

Stratford St Mary, Suffolk

Consideration of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

Justification

Introduction:

Over the past two years, the dramatic increase in the recreational use of the River Stour has brought with it several problems that have disrupted daily life in our small rural community.

In addition to the associated parking and litter problems, which are being addressed to the extent possible through the measures available, by Parish, District and County Councils, the village has experienced frequent, ongoing instances of behaviours that can only be considered anti-social and disruptive that cannot be addressed by the proposed actions in respect of parking and littering.

Description of the situation.

In Stratford St Mary, the river and the main access road come into juxtaposition in the centre of the village, with the result that the points of river access are in the middle of a residential area. The nearby properties, consist mainly of houses that front onto the pavement, without the distancing provided by a front garden and for some, without any off-road parking.

River access can be gained at two points between which road and river run parallel in close proximity and without a pedestrian footway between them. Along this stretch the road, although formerly the A12, is not of sufficient width to permit traffic to flow safely if vehicles are parked on both sides. For this reason, the proposed actions in respect of parking referred to above include the introduction of double yellow lines on the river side of the road. It is not however considered practical to introduce them on the other side of the road due to the potential for disruption to the normal parking requirements of residents, their visitors and postal and trade deliveries.

The pedestrian footway on the other side of the road to the river is narrow, only 1.2 metres for much of its length, and is bordered by an almost continuous brick wall extending for some 300 metres. At the times when river use is high, parking along this stretch is virtually bumper to bumper with the result that pedestrian passage along the footway can seem constrained, particularly with the high sided SUVs, trucks and vans that seem to be preferred for the transport of canoes and paddle boards.

This constrained footway is easily blocked, by people off loading canoes, kayaks and paddle boards along with related equipment, onto the footway prior to carrying it, along and across the road, to the river access points. This

situation is exacerbated by the fact that many of the craft in use are of an inflatable nature, with the result that with the time taken to inflate the craft ready for use, the period of blockage can be considerably extended. This process is then repeated in reverse after the return from the river, sometimes extended further by the need to change out of wet clothes. Not an edifying sight on the streets of a Suffolk village.

The traffic volume on the road makes it unwise for pedestrians to consider walking on the road to circumvent any blockage, although many do in fact do so. An option not available to someone with pram, pushchair or using a mobility scooter.

As a result, pedestrians can be faced with lengthy and repeated interruptions to their progress along the footway, inevitably leading to frustration and not infrequently, regrettably, bad tempered altercation. Those intending to get onto the river not wanting to be interrupted in doing so and local people, understandably, not wishing to be prevented from moving around their village.

An unfortunate addition to this problem is that although many of the visitors use hand pumps to inflate their craft, some use portable generators the noise from which is very intrusive inside properties with a front wall only a metre or so away. A resident requesting that the generators be moved further away, is rarely received politely

Blocking a pedestrian footway in this way is unacceptable, potentially dangerous and, we suggest, unnecessary. The unpleasant atmosphere generated by this situation is causing some residents to avoid leaving their homes at times when activity on the river is likely to be high, and with the noise from generators, even staying at home can be unpleasant.

From the information available to us, it appears that the only measure available, that might introduce some control over the situation described here, is a Public Space Protection order.

If there is an alternative approach available that has the potential to better address the problems currently being experienced then we would be pleased to be advised accordingly otherwise, please advise the steps required to proceed with a request for granting of a PSPO.