

# **Parking Review:**

## **Nantwich Town Centre**

**October 2010**

---

## **Nantwich Parking Review**

Contents	Page
1. Introduction: Scope and Objectives	
2. On Street Control and Parking Provision	
3. Off Street Car Parks	
4. Contributions and Comment	
5. Residents Parking Schemes	
6. Conclusion and Recommendations	
7. Appendices:	
I. Map of town centre	
II. Car Parks Condition Survey	
III. Parking Patterns on Unrestricted Streets: survey data	
IV. Nantwich Town Council Transport Group Consultation	

## 1.0 Introduction, Scope and Objectives

- 1.1. This report sets out findings from a review of the parking situation in the town centre in respect of both on and off street parking and control measures.
- 1.2. The objectives of this Review are:
  - 1.2.1. **To study the controls and facilities for parking in the central area of town and**
  - 1.2.2. **identify changes needed to improve the provision, control and management of parking.**
- 1.3. The study focuses specifically on the town centre (as defined on the map shown at Appendix I) in order to understand the effect of parking demand and supply on traffic circulation and parking for all vehicle users in a well defined central area.
- 1.4. This report summarises the analysis of the current controls and provisions for parking and makes recommendations for changes to improve both customer service and circulation through appropriate controls.
- 1.5. Management of public parking in the town centre consists of a combination of
  - 1.5.1. on street restrictions and limited waiting provision, and of
  - 1.5.2. provision of off street public car parks.
  - 1.5.3. Control is exercised through Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) (under the terms of the Traffic Management Act 2004). Civil Parking Enforcement of both on and off street parking began in January 2008. Prior to this on street control rested with the Police.
  - 1.5.4. The enforcement service is provided by one team of 26 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) and 9 Notice Processing staff covering the whole of the Cheshire East area.

## 2. On Street control and provision

2.1.1. **Location of and nature of existing restrictions:** The restrictions in force can be found on the Council's website interactive mapping facility:

<http://maps.cheshire.gov.uk/cheshirecc.interactivemapping.web.internet/Default.aspx?e=365209&n=352325&mp=1&layers=BOU.PLA.PLO.CARP&hLayer=&hField=&hValue=>

2.2. **Parking Patterns on Restricted Streets:** a survey was carried out of parking on streets having limited waiting and no waiting restrictions.

2.2.1. The occupancy of town centre bays observed was as follows:

Table 1

Nantwich Limited Waiting Bays Survey August 2010 (1 week)							
Location	No. of spaces	Tue		Thu		Sat	
Occupancy		am	pm	am	pm	am	pm
Market St	6	25%	33%	88%	60%	100%	75%
Pillory St	16	56%	73%	69%	100%	88%	65%
Hospital St	21	65%	82%	79%	90%	75%	40%

Overstay No. of Vehicles							
Market St	6			1			2
Pillory St	16	1	2	1	1	1	2
Hospital St	21	1	1			1	1

This indicates that other than on market day (Thursday) there are sufficient limited waiting bays for the demand

2.2.2. The limited waiting bays marked in Welsh Row are currently unenforceable as time plates are missing. The road has been the subject of works and changes to limit through traffic subsequent to the opening of the alternative route past the Football Club (Waterlode extension). The bays are used by local residents and workers and the unrestricted parking does not appear to cause difficulties. However the future of the restrictions needs to be resolved to allow appropriate control.

2.2.3. Access to the pedestrianised area around the War Memorial is controlled with a gate at the end of Pepper Street (Thursday, Friday and Saturday, locked at 10am and opened at 4pm). However vehicles can still gain access at all times from Mill Street and past the Crown Hotel. This leads to potential conflicts with pedestrians often from large vehicles making deliveries, as well as damage to yorkstone flag paving near the memorial. This is raised by Council Members following complaints from customers.

2.3. **Parking Patterns on unrestricted streets:** sample studies were conducted in order to establish usage patterns and the extent of any displacement parking on streets.

These showed long stay parking during the day probably by town centre workers. This was especially the case in Volunteer Fields. However this does not appear to have caused inconvenience or obstruction as no complaints or requests for action have been received.

2.4. Residents in other locations affected by displacement parking have requested Residents Schemes, and these are dealt with in the relevant section below.

**2.5. Enforcement:** The level of enforcement in terms of numbers of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued (table 2) indicates:

2.5.1. that compliance is generally good though extra vigilance is required on market day and during festivals.

2.5.2. that this low and reducing figure may have been affected by variable frequency of patrol and vacancies in the CEO team which have stretched the resource and may have masked non compliance to some extent. Complaints have been few however.

2.5.3. that there is reduced vehicle presence in the town due to the economic situation.

2.5.4. Last year, of the PCNs issued , On street the main reasons were for parking on prohibited waiting streets (56%) and overstay on limited waiting bays (42%).

2.5.5. Off Street, main contraventions were failure to pay (53%) or ticket expired (37%).

2.5.6. This year to July the picture is similar though on street overstays have fallen significantly.

Table 2

PCNs Issued						
Nantwich						
yr 09 10				yr 10 11		
	On Street	Off Street	Total	On Street	Off Street	Total
April	93	150	243	53	115	168
May	98	196	294	37	147	184
June	96	204	300	25	149	174
July	106	221	327	44	176	220
August	88	245	333	34	162	196
Sept	90	190	280			
October	61	222	283			
November	117	232	349			
December	88	198	286			
January	45	183	228			
February	43	181	224			
March	58	166	224			
<b>Total</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>2388</b>	<b>3371</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>942</b>

### 3. Off Street Parking

#### Parking Stock

- 3.1. Council- operated car parks are shown in table 1 below together with the current charging status. The map attached at Appendix I shows locations.
- 3.2. Fees and charges are strictly beyond the scope of this Review. However the current position is shown below together with the proposed change, for completeness. The change has been proposed in response to many comments and complaints that since amalgamation, the fees in the town were out of step with the structure of tariffs elsewhere. That is to say that there is no clear, incremental stepping of tariffs through the stay lengths. This does affect customer choices and therefore effective management of the parking stock .

Table

Name/Location	Maximum Capacity	Disabled Spaces	M/Cycle Bays	Up to 1 Hr	Up to 2 Hrs	Up to 4 Hrs	Up to 5 Hrs	Up to 10 Hrs (all day)
Bowers Row	32	2	1	70p	£1.00			
Bowling Green	53	1	2	70p	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	
Church Lane	33	0	0	70p	£1.50			
Civic Hall	151	12	3	70p	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	
Dysart Buildings	25	2	0	70p	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	
First Wood Street	50	3	0	70p	£1.00	£1.50		£2.20
Love Lane	124	4	0	70p	£1.00	£1.50		£2.20
Manor Road	19	1	1	70p	£1.50			
Market Area	16	1	0	70p	£1.50			
Snow Hill	247	8	1	70p	£1.00	£1.50		£2.20
Total	725	34	8					

- 3.3. At the time of writing it is proposed to move towards conformity with tariff step patterns elsewhere in Cheshire East. In particular, currently short stay prices start at too high a fee, and long stay prices have no tariff steps over 4 hours.

The proposal is as follows and is subject to approval:

<b>Proposed Tariff</b>					
<b>Name/Location</b>	Up to 1hr	Up to 2hrs	Up to 4hrs	Up to 5 hrs	4 to 10 hrs
Bowers Row	£0.50	£0.90			
Church Lane	£0.50	£0.90			
Market Area	£0.50	£0.90			
Manor Road	£0.50	£0.90			
Bowling Green	£0.50	£0.90	£1.90		
Civic Hall	£0.50	£0.90	£1.90		
Dysart Buildings	£0.50	£0.90	£1.90		
Love Lane	£0.50	£0.90	£1.90	£2.30	£2.50
First Wood Street	£0.50	£0.90	£1.90	£2.30	£2.50
Snow Hill	£0.50	£0.90	£1.90	£2.30	£2.50

- 3.4. This change may have an effect on the distribution and volume of parking in the town and as a consequence, further study may be required after a period of operation with these charges.
- 3.5. The physical condition of the pay and display car parks is generally good. Signs and meters conform to required standards as detailed in the condition survey. Equally, surface condition and line markings are adequate, although there some maintenance requirements this year, and Snow Hill in particular may be in need of surface dressing at least within 12 months.
- 3.6. The car parks have been the subject of a general condition survey and the results are attached at Appendix II. More immediate small works will be undertaken in ensuing weeks; more substantial work will be investigated with a view to obtaining contractor quotation in accordance with Cheshire East Procurement rules.
- 3.7. Additional town centre parking is provided by Morrisons and ALDI supermarkets. These are operated privately and parking is not charged for though maximum stay is limited.
- 3.8. Informal parking takes place at St Anne's Lane (former gasworks); typically 100 vehicles use what is uncontrolled open space in the ownership of the Council. It is classed as land in need of remediation before any improvement may take place.
- 3.9. Nantwich Town Football Club also has a large parking area which is occasionally made available to the public (eg during festivals). The club is believed to have plans to improve the unsurfaced section and is currently operating it as a public long stay car park (£1.50 all day). This would accommodate approximately 200 vehicles.
- 3.10. Malbank secondary school also has a large car and coach park at the furthest end of Welsh Row. This is often suggested as suitable for public parking out of term time. However the distance from the town centre coupled with difficulties in setting a Car Park Order to cope with term variations, as well as risk issues, renders this problematic.
- 3.11. There are currently no provisions for the sale of contract parking permits. This may be especially useful if the proposed new tariffs are introduced. As a result displacement onto the streets may increase, at least initially. Contract permits would give some customers a choice of a discounted season ticket in effect. It is not known whether the Football Club arrangements will be in place or attractive enough to minimise the effect of such displacement. Therefore the offer of a permit could help to

reduce displacement. This will require a change to the Car Park Order, to allow sales of permits on certain long stay car parks.

3.12. The Town Council has been investigating use of the former railway station yard as a public car park. This would be useful for rail commuters and long stay parking for the town. However the site is in multiple ownership, the chief of which is Network Rail, agreement with whom has proved difficult to achieve to date. This Council is not involved in negotiations but the Town Council is understood to be pursuing the matter.

3.13. There are 725 bays of which 34 are for disabled only. The breakdown across long, short, paying and free, is

Table 2

Current Breakdown (since May 2010):

Max. Stay	No. of Bays	
	Total inc Disabled	Paying Only
Short Stay (<5 hrs)	304	285
Long Stay (5 hrs +)	421	406

### Usage and Occupancy:

3.14. Pay and Display charging was introduced over 15 years ago. Civil Parking Enforcement on and off street was introduced from January 2008. The usage of the car parks in 2009/10 has been analysed based on sales of tickets.

3.15. Income from the car parks last year averaged £12500 per week or 11750 ticket sales. This split at 64% short stay (under 5 hours) ticket sales, giving over 59% of the sales income. However only 41% of the bays are short stay which suggests not only that these are “working hard” but also that such a small town centre is adequately provided with long stay bays.

3.16. Turnover of bays in a car park (the frequency with which vehicles use the bays, on average) is a useful measure of occupancy. In Nantwich during the last year turnover as indicated by the sales information is:



Table 3

<b>Parking Bay Turnover</b>						
<b>Car Park</b>	<b>Max stay (hrs)</b>	<b>Bays</b>	<b>2009/10 P+D Sales (units)</b>	<b>less: Sunday sales</b>	<b>Average Daily Sales (305 days)</b>	<b>Turnover/ bay/day</b>
Bowers Row	2	30	49078		161	5.4
Church Lane	2	33	34938		115	3.5
Market Area( 3days/wk)	2	15	6670	768	39	2.6
Manor Road	2	18	29837	1584	93	5.1
Bowling Green	5	52	46841		154	3.0
Snow Hill still <5 hrs)	5	239	225405	12000	700	2.9
Civic Hall (still >5 hrs)	5	114	116081	4644	365	3.2
Dysart Buildings (still >5hrs)	5	23	13260	348	42	1.8
Love Lane	10	120	68838		226	1.9
First Wood Street	10	47	20177	768	64	1.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>691</b>	<b>611125</b>			

- 3.17. On average bays in car parks mainly used for long stay achieved 2.1 per bay per day. Those used for short stay (more central, higher tariff) achieve 3.5. This is expected to grow as two of the car parks changed to short stay this year. (In Crewe, long stay car parks are on average at 1.4 to 1.5 with short stay at from 3.1 to 4.3). This implies that, relatively, more short stay users are using the longer stay (though still dual-purpose) locations. This is natural to an extent where car parks are relatively few and located close to the centre.
- 3.18. The decision was made this year to change Civic Hall and Dysart to maximum 5 hours stay to reflect the increased demand for short stay due to the Health Centre construction. To compensate, Snow Hill was increased to 10 hours at the same time.
- 3.19. For some years, the relative strength of Nantwich's retail economy, coupled with its growth as a tourist and festival centre, has led to calls for an expansion in parking provision. In particular during festivals, demand can be acute and the need has been suggested for more out of town parking in conjunction with park and ride. The difficulty in this lies in the extreme contrast between festival days and normal trading days. This renders a permanent park and ride service cost ineffective. On normal days the existing parking stock, managed through tariffs and enforcement, appears adequate as people can find a space within a reasonable time.
- 3.20. The likely effect of the proposed new tariffs must be considered. As these represent an improved incentive to short stay parking in the town, along with an increase in long stay prices, patterns of movement and demand could change.
- 3.21. However as the Football Club (NTFC) site is now offered as a public car park, this may provide an outer zone tariff to divert "overspill" long stay customers and allow central car parks to serve more shoppers and visitors.

**3.22. Car Park Order** : The car parks are managed and controlled under the terms of an Off Street Parking Places Order (Car Park Order or CPO) put in place by the former Borough Council and also covering Crewe. It is in need of updating and the overall management of car parks in the town over time would benefit from a standardised approach in the CPO. This would be best delivered as a new, Cheshire East wide Car Park Order. However the existing Order is functional and so it is not proposed to start work on a new Order immediately.

#### **4. Enforcement:**

4.1. The PCN issue figure is reflecting the high demand for space and relatively low availability. However it does also reflect the balance of attention paid to on or off street locations given the restricted CEO team availability during this time.

4.2. The occupancy and enforcement figures together indicate that capacity overall, for parking in the town, is sufficient for the observed average level of demand. However during festivals, events, and frequently on market day (Thursday) it can be difficult for customers to find a space.

4.3. **Provision for Disabled Drivers:** the Off Street Order allows customers displaying a valid Blue Badge to park without charge within any bay on a public Council operated car park. Of the total of 725 off street bays in the town under public control, 34 wide disabled bays are offered, ie. 5%. This conforms to the national guideline minimum. Organisations for the Disabled often cite 10% as their preferred figure. However, in view of Cheshire East's current policy of not charging any disabled customer, 5% should be sufficient.

**4.4. Uncharged Car Parks** : There are no adopted public car parks in Nantwich uncharged for at point of use. The St Anne's Lane site is unlikely to be adopted as a public car park due to the high cost of remediation, and the need thereafter to repay the Development Land Grant.

#### **5. Consultation:**

5.1. Ward Councillors submitted a range of comments and these are summarised below, together with Officer comments.

5.1.1. Off Street capacity is generally sufficient with notable exceptions at peak times such as Thursday (market day) and Saturday – main trading periods especially in the summer, as well as during festivals and events. The Football Club and Malbank school are able to absorb some of the excess demand but members would like additional land on the outskirts of town to be considered for possible overflow parking at some point in the future, subject to owners' agreement and to local sensitivity.

5.1.2. The signage indicating 1<sup>st</sup> Wood St car park needs to be improved to encourage long stay use.

5.1.3. The car park around the old Medical Centre on Beam St could be operated by the Council to improve availability and capacity.

5.1.4. Whitewell Close residents have expressed an interest in a Residents Scheme.

- 5.1.5. Double parking in Park View can become an issue causing congestion.
  - 5.1.6. Access to the town centre (central square needs more restriction to exclude delivery vehicles in peak trading time- a barrier on Mill St is needed.
  - 5.1.7. Civil Enforcement Officers need to step up vigilance in this area to ensure that loading/unloading time is observed.
  - 5.1.8. Access through Snow Hill car park (Wall Lane) is used as a rat run and presents some risk to crossing pedestrians. Could this be better controlled?
  - 5.1.9. Shrewbridge Road Open area- the capacity of this site to take more vehicles to be explored by the Council (Leisure/Open Space). Better car park signs should be provided.
  - 5.1.10. It was agreed that changes to the car park tariffs will have some effect and that officers and members need to take time to observe the result in traffic management terms and to make further recommendations as necessary.
  - 5.1.11. Coach parking needs to be catered for but the opening of NTFC car park may absorb this; again further observation needed.
- 5.2. **Nantwich Town Council Transport Group**: echoed many of the above points (see Appendix IV).

## 6. Residents' Parking Schemes

- 6.1. Nantwich has a number of residential streets within the central business district and, due to its compact size, larger residential areas within walking distance of the centre. There have been only a few requests for residents' schemes, from the former. Streets further out tend only to be affected by displacement parking to some extent during festivals and events. At other times residents appear not to suffer inconvenience sufficient to warrant a request for a scheme.

To date, requests for such schemes have come from residents in the following locations:

Street	Town	Surveyed	Suitable for RP
Barker Street	Nantwich	Yes	Possible
Whitewell Close	Nantwich	Yes	No
Crewe Rd (requested)	Nantwich	No	
Pratchitts Row (requested)	Nantwich	No	

- 6.1.1. Barker Street/Love Lane: only one area is appropriate to be considered- a cul- de- sac area with marked parking bays (currently uncontrolled).
- 6.1.2. The other two streets requesting schemes will be surveyed as soon as possible.

## **7. Conclusion and Recommendations from this review**

The control and management of parking in Nantwich is generally felt to be satisfactory, although there are persistent concerns at peak times in the summer months and at festivals. Actions recommended are:

### **7.1. On Street Controls: (for Highways):**

- 7.1.1. The status of the limited waiting bays in Welsh Row needs to be finalised by Highways department.
- 7.1.2. Access to the town centre from Mill St and the Crown should be reviewed and the possibility of barriers here considered. This should be progressed following submissions from the Ward Members via their Ward Lists.
- 7.1.3. Wall St access should be referred to the Highways Road Safety unit for review and recommendation.

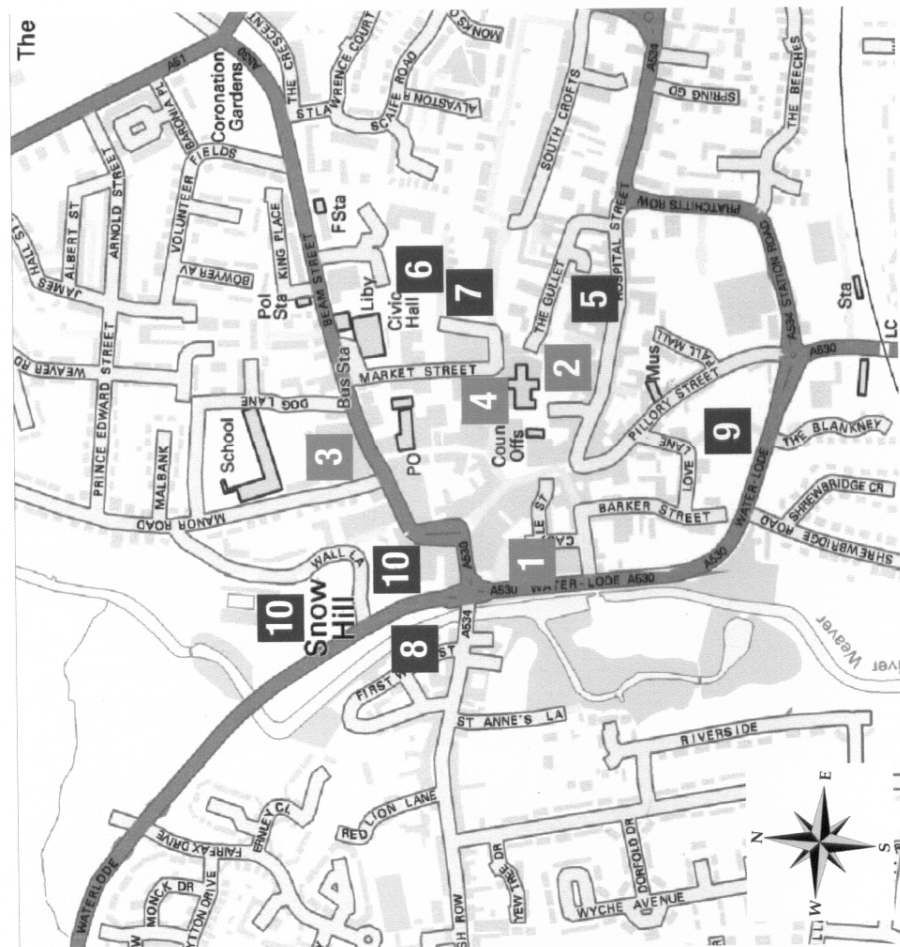
### **7.2. Off Street Control (for Parking Services):**

- 7.2.1. Monitor car park occupancy and on street compliance once the new tariffs have been introduced; as this may lead to changes in demand and pressures on streets with no restrictions.
- 7.2.2. Review customer vehicle movements and behaviour over the next 6 months following the opening of the NTFC car park, affecting mainly long stay demand, in conjunction with the tariff changes in CEC car parks.
- 7.2.3. Introduce Contract Parking Permits on some long stay car parks to give an option of discounted seasonal parking. This will require a change to the Car Park Order.
- 7.2.4. Consider resurfacing Snow Hill Car Park subject to availability of capital funding.
- 7.2.5. Install a sign at Shrewbridge Road site indicating availability for parking.
- 7.2.6. Conduct surveys on two further zones in respect of residents parking Schemes.

Appendix I

Map of Town Centre: Definition of Study Area

Nantwich Public Car Parks



Key to Location of Car Parks						
Short Stay	Cars	0-1hr	1-2hrs	2-3hrs	3-4hrs	4-5hrs Over 5hrs
1 Bowers Row	32	£0.70	£1.00			
2 Church Lane	33	£0.70	£1.50			
3 Manor Road	19	£0.70	£1.50			
4 Market Area	16	£0.70	£1.50			
Long Stay	Cars	0-1hr	1-2hrs	2-4hrs	4-5hrs	Over 5hrs all day
5 Bowling Green	53	£0.70	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	-
6 Civic Hall	126	£0.70	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	-
7 Dysart Buildings	25	£0.70	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	-
8 First Wood Street	50	£0.70	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	£2.20
9 Love Lane	124	£0.70	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	£2.20
10 Snow Hill	247	£0.70	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	£2.20

Contacts  
Parking Enquiries  
01270 537547  
01625 504706  
carparks@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Disabled drivers may park in any bay subject to the display of a valid and appropriate badge.  
Tariffs may be subject to change and users are asked to check they comply with the terms and conditions displayed in the car park.  
All information is correct at time of publication (25.05.10)

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.  
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to legal or civil proceedings. Cheshire East Council, licence no. 100049045 2010.



www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

## **Appendix II**

### **Nantwich Parking Review:      Condition Survey      2010**

#### **Recommendations by Car Park**

Snow Hill Car Park: the surface and drainage of this site has been deteriorating for some time and requires some repair.

#### **2. Car parks not charged for at point of use**

St Anne's Lane (former Gasworks)

This is an area of open land used as an informal car park. It is not adopted and has no car park order in place. Considerable remediation study and work would be required at significant cost, before such adoption and construction could take place.

Shrewbridge Road (near Airman's Grave)

This is also an informal open space used as a car park serving the Mill Island and lake. With some minor improvement its capacity could be improved which would be useful during festivals.

## **Appendix III**

### **Parking Patterns near to Nantwich town centre on non restricted sections of road**

#### **Scope and purpose**

Surveys were undertaken of a sample of roads and streets near Nantwich Town Centre where no restrictions apply. The purpose of these surveys was to determine:

- Total number of spaces available
- Total occupancy rate of spaces during the day
- Total occupancy rate of spaces in the evening
- Total number of spaces being used by residents during the day
- Total number of spaces being used by non residents during the day

#### **Collection of data and reliability**

Data collection was carried out by logging registration numbers during the day and during the evening (outside normal working hours). Vehicles parked during the evening were assumed to be residents' vehicles and this information was used to assess the number of residents parking during the day also.

The reliability of the data therefore must take into account the following:

- this method of survey provides data which is approximate.
- The accuracy is affected by the frequency of survey visits: with only 3 or 4 surveys carried out the result is only a "snapshot" and will not take into account seasonal variations or changes occurring e.g. during school holidays.
- The assumption that all vehicles parked in the evening are residents' vehicles and that all residents are present during the evening is only suitable for "provisional" results but does give a picture which is useful if the limits are remembered. To some extent the errors cancel themselves out but this cannot be guaranteed.

#### **Conclusions from the data obtained**

1 Volunteer Fields sees regular day time car parking by town workers with numbers fairly static.

2, St. Lawrence Crt experiences the same as Volunteer Fields but substantially less numbers.

3, Bowyer Ave, Volunteer Ave, Blakney and Shrewbridge Crst appear fairly static day and evening, suggesting residential traffic.

4, In most cases day/evening parking for residents is not an issue. No complaints from residents since going decrim.

5 All streets surveyed with the exception of Volunteer Fields are free of yellow lines. Volunteer Fields having 10 mtrs of d/y lines on the east and west side near to Beam street junction.

#### **Appendix IV Nantwich Town Council Transport Group Consultation**

The Group was consulted at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2010 following email notification of the Review's scope and objectives. At this meeting the interim recommendations were explained as shown in this Review report. Comments received included:

1. Civic Hall Car Park: Suggestions were made of increased efforts to ensure compliance and of a "free half hour" to allow people to undertake activities like a quick purchase or collect a prescription. Paul Burns (PB) explained that the new tariff of 50p per hour would partly address the issue; ½ hr tariff is not practical as it is very difficult and costly to enforce.
2. Points were made by the Group to the effect that a 50p per hour tariff was a step in the right direction but hopefully there would be further moves to parity with other towns.
3. Difficulties of parking in Whitewell Court were mentioned. PB felt a residents parking scheme was highly unlikely because of the existence of adequate off-street parking. Residents may therefore need to request restrictions through the Ward Member list system.
4. Pedestrian area on the Square: Malcolm McCuaig said that he was prepared, subject to resources, to consider the possibility of an experimental order in Mill Street, restricting traffic. The way to progress it was through the 'Ward Member' system. PB will ensure that this recommendation would also be included in the Review report.