 hours). The number of consecutive occasions when the same car was observed more than once was as follows:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Frequency | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Number | 55 | 19 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 2 |

The longest stay observed in the Precinct was 6 hours. Both the Hall and Co-op car parks had a single instance of one car staying for 10 hours but there were never more than 3 bays occupied for a lengthy period.

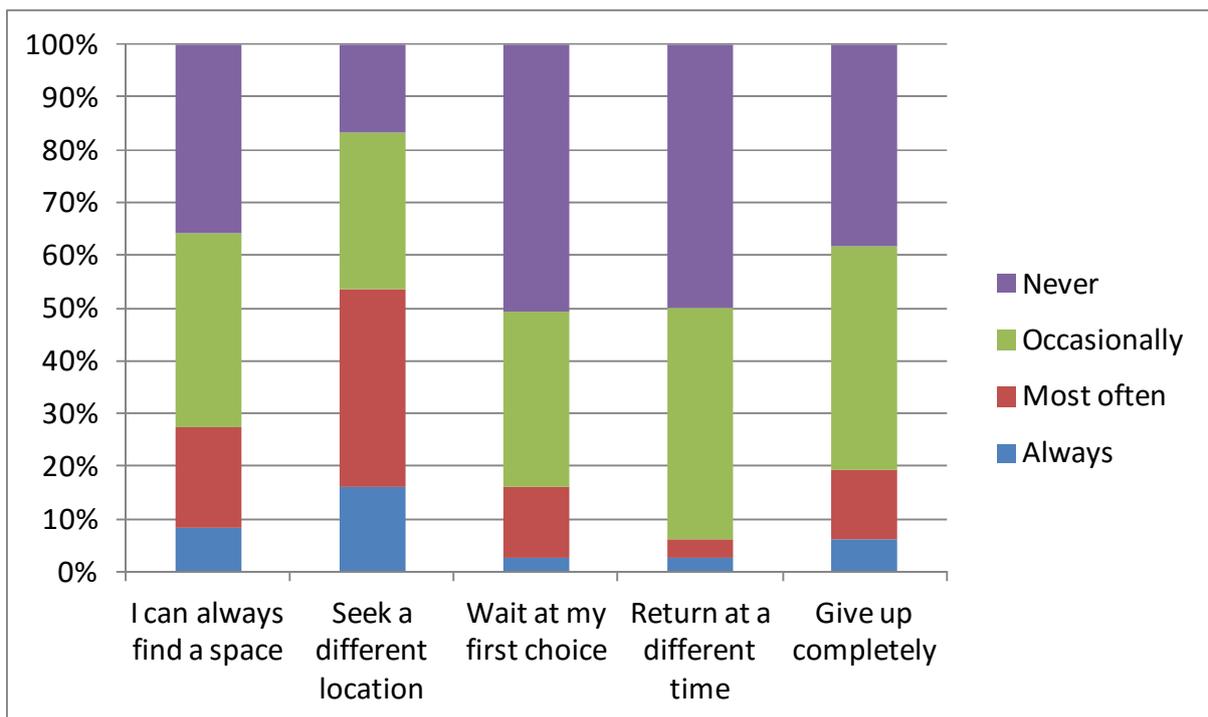


The survey then asked which car parks were favoured by respondents.



This shows a clear preference for Chapelside precinct, followed by the Co-op car park in Poplar Avenue. Sitwell Street (which is largely reserved parking) and Church Street (which is comparatively far from the village centre) are rarely used. In fact, 36 respondents were unaware of the existence of one or both of these car parks.

The next question investigated what happened if the respondent could not immediately find a space in their first choice location.



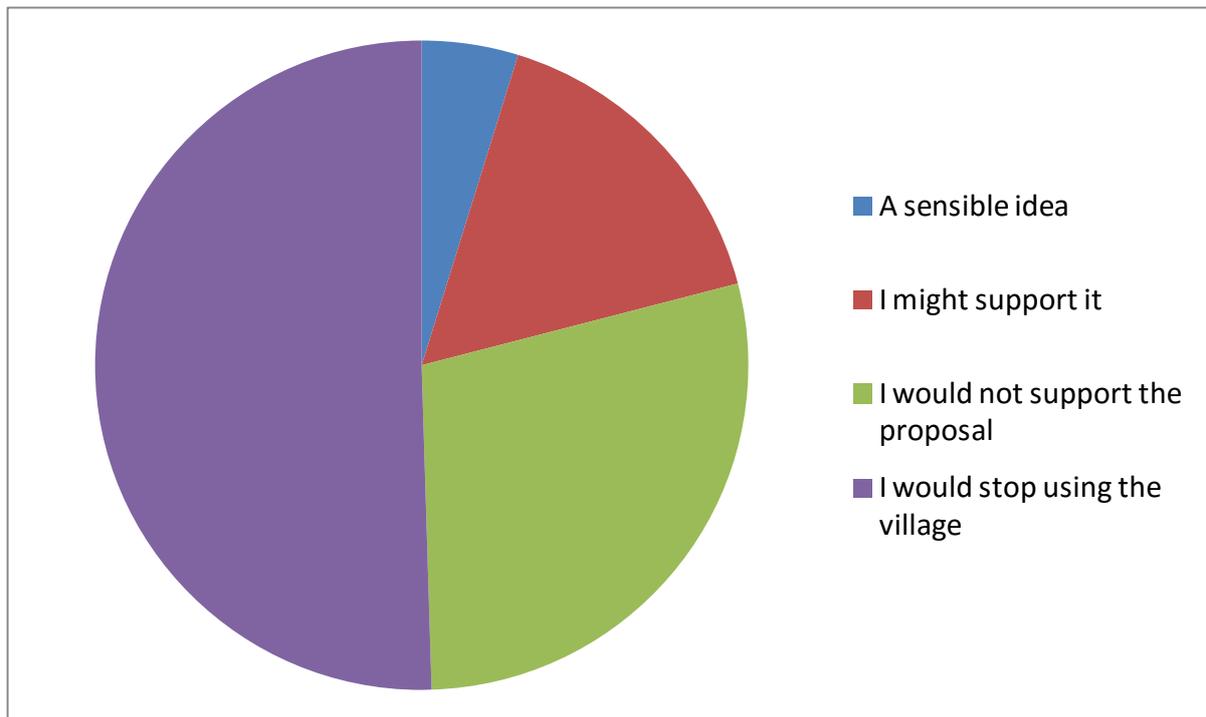
Taking the “Always” and “Most often” categories, it can be seen that about 25% are successful in always finding a space and, if not, 50% will then try an alternative location. A small number will simply wait at their first choice, rarely will they try again later and only a small fraction will give up completely. 3 respondents who “give up completely” added a comment that they would then go and shop outside the village.

Casual observation might suggest that those preferring the Chapelside car park employ a different strategy to others but in fact the profile is almost identical.

The precinct car park was monitored in May for any queuing but there was none recorded throughout the day. General observation does show occasional queuing but one must conclude that this is transitory and not continual. Throughout the day, it was noted that there were cars parked in addition to the marked bays. However, as this happens when there are available marked bays, one must conclude that this is a matter of personal preference, rather than necessity.

In this survey, as in the more general one conducted in March 2015, the White Swan corner was cited as a deterrent to pedestrians, meaning that if the destination is the Chapel Street shops, only the Chapelside precinct car park is regarded as a viable option.

In the survey, views were then sought on charging for parking. It is, perhaps, not surprising that this was not a popular option with over 75% unsupportive and 2/3 of them saying they would not use the village centre at all. Inevitably, some viewed this as a revenue-earning opportunity rather than a strategy to improve parking.



However, in the comments, some of those opposed to the idea suggested that a “free parking allowance” would make it acceptable. The monitoring showed that an allowance of, say, 4 hours free parking would cover almost all of the parking and so would have no significant deterrent effect. Alternative suggestions of a parking fee that would be refunded for genuine village centre users would be extremely difficult to administer, involving Library customers as well as Village Hall and GP surgery users.

The usage of disabled bays was also analysed (the “maximum” column represents the number of bays multiplied by the monitoring periods):

| Disabled bays | Total | Max | Unused | Ineligible | Unused | Ineligible |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|--------|----------------|--------|------------|
| Hall | 4 | 52 | 16 | 5 ² | 31% | 14% |
| Precinct ³ | 3 | 39 | 17 | 6 | 44% | 15% |
| Coop | 2 | 26 | 5 | 3 | 19% | 14% |

The ineligible number represents those cars parked in a designated bay without displaying the required blue badge.

The waiting restriction on the “loading bay” at the Hall car park seems to be observed generally.

However, Library staff report that the loading bay is often used for longer than the designated 10 minutes, as well as a greater abuse of the disabled bays on a Saturday morning (when the Hall is used by “occasional”, rather than regular, hirers).

Conclusions

1. Whilst there is a common perception that there is a “parking problem” in the village centre, this does not seem to be borne out by observation. There are occasions when the precinct car park is full (or nearly) so but there is usually space in other areas.
2. Relatively few of those surveyed do not persist in finding a parking space eventually and an even smaller fraction give up and go elsewhere. This suggests that “parking problems” are an inconvenience rather than a real deterrent to village centre use.
3. Again, there is a belief that centre car parks are used as “park and ride” facilities for the city centre. In fact, the occurrence of “long stay parking” is minimal and is probably explained by a small amount of parking by shop and library staff.
4. The provision of disabled parking bays seems to be adequate and is largely honoured.

² Note that the Hall “ineligible” count includes 2 instances where a particular Hall hirer persistently flouts the restriction, despite being spoken to by the Hall Manager.

³ Including 2 bays on Chapel Street