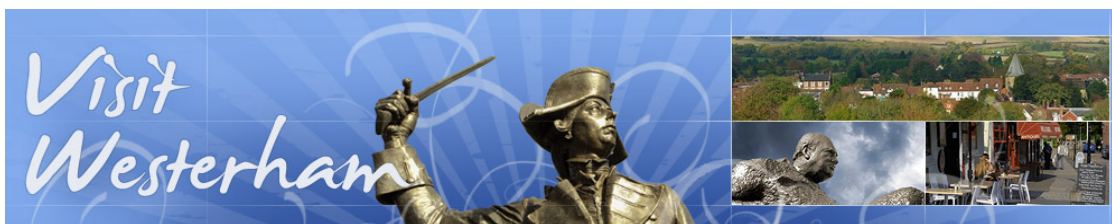


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- E. Westerham Health check April 2010
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1.0 Summary of Challenges

This report seeks to describe parking challenges and demand in Westerham and explore solutions over the next 10 -15 years. The aim is to support the economy of the town and to enhance the wellbeing of residents, visitors, and workers.

Westerham has limited transport alternatives to the car: residents number about 5,000 with a significant influx of daily workers during the week and tourists, many of whom visit the town shops and pubs/restaurants and our two National Trust properties during the week and at weekends.

Making best use of on and off street parking spaces is a delicate balance in any town. The majority of spaces are managed by SDC.

To be reviewed: Existing supply, demand including growth, timings, charges, cover for cars, cycle, coaches caravans, comparison with other towns in the area, etc.

There is evidence of business and visitors avoiding Westerham town centre because of parking issues, including numbers of convenient spaces, charges and signage.

1.1 Summary of Proposed Solutions

- 1) Free parking in the Darent car park for up to 3 hours.
- 2) Rural Grassprotecta overflow car park next to Darent car park.
- 3) Revised parking charges/restrictions including 15 minutes 'pop n shop' time in the town centre and time restrictions in Croydon Rd and Fullers Hill extended to 3 hours.
- 4) Parking permits price and flexibility changes.
- 5) Improved signage and lighting.
- 6) Better targeted and customer satisfaction focused enforcement.
- 7) Improved maintenance of the path twix Darent car park and the town.
- 8) New sites for car park spaces.
- 9) Planning permission issues.
- 10) Park and Ride initiative.

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2.0 Existing Parking Facilities



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2.1 Car Park spaces, restrictions and charges.

Westerham has 3 car parks run by SDC with 145 bays including 8 disabled bays:

Darent	97
Quebec Av	35
Vicarage Hill	13

Total	145
--------------	------------

Current Car Park parking charges for The Darent and Quebec Av:-

Monday to Saturday 8.30-18.30

£0.20	30 mins
£0.40	1 hour
£0.60	2 hours
£1.00	4 hours
£2.90	All day

Vicarage Hill:-

Monday to Saturday 8.30-18.30

£0.10	30 mins
£0.50	1 hour
£1.00	2 hour.

Max stay 2 hours. No return within 2 hours

Although these charges are cheaper than those in Sevenoaks town centre, the SDC car parks in Eynsford, Shoreham and Kemsing **are free**. Swanley has similar rates except on Saturday when parking is free.

There is **free town centre parking** for at least 3 hours in most neighbouring towns including Edenbridge, Oxted, Warlingham and Caterham on the Hill. (See Appendix B).

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2.2 Current On Street Parking - spaces, restrictions, charges

Westerham has about 96 on street parking spaces (including 3 disabled bays): -

Fullers Hill	10
Market Square	22
Croydon Rd	30
The Grange	15
The Green	19
Total	96

Parking charges as follows: -

Monday to Saturday 8.30-18.30

£0.20	30 mins
£0.50	1 hour
£1.00	2 hour.

No return within 1 hour.

There are 49 permit holders in Market Square, Croydon Road and The Grange. Permit holders on The Green number 14.

Time restrictions in other local town centres vary from ½ hour to 2 hours, but on street parking areas in Edenbridge, Oxted, Warlingham, Biggin Hill and Woldingham are all free. See Appendix B.

2.3 Parking Permits

2.3.1 Residents Parking Permits

SDC issue Residents Permits for the Darent, Quebec Av, Vicarage Hill and The Green.

Understandably these need to be particularly carefully restricted in the areas where parking spaces are severely limited and the general population needs access to parking to sustain local shops and businesses, eg The Green and Vicarage Hill. SDC charges £35 for first cars.

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Comparison of parking spaces and permits issued

		Number of spaces	Number permits	Effective no. Visitor spaces	% spaces left left for visitors
The Green		19	14	5	26%
Croydon Rd	30				
The Grange	15				
Market Sq	20				
		65	49	16	25%
Fullers Hill		9	6	3	33%
All On Street Parking		93	69	24	26%
Vicarage Hill		12	5	7	58%
All Town Centre spaces		105	74	31	30%
<i>Plus out of town spaces</i>					
Quebec Avenue		32	20	12	37%
The Darent Car Park		93	25	68	73%

2.3.2 Car Park Season Tickets

SDC offer an annual season ticket for The Darent car park for £50pa or £12.50pq. This seems to be a very reasonable ticket, designed to provide affordable parking for shop/office staff and it seems to be grossly underused.

Discussions are due to be held to promote this ticket and encourage more cars out of the town centre.

2.4 Motor cycles/Coaches /Cycles

2.4.1 Motor Cycles

Westerham has a designated motorcycle area in the Darent car park and there are plans also for another at Fullers Hill.

2.4.2 Coaches

There are 3 bays in the Darent car park for coaches and buses. One is in regular use by the local buses.

2.4.3 Cycles

Westerham has a cycle rack for parking bikes on the Green.

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2.5 Parking Provisions for the Disabled

There are currently 11 parking bays reserved for those that are registered disabled. The Darent has 4, Market Square 2, Quebec Avenue 3, Fullers Hill 1 and Vicarage Hill 1. The ones in Market Sq and Fullers Hill are in regular use. However cars without badges sometimes misuse those in Market Square. This can mean that occasionally parkers with valid badges may have problems parking there. The bays in The Darent and Quebec Avenue are rarely used.

3.0 Usage Survey

Over the period 11th September to 20th October, records were made of all available parking spaces throughout the town (Appendix C). Although the report does not claim to be statistically robust (e.g. the times were not randomly drawn), it is an honest representation and does highlight in detail the problems faced by the town. The results are summarized as follows:

Market Square

Market Square is in the centre of Westerham and offers 20 parking spaces (+2 disabled bays). The survey shows that, during the main part of the day, there is rarely more than one space available and more often than not it is full. Cars are often seen waiting along the edge and in the unloading bay. There is evidence too that, in this area in particular, a few individuals regularly flout parking restrictions. The disabled bays here are well used.

The Grange (opposite Co-Op):

This is a popular parking area close to the town centre where there are retail, restaurant and business outlets. At full capacity there are probably 15 spaces but bad parking can make it much less and sometimes spaces are suitable only for smaller cars and confident parkers. The usage survey has recorded no times when there have been more than 3 available spaces in the main part of the day and usually one or less.

Croydon Road:

This area has about 30 spaces. The nearest spaces are 50 meters walk from the Grange and 100 meters from Market Square.

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The usage survey shows that Croydon Road often has spaces when the rest of the town centre's parking is at capacity and the survey has yet to record it full. Its lack of popularity may be because: -

- It is further from the centre.
- More than half of the spaces are on the narrow service road (but large empty spaces have been regularly recorded)
- Passing traffic is unaware of the spaces (inadequate signage?)

Fullers Hill:

The Fullers Hill car park is treated by SDC as 'on road parking'. It is a popular car park with 9 spaces, a disabled bay (regularly used) and an unloading bay. The usage survey shows that it is often full and rarely has more than 2 spaces free during normal shopping hours. There are 6 permit holders.

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The Darent Car Park:

This car park has 93 spaces, 3 disabled bays, an area for motorcycles and 3 coaches. The parking bays are not well delineated and it does not run at 100% efficiency. The car park is on the edge of town and access to the centre is either by footpath through the churchyard and the Green or along the A25.

The survey suggests that the Darent has spare capacity most of the time **except Saturdays and Sundays and/or when there is an event in the Town**. Then the car park cannot cope with the demand and cars park in the bus/coach bays, on the verges and in the access road. The Darent Car Park has 25 permits.

This is the Darent car park on Sunday 14 April 2013, a typical weekend.



*The vehicles in the picture **were parked** and the drivers have walked away.*

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These photos were taken looking back up the ramp at the entrance to Darent Car Park on the same day. In desperation, people were parking either side of the ramp.



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The motorcycle area and disabled bays in the Darent Car park are rarely used even when the car park is overflowing. Photo taken on the same day 14/04/2013



Use of Season / Non- resident Tickets in Darent Car Park

SDC have issued only a few season tickets. They are available to everyone and cost £50pa (£12.50pq). At 21 pence per day for a normal working year, this should be a popular ticket. Its lack of appeal may be because:

- It is a few minutes' walk up hill to the town centre.
- Parkers are unaware of the offer (poorly advertised).

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Vicarage Hill Car Park:

This car park is opposite the Green and close to Water Lane, which accesses Squerryes Estate for walkers. It has 13 spaces, which are well used. The survey found that usage can be variable, but often doesn't have much more than 1 space free during normal shopping hours. There are 5 permit holders.

Quebec Avenue Car Park:

This car park is in front of Westerham Hall and has 32 spaces plus 3 disabled bays. The survey has rarely found it at full capacity except when there are events at the hall when it's full and parkers have to search around the neighbouring residential area and the King George's Field Car Park. Disabled bays are rarely used. Permit holders number 20.

4.0 Parking Enforcement Policy

The Westerham Town Partnership has consulted a number of residents, business owners and tourists within the town as to the enforcement of parking restrictions.

We note that Westerham accounts for 24% of the total number of on street parking fines in the whole Sevenoaks District (SDC Annual Parking Report 2011/12).

Parking availability in the town is dire and we believe this is the main driver of parking offences. We welcome good enforcement of parking restrictions but the disproportionately high fines revenue from an otherwise law abiding town, signals a huge underlying problem.

Obviously the first way to tackle this is to look at the inadequate provision of spaces themselves, which is done elsewhere in this document. Supporting this, though, participants in the survey would like to address the methods of enforcement.

On the one hand, we can cite several cases of visitors who have overrun their permitted parking time by a few minutes and have been so put off by the parking officer's manner that they have resolved never to return. On the other hand, we have a few offenders that repeatedly and regularly flout the restrictions, block town centre spaces for hours and seem unrepentant. We need SDC officers to be able to distinguish between these two types of offender and be allowed to deal with them differently. We need SDC officers to be part of the solution to our problems.

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On a practical level, we would like them to carry on effectively policing the parking zones but to be trained to promote a constructive customer service attitude. This would need a change of emphasis to pursue a helpful and friendly approach. Specifically, we recommend they:-

- Have and use the discretion to waive up to, say, 5/10 minutes over the allotted restricted time for inadvertent offenders .
- Have and use the discretion to allow a few minutes grace time for unloading where no harm is being done.
- If possible, have a history of past offenders' number plates and target those that repeatedly flout the restrictions.
- Have a sympathetic understanding to the background problem. We suffer from a poor parking reputation here and we would like your officers to help address that problem and limit the real commercial damage it causes.
- Have knowledge of all parking spaces in the town and offer helpful advice where they can.
- It would also be particularly helpful if repeat offending could be firmly addressed at the administrative and legal level to stop the corrosive effect on other users as well as the blocking of parking spaces.

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5.0 Charges & Fines Income

Extract from SDC's Annual Parking Report 2011/12 :-

Net Parking Income :	2011/12					
	Sevenoaks District				Westerham	
	Parking Spaces	Net Income (ex PCNs)	No of PCNs	PCN income	Parking Spaces	Fines (PCNs)
On Street Parking	531	£142266	4528	£133745	96	1093
Car Parks	1910	£1406677	5871	£147684	145	298
Total	2441	£1548943	10399	£281429	241	1391

The above table highlights the disproportional contribution that Westerham fines appear to have been making to the District's net income. Westerham has 18% of the district's 'on street' parking spaces and incurs 24% of the total 'on street' parking fines – presumably accounting for more than £24,000 in fine revenue. As a ratio to head of population, (who suffer the consequences) fines revenue is completely imbalanced.

When charges are included (assuming similar usage/charges across the district), total 'on street' income earned in Westerham are estimated at more than about £70,000. Our additional contribution to car park fees is estimated at £41,000. We believe that it is time for a lot of this revenue to be reinvested into schemes to alleviate Westerham's chronic parking problem.

6.0 Signage

It is clear from the demand survey (Appendix C) that some parkers are unaware of all the public parking areas in Westerham.

It would be useful to have a map on all the ticket machines in the town centre showing other parking zones and highlighting ample free weekday parking in the Darent.

The route from the Darent to the town via the churchyard and the A25 needs to be better signed and lit.

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7.0 Future Additional Demands -Town Developments

National Trust (Quebec House):

The NT has invested heavily in Quebec House and set a target of 23,000 visitors in 2014, and heavy advertising will support this. This target is an increase of 5000 (27%) on 2013. Bearing in mind that we are not on a train line or a particularly frequent bus service (one every hour from Sevenoaks and one every 75 minutes from the Oxted direction), the majority of visitors will arrive by car. The NT has already had complaints that there is limited parking available over weekends (Quebec House is open every weekend). Indeed Quebec House records repeatedly showed falls in attendance on Saturdays when St Mary's had a wedding –more evidence of the inadequate weekend parking facilities. No doubt, if Quebec House lost revenue, so did many of the town's traders. See Appendix A.

King George's Playing Fields:

A Sport England grant enabled the building of 2 new junior football pitches but no consideration seems to have been given to the parking of the extra cars for the additional teams of players, referees and spectators. The WSA car park is inadequate and The Darent is already literally full to overflowing on Sundays during the season.

Office Demand:

On average during the recession, to 2013, 20% of the town's office space has been vacant. Although these offices have some parking, there is no allowance for any visitors to the offices. When they are let as the economy recovers, they and their visitors would place a greater strain on our already stretched parking resources.

We expect to have a 100% occupancy of the retail outlets, many of which have no onsite parking which results in them using spaces in the town for staff/visitor parking.

School site (London Road):

Although the school site on London Road has been re-designated for housing, from a nursing home, the site itself has not been sold. The permission on the site is for 30 houses, so we would expect these to be families and use Westerham as their local shopping and eating area. They will also have visitors who would also require additional parking.

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Fairway Copse (Ward Homes Development):

12 houses have been built on this site and the families can be expected to come and use Westerham's shops and restaurants. Brasted does not have a supermarket and its only food establishment is a gastro pub.

Fountain Park (Golf Course Houses):

The families of 5 new houses join our resident numbers.

Charman's Farm (Beggars Lane):

Henry Warde (Squerryes Estate) is putting forward an application to open a farm shop, develop a Winery, and also transfer the Westerham Brewery to this site. It is to be expected that this would increase the number of visitors to Westerham and the site may be linked to the town by a 'Park and Ride' scheme. It is envisaged that there will be parking on site.

When factoring in the additional pressures from the above developments, it is clear that Westerham's limited parking facilities will be further strained. The Darent Car Park is already woefully inadequate on Sundays and a huge increase in cars related to Quebec House and the two new playing fields will be particularly damaging. These cars will arrive early and substantially reduce space for other users – particularly the tourists and shoppers on whom the towns' traders depend.

8.0 Parker's Demand Survey

Still on-going. The preliminary findings support all our recommendations. The questionnaire (Appendix D) is being answered by regular visitors only.

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9.0 Park & Ride Initiative with National Trust and Squerryes Estate

This is a proposal for a trial of a park and ride system from the yard on Charman's Farm to the centre of town, to Quebec House and to Chartwell.

Timing of Charman's Development

Dec 2013 Planning application for Farm Shop, Winery & Brewery

Easter 2014 - Park and Ride with a double decker bus to trial over the Easter Period – to be funded by NT.

2014 building work carried out, Farm Shop opens Xmas 2014

Easter 2015 Park & Ride starts on trial basis as follows:

Site: Charman's Yard (which holds about 50 cars, already suitable surface) for a trial period of the summer.

Demand: from tourists and town office workers

Costings:

Item	Est. Cost	Source
Westerham (branded as we wish) 17-seater bus provided by Westerham Cars and rented on a daily basis for £230, say 28 days = say £6,500	£6,500	Squerryes' current proposal is Squerryes 25%, NT 37.5% Town (Partners: Retailers/TC and TP?) 37.5%. Sevenoaks got a grant from Mary Portas for 100% of trial bus running costs) Offset by ticket charge.
Charman's Yard	nil	No cost for parking in the yard (need to put in place a system to avoid long termers)
Bus Stops	£400	?
External Bus branding	£500	? Offset by internal advertising

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Leaflets & Posters, Signage	£500	?
External Advertising	?	NT/Squerries/WTP

Running times: On a continuous day loop on summer weekends, and holidays

Morning & evening commuter bus (or two) on weekdays 8.45am and 5.30pm throughout year

Charge £2? for a whole day tourist ticket ...commuter bus?

Longer Term

Potential to expand into field behind the yard that backs onto the M25 but this would need planning permission and is not necessary for the Trial. Cost unknown of preparing surface (looks fine this evening but there are ruts in the ground) but Squerries willing to provide levelling tractor and hard-core entrance.

(Extract from WTP minutes, July 2013)

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10.0 Proposals

Proposal 1: Free Parking in the Darent Car Park (up to 3 hours)

Parking in Westerham is limited and in constant demand by a huge number of users. It is imperative however to ensure that those wishing to park and spend have a good chance of finding a space in the town centre. It is on them that the survival of our shops and businesses depend. In order to free up the centre of town, we must encourage as many cars as possible to park into the only car park we have with good weekday capacity- The Darent. It is only a 5-minute walk from the heart of Westerham and is particularly suitable for medium stay shoppers, office/shop staff, tourists etc. It is clear that all the towns and villages around us have benefitted from free town centre car parks. For us not to follow this route would risk losing valued shops and crippling the town's future. We propose that parking charges be amended to give an initial three hour 'free but ticketed' parking in the Darent Car Park.

Proposal 2: Grassprotecta overflow car park next to the Darent Car Park.

If the other proposals are accepted and successful, we would expect the Darent to see higher weekday use and, in the future, approach weekday full capacity. Sundays are already at capacity with regular use of verges and the access road itself - and that is before the effect of the extra football pitches and the National Trust's promotion of Quebec House. We would not want to permanently scar Green Belt land and the beautiful approach to the town, but believe that a modest overflow car park using Grassprotecta would be a sensible solution to the difficult predicament we have been placed in.

Squerryes Estate has offered the field to the East of the Darent Car park as an overflow. Companies offering Grassprotecta are preparing quotes and a meeting with landscape architects is scheduled. It is hoped that an Entrust Grant would fund this project. Some of the disproportionate SDC fines revenue to be reinvested into this scheme.

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Proposed site next to Darent car park with possible area marked with tape:-



Example of a Grassprotecta car park from their brochure:-



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Proposal 3: Revised Parking Charges/restrictions

We believe our proposed charges (or a version of them, tailored after sight of SDC ticket data), would yield at least as high an increase in income as that proposed by SDC. Critically, however, it would do so in such a way as to be attractive to residents, promote Westerham's economy and thereby help to secure the town's future.

	Current	SDC proposal	WTP proposal
Darent			
15 mins			0.00
30 mins	0.20	0.30	0.00
1 hour	0.40	0.50	0.00
2 hours	0.60	0.70	0.00
3 hours		1.20	0.00
4 hours	1.00	1.20	1.20
All day	2.90	3.10	3.10
Quebec Av			
15 mins			0.00
30 mins	0.20	0.30	0.20
1 hour	0.40	0.50	0.50
2 hours	0.60	0.70	0.70
4 hours	1.00	1.20	1.20
All day	2.90	3.10	3.10
Vicarage Hill max 2 hours			
15 mins			0.00
30 mins	0.10	0.20	0.20
1 hour	0.50	0.60	0.60
2 hours	1.00	1.10	1.50
Fullers Hill max 3 hours			
15 mins			0.00
30 mins	0.20	0.20	0.20
1 hour	0.50	0.60	0.60
2 hours	1.00	1.10	1.50
3 hours			2.50
The Green, The Grange and Market Square			

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max 2 hours 8am – 6pm			
	Current	SDC	WTP
15 mins			0.00
30 mins	0.20	0.20	0.20
1 hour	0.50	0.60	0.60
2 hours	1.00	1.10	1.50
Croydon Rd On Street Parking max 3 hours			
15 mins			0.00
30 mins	0.20	0.20	0.20
1 hour	0.50	0.60	0.60
2 hours	1.00	1.10	1.50
3 hours			2.50

In order to encourage passers-by to stop in Westerham for quick purchases and services that they may otherwise do elsewhere, we would like to see an initial short free parking period – say, 15/20 minutes. The time could still be ticketed to aid enforcement and avoid abuse. We hope this would give a boost to our smaller retailers who depend on high volumes of smaller spends.

See Appendix F.

To encourage medium stay shoppers to park elsewhere, charges for stays over an hour could rise significantly.

We have had requests from retailers for both shorter and longer parking restrictions, which serves to illustrate the pressures that our traders are under. We hope that the shorter stay lobby may benefit from the above.

We have also had requests from some retailers for longer time restrictions to encourage “browsing and eating”. The proposals below provide 39 spaces within walking distance of the centre for up to 3 hours.

We do not have access to sufficient facilities to compute the exact financial effect of our proposals. We do however have alternative proposals should the above be financially difficult.

We note that SDC’s proposed 13% increase in Westerham’s Car Park tariff income is considerably higher than the advertised 3.5% sought. Whilst this may be an averaging exercise, coupled with the disproportionate fines revenue, it seems that Westerham is contributing more than its share. Our own proposals may predict an even-higher-than 13% increase in revenue: should they be accepted, this additional surplus must be directed towards the costs of our expansion plans.

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Proposal 4 : Parking permits

The table in 2.3.1 above shows resident's permits issued as a proportion of the available spaces. **There are only 105 parking spaces in the town itself and against these spaces, 74 permits have been issued.** It seems therefore, that up to 70% of all available spaces could be used for extended periods by immediate residents and only 30% secured for all Westerham's other residents, shoppers and visitors. Obviously many permit holders will vacate their spaces for parts of the day but others could work in Westerham or be retired and their cars could effectively block these valuable spaces most of the time. In large numbers this is a problem.

There may, however, be some measures, which could be taken to restore a balance between the interests of immediate residents and the rest of the community:

- 1) Introduce two tier permits: permanent and off-peak (valid 6pm – 9am).
- 2) Gradually increase permanent permit prices significantly in the most critical areas (The Grange, The Green and Market Square).
- 3) Second permits should be avoided but if necessary they should be for the Darent Car Park only.
- 4) More rigorous application process in the granting of permits generally.
- 5) Any Resident's permit should be valid in their zone **and** the Darent Car park.
- 6) Croydon Rd and The Grange Permits to be valid in the Croydon Road (and Darent) only.

Proposal 5: Improved signage and lighting

It is clear from the demand survey that some parkers are unaware of all the public parking areas in Westerham. It would be useful to have stickers on the entire town centre ticket machines highlighting ample free parking in the Darent Car Park, the availability of season tickets and cheaper parking in Croydon Rd and Vicarage Hill Car Park. The route from the Darent to the town via the churchyard and the A25 could be better signed and lit.

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Proposal 6: Better targeted and customer satisfaction focused enforcement.

We would like to harness the powers of the enforcement officers to help solve our parking problems - policing with discretion and constructive advice is the more productive approach. See Section 4 and Appendix F.

It would also be particularly helpful if repeat offending could be firmly addressed at the administrative and legal level to stop the corrosive effect on other users as well as the blocking of parking spaces.

Proposal 7: Improved maintenance of the path twixt Darent car park and town.

If we are to persuade a significant number of drivers to park in the Darent, we need to consider if there is anything we can do to make the walk to the town more user friendly. We have, in the past, had complaints of flooding, lighting and accidents on slippery leaves. We should address any such issues.

Proposal 8: New sites

We are constantly searching for spare pockets of land that may be used for public parking.

Westerham Town Council is in discussion with the owners of Pitts Cottage Car Park to see if there is availability for public parking.

There is also a car park off King George's Field and adjacent to the Bowling Club car park. The Westerham Town Council is considering applying to extend spaces for use by the Sports Clubs only.

Proposal 9: Planning Permission Issues

It is absolutely critical that SDC Planning Policy considers the effect on public parking when granting planning permission in the very centre of Westerham. Allocation of more-than-adequate on site parking spaces should be required. Garages and 'one car in front of another' facilities will inevitably result in residents, their guests and second car users opting for handier public car spaces – especially in the evenings and Sundays – adding to the general pressure of central town parking.

Proposal 10: Explore the "Park and Ride" initiative – Joint venture with NT and Squerryes Estate (see Section 9)

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11.0 Conclusions

The serious issue of attracting paying visitors and shoppers to our town needs to be addressed. There is a real threat that Westerham's range of shops and businesses will not be able to survive in the future unless adequate parking is available for their customers.

All our residents as well as shops, businesses and tourists share the benefits of a thriving town centre.

We believe the above proposals are financially sound, and should be adopted as soon as possible.

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Appendix A

Letter of concern from Z Colbeck of The National Trust :

The National Trust and Westerham town have a very important relationship. The Town is the location of two of the National Trusts special places in Kent.

Firstly, Quebec House which is the charming childhood home of the 18th century famous General, General Wolfe. Wolfe was the leader of the Battle of Quebec winning this part of North America for the British against the French. The site offers an insight into life in the 18th Century and this remarkable man and his family. Visitors can also enjoy the garden and obtain a cup of tea from the coach house. Visitor numbers are normally around 20,000 per annum which is good for a historic house of this size, with links to the 18th century. However in 2013 despite all the other national Trust properties in this geographical region beating their visitor number targets by at least 6% Quebec is languishing 11% behind.

One of the key barriers is the lack of parking in Westerham which makes it difficult for visitors to access the house as there is nowhere to park. Parking needs to be improved and increased in Westerham to enable us to share this important part of our local history and enable visitors to enjoy this special place.

Visitors are crucial to the sustainability of the operation and paying for the up keep of Quebec house and garden.

Secondly we have Chartwell – family home of Sir Winston Churchill. This is one of the most visited properties in the National Trust and it receives about 200,000 visitors annually. The National Trust is broadening the offer at Chartwell to encourage visitors to explore the wider estate and woodlands and encourage them to come back and see the wonderful gardens throughout the year. The National Trust wants to increase visitor numbers by 20% by 2020. At Chartwell we have limited space for facilities and at times the queue for the restaurant is often over 45 minutes. Visitors often leave saying they are going to look to get something to eat in Westerham. Their second choice is then not possible due to parking difficulties and lack of capacity in Westerham meaning that Westerham loses out due to the lack of parking.

The relationship is also an important one for our staff and volunteers – totalling over 300 people who mostly all drive through Westerham on their way to Chartwell. Due to the parking issues in Westerham, very few use the local amenities as it is so hard to park and if you want to pop in for something the ticketing system doesn't encourage this.

Ms Z Colbeck 2/10/13

File note: Dec 2012

Ms Colbeck's predecessor repeatedly mentioned the recorded fall in attendance at Quebec House on Saturdays when St Mary's has a wedding –more evidence of the inadequate parking.

No doubt, if Quebec House lost revenue, so did many of our traders.

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Appendix B

Street parking charges in other towns

Sevenoaks:

Same rates and 2 hr restriction in town centre ie London Rd, South park, High St. Other roads have extended times and all day parking (The Vine, St Botolphs North, Holly Bush...)

Oxted:

Stay restricted to 1 hour . No return within 1 hour. Free

Edenbridge:

Stay restricted to 1 hour(2 hrs north end of High St). . No return within 1 hour. Free

Warlingham:

Stay restricted to 1 hour . No return within 1 hour. Free .

Woldingham:

Stay restricted to 2 hours . No return within 2 hours. Free .

Biggin Hill:

Stay restricted to 30 minutes. Free

Car park parking charges in other towns

Sevenoaks:

All town centre car parks are considerably more expensive than Westerham. St James Rd , St Johns Hill is the same as Westerham.

Oxted:

Ellice Rd car park is free but stay limited to 4 hours - no return within 3 hours.

Caterham on the Hill :

First 3 hours free – no return within 3 hours.

Edenbridge:

Croft Close town centre car park free.

Warlingham:

Warlingham Green car park is free but stay limited to 3 hours -no return within 2 hours.

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Appendix C

Usage of parking spaces in Westerham:

See document online at

<http://www.visitwesterham.org.uk/images/documents/DarentCPsurvey2.2013-4.2014.pdf>

Appendix D

Demand Survey Questionnaire – to follow

Appendix E

Westerham Health check April 2010 – Review findings at

http://www.visitwesterham.org.uk/images/documents/Healthcheck/Westerham_Report_v10.pdf

Appendix F

Shropshire Council Parking Policy

A) 15 minute free parking

In line with MP Eric Pickles' call for all local authorities to offer motorists free short term parking, Shropshire Council have made the following media announcement:-

Drivers will be given 15 minutes' free parking in an effort to boost high street trade, under new plans being introduced by Shropshire Council.

The council is introducing a 'grace period' of 15 minutes for designated pay and display bays at all council-owned surface car parks and on-street parking bays, meaning people would not need to buy a ticket if they were only parking for 15 minutes.

Council leader, Keith Barrow, said the aim was to make it easier for drivers to visit their local town centre without being put off by parking charges.

He said:

"High streets up and down the country are under pressure and car parking charges have been a bone of contention for some time now. As a council we are determined to do everything we can to encourage people to visit town centres

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and use their local shops.

“By giving a grace period of 15 minutes, I hope we will make it easier for those people who just want to pop into town for a short time to run an errand or visit a particular shop.”

From Monday 20 May 2013, the grace period will apply to designated pay and display car parking bays at all council-owned surface car parks across the county (apart from those which already have a free period of parking), and on-street pay and display parking bays.

Councillor Barrow said the decision had been taken following discussions with all of the MPs in the Shropshire Council area, Owen Paterson, Daniel Kawczynski, Philip Dunne and Mark Pritchard.

Owen Paterson, MP for North Shropshire, said:

“I am delighted that these new parking rules are being implemented. This will make it much easier for local people to ‘pop in’ and use their local shops. I hope that my constituents will take full advantage of 15 minutes free parking to support local retailers.”

B) Extract from Shropshire CC Parking Service Customer Charter

The following text is taken from

www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/170678/customer-charter-and-procedures.pdf

Shropshire Parking Service is committed to offering the best possible service to its customers. The following are our commitments:

Helpful

- ◆ Our Parking Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) will give advice on parking provision and how to park safely and within any applicable parking restrictions.
- ◆ All parking staff will address customers with respect and courtesy at all times and will expect to be treated by them in the same way.

Fair

- ◆ We will enforce the parking restrictions in a consistent and fair manner and will encourage considerate parking.
- ◆ We will use photographs of all parking offences to ensure that Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) have been correctly issued by Parking CEO's and to assist in subsequent challenges.
- ◆ We aim to monitor and arrange to replace any incorrect signs or lines on the road or in car parks to avoid confusing drivers.

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Excellent

- ◆ We will fully investigate and consider all correspondence regarding a PCN issue.
- ◆ We will reply clearly and provide full information as to how and why we have reached a decision.
- ◆ We will reply to all correspondence within 10 working days of receipt.
- ◆ We aim to improve on-line access to the parking services for customers.
- ◆ We will promote safe and considerate parking through the provision of information on our website and through the media.

The above text is a quote from the Shropshire Council Customer Charter
www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/170678/customer-charter-and-procedures.pdf