

The Parish Church of Exeter St James

Parking and Travel: further to my report for PCC meeting 26th September 2006.

The travel survey carried out recently resulted in 164 completed responses. The results have recently been received from Devon County Council and I've been through it with Gina Small their Travel Plan Officer.

There were a wide range of responses and views expressed.

Recommendations;-

a. That the results of the survey and these recommendations be conveyed to the congregation and church hall users by means of a display/exhibition.

b. That the church's "Carbon footprint" be reduced by positively supporting/promoting "green" travel. By:-

- (i) Encouraging walking**
- (ii) Encouraging cycling**
- (iii) Encouraging bus travel**
- (iv) Encouraging shared car use**

c. That the car park is signed/marked to further support recommendation b.

1 Display/exhibition

For all church and hall users, particularly those who took the time to complete the forms it is important that they are made aware of the results and recommendations.

There should be three aspects to the display/exhibition, a summary of the results, the recommendations and how they may be achieved. For at least two Sundays the display/exhibition should be at the back of church. During the week the display/exhibition can be transferred to the hall for the information and benefit of the hall users.

Detail of what should be displayed follow below.

2 Walking

Walking is the most carbon efficient means of travel to church, and is for most people the healthiest. However the results of the survey showed that there are several drawbacks to walking, these include, age (fitness), the hills, the weather and distance.

There are no ways of making people walk, but they may be encouraged by the following:-

- (a) Hold a walk to church week.**
- (b) Provide wet weather facilities eg. an area for leaving wet clothes and umbrellas,**
- (c) Organise walking buses, not dissimilar to those organised for children walking to school.**
- (d) Recognising that walking might be only one element of travelling to church e.g. walk and bus or vice-versa**

More information to be made available in support of these ideas.

2 Cycling

Cycling might be said to be the second most carbon efficient means of travel however the drawbacks are similar to those for walking age (fitness), the hills, the weather and distance, in addition some might not have learnt to cycle or may not have cycled for some time.

Encouraging cycling might be achieved by the following:-

- (a) Provide wet weather facilities e.g. an area for leaving wet clothes and umbrellas,
- (b) Provide improved cycle parking facilities some near the church, some near the hall door (A 50% grant might be available to help fund this).
- (c) Make people aware of the "Cycle to your hearts content" scheme that operates for residents of Exeter. It's an adult (OVER 16) training course to teach basic skills to new cyclist and those who have not cycled for a while (a person in their late seventies learnt to cycle on one of these course).
- (d) Make people aware of the cycle training available from DCC.
- (e) Make people aware of the cycle facilities already available e.g. cycle lanes and routes..

More information to be made available in support of these ideas.

3 Buses

Parking

Due to health problems the remarking of the car park has not progressed beyond Nigel obtaining the paint. However I expect it to be finished within two weeks weather permitting. Provision of the posts will follow as soon as possible. The laying of the markings can be made easier if we hire a line marking machine that uses spay paint similar to that we have. There would be a small cost involved in hiring a machine.

From HSS Hire 1 day 13.00 2 days 19.50 Brandon Hire 1 day 11.10 2 days 14.80 (prices exclude VAT)

The number of spaces available should be 22 including one for the disabled.

I spoke with David Boyns about the space that is coned off on a Sunday, for his lift service and whether this might have special markings. We concluded that this space would be better served by a temporary sign; the reverse of the 'A' sign used for funerals could be used. This would be a neater than the cones and more explanatory.

Some progress to report is that the front step of the Church has been painted to make it more visible.

Travel Plan

I consulted a former colleague at DCC about a 'Travel Plan' for the Church and she advised that it would not be appropriate in this situation. It being more appropriate for large employers and schools with regular commuting trips. She did, however, offer advice as outlined below for your information and consideration. My thoughts are in italics.

Car sharing

You could organise car sharing within your congregation, generally this works by people travelling from similar locations to a destination, either picking up or meeting on the way. It would also benefit those who might not be able to get to church as they live too far to walk or have no access to a bus or car. You could ask people to register their journey on a simple spreadsheet then match people up. There is also a Devon wide free car sharing website however this might not be appropriate for your church as it tends to be used for frequently made journeys.

www.carsharedevon.com

David's lift system already comes into this category and other things might be considered see 'Awareness raising' below

Cycling

There are huge improvements being made in the city to encourage cycling, including better links and cycle training. Perhaps a few cycle guides and information would encourage people to get on their bikes! We are also able to provide 50% matched funding for bike parking, which may be of interest to you.

For more information www.devon.gov.uk/cycleexeter

As we now have a cycling Rector Curate and occasionally the gardener, it would be appropriate to encourage more cycle visits. New bike parks might be provided (a) near the main door in the ornamental grass area and (b) adjacent to the door of the Parish Hall. Cycling down from the top of Pennsylvania of course would be easy, but encouraging cycling in the reverse direction may prove difficult.

Walking

The health and environmental benefits of walking make it simply the best way to travel. For those who could walk to church maybe it would be nice to organise walking buddies, so that they could enjoy the walk to church with someone else?

Another good idea already followed by many already, but could be looked at in the light of 'Awareness raising' below

Public transport

Public transport connections are pretty good, over 60s are able to travel free. Perhaps it would be worth making available timetables for your congregation.

A form of transport that I now frequently use to travel to the Church and might already be used by others. Again might be considered see 'Awareness raising' below

Awareness raising

Sometimes people assume the easiest thing is to jump in your car to get somewhere. Challenging this assumption is always a good way to get people thinking. Perhaps you could have a green travellers coffee morning before church begins. The week before you could summarise the problems with parking, but also the impact that cars have on the environment and health you could then challenge people to leave their car at home and come in some other way or if they must drive to see if they can fill their car with other members of the congregation.

DCC has a number of posters and leaflets we could supply you with to raise awareness about the alternatives at your church. If you would like anything sent through please let me know, or if you would like to chat over any ideas I would be happy to share my experiences!

At the last PCC meeting we were reminded that the congregation had previously been asked only to drive to Church (use the car park) if they had good reason. I do not know the reasons why, but I'm sure someone will have a record of them or can recall them. We could also offer any advice to other Church and Church Hall users.

In some instances we may be preaching to the converted. However, my advice would be that we reissue the advice on parking at the church and support it with advice on the alternative forms of travel, seeking and making use of the support offered by DCC.

Barry Wedlake