

Planned parking restrictions 'flawed and ill thought-out'

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Parking proposals which have infuriated some residents have been condemned as an 'ill thought-out' solution to the problems of commuters leaving their cars outside residential properties all day.

St Albans council is currently consulting on a parking scheme for the Avenues area of Harpenden which would result in sections of those roads being restricted to permit holders during certain times of the day.

The scheme is intended to stop all-day commuter parking, allow space for residents and visitors to park near their homes and with some designated for business use.

But the proposal, which will mean residents in the affected area being charged for permits, has already attracted a petition from employees of Waitrose in the town concerned about paying for parking in the town.

And there are mounting fears that if the scheme is introduced in the Avenues area, displaced parking will push the parking problem further out.

One of the objectors, Patrick Powers, warned that nearly the whole of Harpenden town was within walking distance of the station and restrictions would affect people living outside the proposed zones but they had not been consulted about it.

He described the proposed zoning as an ill thought out solution to the present commuter parking problems in Harpenden and questioned why all the town's residents had not been circulated with the full details of the proposal.

John Talbot, speaking on behalf of a group of residents in the Avenues, said the environment had changed since the proposals were first discussed several years ago with the formerly prosperous High Street suffering from empty shops.



■ Parking restrictions are being considered for the Avenues in Harpenden

Many shopworkers had said they would no longer be able to work in Harpenden if they had to pay for parking.

He warned that the proposals would not stop the parking but just force workers as well as family and friends of residents being forced to buy vouchers to park at certain times of the day.

And with most residents in the Avenues having off street parking, he pointed out that there was a much easier solution - the painting of white lines across their driveways.

Mr Talbot called on the district council to address the chronic shortage of parking in Harpenden and look to build double levels of parking at the station and elsewhere.

Cllr Michael Weaver, who represents Harpenden West ward on the district

council, said he was not prepared to support a flawed parking scheme.

He accepted that some residents in his ward wanted parking restrictions but others living further out did not want it and he would be pushing for a long term parking solution for the town rather than a piecemeal approach.

And while he accepted that some roads, such as Salisbury Avenue, would have to have some restrictions as it was usually full of parked cars by 7.30am, he did not support the scheme as it was proposed.

He added: "I am not going to put my name to a scheme which will just take a piecemeal approach to clear up one area and spread the problem to another area. This is not a scheme that will benefit the town as a whole."

App offers student recipes

A young entrepreneur has launched a free new app offering students quick and easy recipes for cooking on a budget.

Former Roundwood Park School pupil Niam Parmar, 20, is the brains behind Student Chef, which has already seen more than 2,500 downloads in six different countries.

Niam, of Brackendale Grove in Harpenden, explained: 'I realised that if I struggled with what to cook at university, then a lot of other students must struggle as well. Although recipe books are widely available, we're in the 21st century now where smartphones are commonplace.'

"I put two and two together and decided to create the app, and I made it free since I know that the majority of university students are reluctant to part with

their money unless they're spending it on a night out or on food!"

With design work completed by former Roundwood Park schoolmate Tom Ephgrave in exchange for a share of the business, Niam has been working on promoting the app to a wider audience.

It now features more than 100 different recipes, with sub-categories including chicken, lamb, pork, beef, pasta, fish, rice and vegetarian options, as well as a feature allowing users to upload their own tasty dishes to the app.

Niam, who currently works for an accountancy firm in Hemel Hempstead, has already registered the app as a limited company, and has plans to expand it further in the future.



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