
PETITION: CAR PARKING IN KENT GARDENS, BIRCHINGTON

To: **Thanet Joint Transportation Board, 23 November 2011**

Main Portfolio Area: **KCC – Environment & Enterprise**

By: **Director of Highways, Kent County Council**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **Birchington South**

Division: **Birchington & Villages**

Summary: A petition has been received, requesting parking restrictions in Kent Gardens, Birchington

For Decision

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A petition of 44 signatures was received by Kent County Council (KCC) in July 2011, from residents who live in Kent Gardens, Birchington. A standard letter was signed, containing the following text:

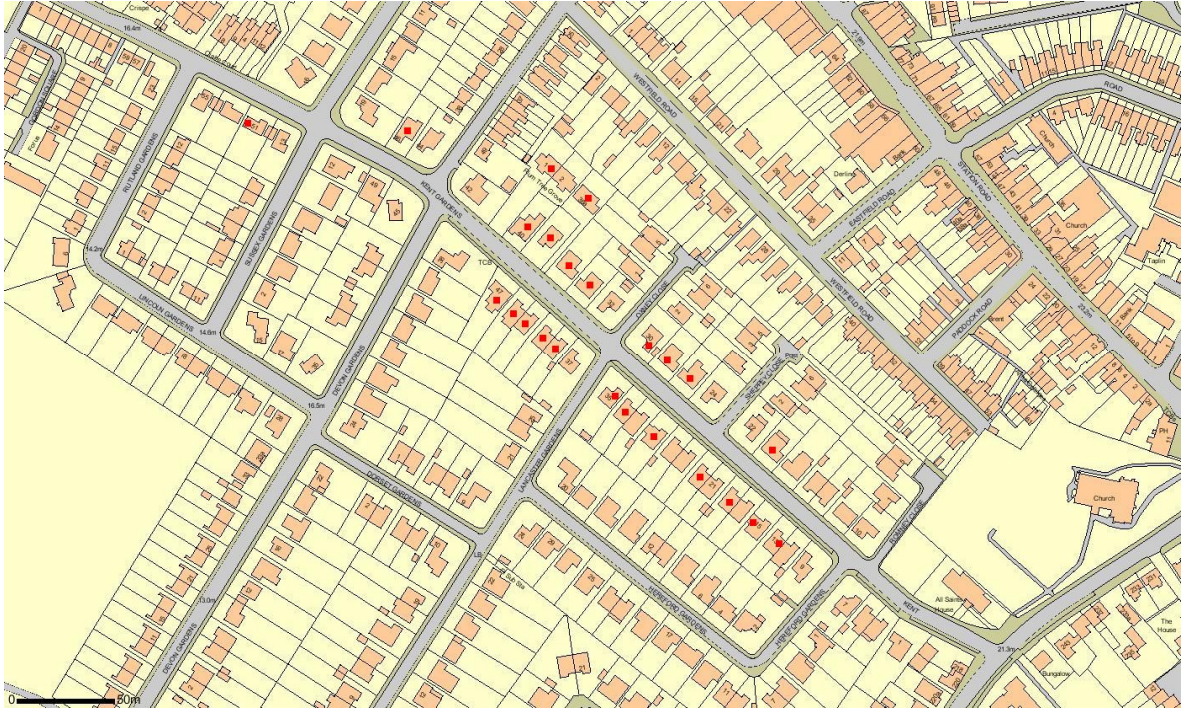
“The residents of Kent Gardens are much concerned regarding the haphazard parking which almost blocks our road between 8.30am and 5.30pm on weekdays. Many of us have parking space on our own driveways but have difficulty actually getting out on to the road because of impaired vision due to parked cars. Also because parking is permitted on both sides of the road there is frequently insufficient room to turn out into the road from your drive. When large vehicles such as 4x4s and vans are parked it is impossible to see whether the road is clear. A further concern is that emergency vehicles needing to serve a particular property may not have access to that property. The road is also used as a ‘rat-run’ to avoid the High Street with its speed restriction humps and large lorries often have to back up because they cannot get through. Also people with boats on trailers drive through on the way to the seaside and it has been known to damage cars as some are so wide. Very often this traffic is frequent and often exceeds 30mph. These are serious concerns for the inhabitants of Kent Gardens and we would appreciate your attention to them and your suggestions as to how our problems may be alleviated”.

- 1.2 A subsequent letter was received on 14 August 2011, relating to an incident on 12 August 2011, and is contained in Addendum 1.

2. Investigation

- 2.1 Kent Gardens is a residential street, located to the south-west of the main shopping street in Birchington (see plan below). Double yellow lines are present, in order to protect the side road junctions. It lies just outside the restricted parking zone, centred on Station Road. As such, it can be used for on-street parking by persons not wishing to be restricted by the amount of time they can remain, or having to pay parking charges. As well as visitors and workers in Station Road, these persons may also be rail commuters or visitors to the church and the community centre. Parking occurs on both sides of the road. This allows cars to pass through; larger vehicles may have difficulty. This is a similar scenario to many other streets in Thanet.

Kent Gardens, Birchington: Site location



- 2.2 KCC has access to a database that includes a log of all crashes resulting in personal injury that have been reported to Kent Police. In the last 3 year crash investigation period to 30/06/11, there have been no reported personal injury crashes where the presence of restrictions could have assisted with the prevention of the incident.
- 2.3 Reference is made in the petition to 'haphazard parking'. Badly parked vehicles that are causing an obstruction of the highway should be referred to the Police, for their further consideration. If the emergency services have concerns over access to roads and properties, there are channels of communication by which they can raise issues. KCC has not been contacted by the emergency services in this way.
- 2.4 Driveway obstruction is highlighted as a concern. White vehicle access marking lines (also known as dog bones, or hockey sticks) can be introduced outside a property. These markings are advisory and give no extra power to the Police to prosecute other road users. To introduce a new white 'access highlight' line marking, it is necessary to prove a persistent obstructive parking problem. This helps prevent too many lines on the highway, and ensures that markings are at priority locations and adhered to by drivers. The costs associated with implementing a white vehicle access marking are met by the applicant.
- 2.5 Concerns over traffic speed are mentioned in the petition. It should be noted that additional double yellow lines would exacerbate this situation.

3. Current financial situation

- 3.1 KCC receives numerous requests every year for new highway works, including double yellow lines. Unfortunately due to substantial Government cuts in funding, KCC does not have the budget to meet this huge demand, and has to prioritise what works can be delivered with the limited funding available. On this basis, KCC is prioritising new works deemed as being 'safety critical'; i.e. a record of personal injury crashes, where it can demonstrated that a reduction in crashes can be achieved, through implementing the measure being requested.

3.2 With the lack of a pattern of personal injury crashes at this location, or any contact from the emergency services to register their concerns, the works being requested are not a priority for the limited funding available.

3.3 Residents expressed concerns over excessive on-street parking. An information leaflet is contained in Addendum 2, regarding residents' parking schemes.

4. Conclusion

4.1 A petition with 44 signatories has been received requesting parking restrictions in Kent Gardens, Birchington. Given the current financial situation and a lack of recorded crashes, this request for highway improvements cannot be justified at the current time.

5. Recommendation

5.1 To advise the lead petitioner that no further action can be taken at this time; and of the application processes for residents parking schemes, and white vehicle access markings.

Contact Officer:

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Supporting documents

Addendum 1 – Letter from petitioner dated 14 August 2011

Addendum 2 – Residents' parking information leaflet