

Barnard Castle

Co Durham

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Proposed Change From Prohibited to Consent Streets for Street Trading Control Purposes in Barnard Castle.

I write as a now retired Town and District Councillor for the Barnard Castle West Ward. The prevailing prohibited status, for Street Trading Control Purposes, was established during my service as a councillor, for a number of sound reasons as follows:

- Protection of the integrity of residential streets / roads, adjacent to the town centre shopping area, from incompatible / intrusive trading and commercial activity.
- Protection of designated sedentary green areas within the distinguished Barnard Castle Conservation Area.
- Consideration for concerns, voiced by permanent retailers, incurring business rates, tenancy lease or rental charges and other overheads. Permitted casual directly competitive street trading was considered to be unfair.
- Recognition of the Traffic Management and congestion issues prevalent in the residential streets, subsequently protected by prohibited street trading status.

Key Considerations

The proposed blanket re-designation of the streets, currently subject to the prohibition of street trading, is indiscriminate. No attention is being paid to the specific circumstances prevailing in each of the location.

No information is provided concerning the precise basis on which consent would be determined or rejected. Equally, no information is provided on how essential conditions associated with such consent would be adequately enforced.

It should be noted that there is minimal community policing in Barnard Castle, Civil Parking Enforcement Officers are only giving limited attention to the town, resulting in common place breaches of prevailing traffic orders. There is little evidence that, with the exception of Barnard Castle's Historic Weekly Market, street trading will be satisfactorily supervised and managed. Pedestrians are frequently obstructed by large A Boards placed on the pavement, with particular difficulties with prams, wheel chairs and electric scooters. Smokers gathered outside public houses, sometimes with seating, impose passive tobacco smoke inhalation on passers by. The practice of merchandise displayed on pavements lacks control and undermines the required pedestrian space in the busy town centre.

SPECIFIC LOCATION FACTS

1) Baliol Street

Baliol Street is a narrow residential street with terraced houses on both sides of the road. Constructed prior mass motoring becoming the norm, the properties are without garages or private drives. Unregulated vehicle parking takes place on both sides of the street, involving daily commuter occupation. Only light vehicles and vans can pass between the two rows of parked vehicles. It is inconceivable that consent to street trading could ever be justified or practical in this street.

2) Marshall Street

Marshall Street is also a residential street with terraced houses on both sides of the road. The properties do not incorporate garages or drives. Except for a limited section at the east end, incorporating disabled bays and the double yellow lined junction with Galgate, it is unregulated. Intensive commuter parking competes with resident needs. This street delivers through routing HGV access to and from the Auction Mart alongside DIY farmer transportation. General through routing to the Cricket Ground and Vere Road, also inclusive of commuter parking, impacts on this street. It is again inconceivable that consent to street trading could be justified or practical in this street.

3) King Street

King Street is a residential street, consisting of a terrace of houses on one side and the substantial Manor House Care Home on the other. It also provides access to residences in the Beaconsfield Court cul-de-sac. The adjacent Richardson Hospital Staff Car Park is also directly accessed from John Street itself. This street is unregulated, apart from the junction with the A67 Galgate. Intensive commuter parking competes with residents for space. A substantial traffic flow results from the nearby Health Centre and the junction with the Victoria Road / Queen Street / Birch Road "rat run". In summary the Street must retain its prohibited status in respect of street trading.

4) Flatts Road

Flatts Road is an extremely sensitive location owing to proximity to the town centre and busy Post office. Essentially a residential area, it is relentlessly the target for commuter parking on both sides of the road, seven days per week. Several residences do not have garages or drives. The road is unregulated apart from double yellow lines at both its west end junction with Vere Road and east end junction with the Galgate town centre. Advisory white lining has been secured to deter obstruction of private entrances to three properties in Flatts Road.

Flatts road is subject to a high volume of through traffic in both directions. The single file flow, between parallel lines of parked vehicles, results in frequent reversing to allow passage. **Exceptional** closure of Flatts Road is rightly secured for a limited time, on one evening per annum, to accommodate the Town Council's Christmas event. However, conversion from prohibited street to consent street status, for street trading purposes, is completely inappropriate.

5) Scar Top

The Scar Top is an important and sensitive environmental feature within the town's Conservation Area.

Primarily defined as a pedestrian area, double and single yellow line highway regulation was introduced to terminate, hitherto seven days per week, car parking on the access roadway adjacent to the Methodist Church.

Priority pedestrian access is consequently provided to the protected green area, castle, Scar Walk, Roman Ford Picnic Site, Children's Play Area, Mini Golf Course and the Woodleigh, Garden. The latter is to undergo substantial restoration following completion of the asset transfer process.

Strictly limited vehicle access is maintained to Tower View (formerly the church caretaker's residence) and, via a private track, to some four properties on the east side of the Methodist Church.

Should refreshments be required for any event on the Scar Top, cooperation with the Methodist Church has long secured such provision, via use of the Church Hall and Kitchen.

Officially, the former Barnard Castle Urban District Council rightly prohibited motor vehicles from the Scar Top. The green is generously provided with seats, several refurbished by private individuals on a dedicated memorial basis.

Teesdale District Council and Barnard Castle Town Council determined that mobile hot food and ice cream sellers should be prohibited. from both the green area and access road. This ruling incorporated representation from the town's resident traders plus a number of environmental considerations.

Inexplicably, Barnard Castle Meet Committee has established a practice of bringing Lorries on to the Scar Top green, in association with the late spring bank holiday Meet Weekend. First, a lorry bearing a Zip Wire installation appeared. The Zip Wire ride spanned the River Tees, on a descending basis, to a low level landing on the south bank. After a couple of years we were advised that a risk analysis and consequent insurance issues had terminated the practice.

In its place the Meet Committee then brought in Lorries to the green area delivering children's fairground rides and generator equipment. Ice Cream and hot food vans were also on the grassed area. In the process the very popular permanent seating could not be used as intended.

Events held on the Scar Top are managed responsibly and sensibly by Barnard Castle Town Council .However, a strict pedestrian area status should be applied, together with a prohibition of commercial street trading.

7) Horse Market, Market Place and the Accommodation Road

This location defines the site of Barnard Castle's Historic Market Area. As a long serving member of the Traffic Management Working Party, I was personally involved in working with the DCC Highways Officer to secure the road closure for the operation of the Wednesday Market. The relevant Order was framed to accommodate road closure on any additional day(s) on which the market operates.

Barnard Castle is the only location I can identify where the monthly Farmers' Market operates as a law unto itself. In all other cases Farmers Markets are required, when occupying an official Market Place, to conform to market regulations and charges applying to that site. The late Lord Barnard was never informed that disparate arrangements were going to apply when agreeing to it being part of Barnard Castle Market Place operations.

Barnard Castle Town Council now administers the historic and official market. The Farmers' Market must be brought into conformity, not least to ensure that unfair market trading practices and privileges do not arise.

Casual or disparate permissive street trading should not be allowed in the historic Horse Market and Market Place. Strict Market and Highway must apply consistently and with due regard to the care and maintenance of the Market Area.

8) Galgate Side Road (Montalbo Road Junction to Flatts Road Junction)

This location, divided into two distinct sections, requires careful attention accordingly.

Section 1 Montalbo Road Junction to Marshal Street Junction

This slip road is located between the A67 Galgate Greens, inclusive of the Garden of Remembrance, and the pavement on the west side of the street. Unregulated car parking applies, adjacent to the pavement, along the whole section of this the side road. Advisory white lining is in place in an attempt to prevent obstruction of vehicle access points to properties adjacent to this side road and to the A67 enhanced pedestrian refuge. Double yellow lining is in place on the slip roads between the greens linking with the A67 and also at the junctions with Montalbo Road, Baliol Street and Marshal Street. A Pedestrian refuge crossing of A67 is accessed close to the Marshal Street Junction.

Astonishingly, given the narrow dimension of this highway, a two way traffic flow applies. However the ever present line of parked vehicles dictates a single file flow of vehicles with frequent reversals etc.

Private residences substantially outnumber business premises along this side road. The Decor Centre, Hot food Takeaway, Pharmacy, News Agent, Pharmacy, two Hairdressing Salons and a Public House generate a substantial volume of traffic.

Should an event at the Memorial Garden require a road closure, this provision can be achieved under prevailing arrangements. It is inconceivable that consent for street trading could ever be appropriate along this side road.

Section 2 Marshal Street Junction to Flatts Road Junction

This location presents a complex mix of former petrol station forecourt incorporating planted area and side road with kerb side car parking, car parking only without side road, car parking and side road, car parking, side road and primary Bus Stop for Darlington and Bishop Auckland. A Pelican Crossing of the A67 is located a short distance to the Bus Stop. Obstruction of buses accessing the Bus Stop by improperly parked cars is a long running problem in this locality. Offending drivers are invariably bent on visiting the Post Office. Short of implementing a Road Closure order it is inconceivable that consent for street trading could ever be approved in this area.

9) Vere Road from Flatts Road to Marwood Cottages

This location is firmly residential and incorporates a pedestrian access to the Flatts and Tees bank Woods. Restricted vehicle access also applies to the Orchard Brae Residence and for Northumbrian Water in connection with the Tees aqueduct.

A junction with Raby Avenue is also connects to this location, Commuter Parking on both sides of Raby Avenue over spills into Vane Road and Cecil Road. Through routing to other residential areas substantially increases the volume of traffic.

The proposed re-designation from prohibited to 'Consent Streets for street trading is again completely inappropriate in this locati

10 Access Road to Galgate Car Park

This road serves a high and complex volume of motor traffic as follows;

- a) Local Authority Short stay car parking for the town.
- b) Car parking provision for Morrisons Supermarket in accordance with planning permission.
- c) Parking for service buses and coaches
- d) HGV deliveries to Maxwells Hardware Store, Morrisons Supermarket and M & Co Clothing Store.
- e) Taxi Rank serving the supermarket.
- f) The Witham Cultural Centre.
- g) HGV deliveries to the Cooperative Convenience Store.
- h) Car parking for the Working Men's Club.
- i) Access for various properties around the perimeter of the car park.
- j) Access for residential property above Meynells Pet Shop
- k) Deliveries to Meynells Pet Shop.

A formal supervised closure order applies to the car park to accommodate the fairground operating over the late Spring Bank Holiday. Delivery provision to the supermarket is maintained under the supervision. However, this Access Road must be confined to highway status only and the prohibition for street trading purposes retained.

11) Newgate

Newgate is primarily a residential street targeted for commuter car parking. As an entry point to the town it accommodates HGV traffic from and to the A66, prohibited from using the camera controlled A67 County Bridge. Many of the properties along Newgate do not have garages or drives leaving residents in completion with commuters etc for unregulated on street car parking. The prevailing prohibition of street trading is a necessary arrangement for the consideration of residents in this busy location.

12) The Bank

The Bank straddles the A67 which serves a high volume of through traffic, compliant with the camera monitored restrictions on usage of the County Bridge. Service Buses, Coaches, Emergency Service, Utility and Local Authority vehicles are exempt from the restriction on the bridge. A Substantial number of residential properties are located on both sides of The Bank. The proposed conversion from prohibited to consent streets for street trading purposes is not compatible with the circumstances prevailing in this location.

13) Galgate (King Street Junction to the Junction of with the Horsemarket

This location incorporates a section of kerb side car parking before widening to accommodate a one way side road. Adjacent to the A67, a central stone set feature incorporates trees, general and disabled car parking, seating, access to the Galgate Pelican Crossing plinth within a substantial paved pedestrian. Area. A busy designated bus terminus takes up almost all kerb side parking below the access to the short stay off street car park.

The whole of this location originally formed the open air livestock market, A consent street designation for street trading purposes may be helpful in the central section of this area. Subject to the closure of sections of the car park, as for the Horse Market and Market Place, would facilitate an overspill area for the historic weekly market when required. Strict management by Barnard Castle Town Council in association with the existing market would ensure a satisfactory result.

John R Watson

Honorary Freeman of Barnard Castle.

Honorary Alderman of the District of Teesdale.