

WINCHELSEA TOWN PLAN

CONSULTATION ON CONSERVING THE GRASS VERGE IN YOUR STREET

Grass verges, particularly those without kerbs, are a special feature of Winchelsea. When turning off the main road, with its paved footways, into a side street, lined only with a grass verge, one moves from the town to the village. The verges allow us to enjoy the best of both worlds.

Unfortunately, the verges in many streets are being eroded by an increasing volume of vehicles driving over or parking on them. Once verges are damaged, they tend to attract more vehicles. In due course, all that is left is an unattractive and neglected no man's land along the side of the road, muddy in winter, dusty in summer. And as a verge is eroded, the edge of the roadway starts to break up as well.

In response to complaints from residents, we are investigating what could be done to save the verges in Winchelsea and are seeking the views of each resident of the streets that have grass verges under threat.

In your section of Back Lane, the verge on the north side has been badly eroded along its entire length, and a very large hole has been gouged out of the verge by the corner of the drive-over into the garage of Yew Tree House. The brand new verge outside Mariteau Court has already had its edge crushed. The damage is largely caused by the parking of vehicles using the New Hall, Bowls Green or Cricket Field, but also by residents and their visitors. An unsuccessful attempt has been made to protect one corner of the turn-off into Kent Close by placing stones on the kerb.

Suggestions for Back Lane include:

1. **Kerbing the unkerbed verges along the southern side of the street.** The suggestion is shown in the attached plan. Kerbs generally stop vehicles driving over or parking on verges. However, there is a risk that a new kerb in Back Lane would not work, given the perceived narrowness of the roadway and the continued demand for parking. Drivers may simply mount the new kerb in order to park. Kerbs would also make Winchelsea more suburban.
2. **Kerbing the entire northern side of the street.** This is shown in the attached plan. This idea suffers from the same risk as the suggestion to kerb the rest of the southern side: without widening the road, drivers will simply mount the new kerb to park.
3. **Cutting back the verge on the northern side of Back Lane** to widen the roadway. In order to avoid having to rebuild the corners at either end of the street, it is suggested that the widening of the roadway takes the form of a single extended bay cut into the northern verge. This is shown in the attached plan. The suggestion recognises the fact that the roadway is seen as being too narrow to allow traffic to pass parked vehicles. Cutting back the verge should help to preserve what is left by removing the damaged margin, which tends to invite parking on the verge, but the remaining verge may need to be protected by kerbs or other measures.
4. **Cutting parking bays into the verge.** This is similar to the previous suggestion but provides individual parking spaces. These bays would not be full depth, as this would take up the whole of the verge.
5. **Short oak posts along the unkerbed sections of Back Lane.** Oak posts are more attractive than stones on the verge, which may be removed by the County Council. They weather to a pleasant silver-grey, which helps blend them into the street scene. For this reason, they are widely used in rural locations. The posts would be fitted with small reflectors. They could be placed close together, to physically stop parking on the verge, or be spaced out, to act as a psychological barrier. The preferred suggestion is posts every 12 foot or so.
6. **A bye-law** against parking on the verge. This would require enforcement, which could only be periodic and so would not stop all parking on the verge and would do nothing about vehicles driving over the verge. The main effect would be as a deterrent.
7. Seeking **conservation agreements from nearby public venues** to take steps to persuade users not to park on the verges. For example, the New Hall could include a request in their hire agreement. Residents would have to play their part by not parking their own cars on the verge and asking their visitors to do the same.
8. **A programme to regularly rebuild the verge each year.** This was done successfully in the eastern end of Back Lane.

Please indicate whether you support or oppose each of the suggestions made above, by marking the appropriate reply. You can support more than one suggestion. Comments can be added in the box.

1. Kerb the rest of the south side	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
2. Kerb along the north side	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
3. Cut back the north verge	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
4. Cut parking bays into the north verge	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
5. Oak posts	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
6. Bye-law	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
7. Seeking conservation agreements	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
8. Regularly rebuilding the verge	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW

Comments

Name.....

RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM TO RICHARD COMOTTO AT FIREBRAND, HIGH STREET, BY 29 MAY 2009.