

Chew Valley/Rural Areas

Which area/village/parish are your comments related to?

Freshford CP

Is access to local services (shops/doctors surgery/schools) in your area affected by any parking issues? Please describe the issue.

Yes – access to most village services is seriously affected by the limited availability of parking.

The most serious problems are with **Freshford Primary School**, when parents deliver or collect their children. The School has a small car park for staff but no parking or drop-off capacity for parents. There are c. 6 parking places about 150m along Freshford Lane, some limited roadside parking in High Street, next to the school, and in Freshford Lane passing the front of the school. Both these roads are narrow, so roadside parking reduces the flow traffic to a single lane – or none at all when car doors are open. This causes serious congestion every school day, often to the extent of obstructing buses and other vehicles. It would be almost impossible for emergency services – fire, ambulance – to get through without significant delays. To make matters worse, these roads are also used by commuters as a ‘rat run’. Some parents are able to use the Hall car park, see below, while others park unlawfully on the Tynning – the village green – damaging the grass verges and causing friction with residents.

Freshford Village Memorial Hall has its own car park with space for 30 vehicles. The Hall’s parking requirements during the day are primarily for staff of the Pre-school and parents delivering and collecting children. The parking capacity is adequate for this use but can be inadequate when functions are held at the Hall, when parking spills over on to the nearby roadside. The nearby road is not wide, so roadside parking can cause serious congestion.

The Galleries Shop and Café share the Hall’s car park, for customer and staff parking and for access by delivery vehicles. Because most Hall events, other than the Pre-school, do not coincide with shop opening hours, there is usually sufficient parking for Shop use. However, when a daytime event at the Hall clashes with busy times in the Shop there can be a shortage of parking capacity.

The **doctors’ surgery** is close to the primary school. It has no dedicated parking, apart from one space for a doctor. Most users park on the roadside nearby. This is not ideal, particularly for those with mobility difficulties, but because the demand is phased through the day this is not a major concern.

St Peter’s Church has no parking at all. Churchgoers, some of whom have mobility difficulties, tend to park half up on the pavement on nearby High Street and Church Hill, causing friction with residents, many of whom have no alternative to on-street parking themselves.

The Inn at Freshford has its own car park which is usually adequate for its needs.

Freshford Station has a small car park. Cars are often parked without consideration resulting in difficulties for Network Rail staff and for Water Board staff when trying to access the treatment plant which lies beyond the station.

What improvements/changes would resolve this issue?

The impact of parents delivering and collecting children at Freshford Primary School is the main issue that needs to be tackled. There is no way of increasing the supply of parking in the locality, so ways must be found to reduce, or at least spread, the demand.

What challenges are there within your area/village/parish relating to residential parking?

The local topography in Freshford severely limits parking capacity. We have narrow streets and pavements, often with properties opening directly on to the pavement or street. Many older properties have no off-street parking so residents park on the street.

Residents generally arrive at a workable compromise among themselves, though this can lead to clashes when individuals prove uncooperative. However there are definitely problems when space has to be found for additional vehicles. For example, there are currently 11 properties in Freshford listed on AirBnB. These result in demand from visitors for additional parking capacity which is often not available.

Any overspill parking tends to be in nearby rural lanes. These are narrow and, when used for roadside parking, can cater for only a single lane of traffic.

Sometimes inconsiderate roadside parking can actually be dangerous. One example is at the junction of Rosemary Lane with Abbey Lane. Roadside parking at this point narrows the flow to a single lane and forces traffic heading for the A36 on to the 'wrong' side of the road as it enters the blind bend. Another example is at the lower end of The Hill. Cars are usually parked on the pavements on either side of the entrance to The Orchard. This forces pedestrians into the road and narrows the road at a particularly dangerous point, where it is impossible for drivers to see vehicles coming in the opposite direction – or pedestrians in the middle of the road. In both these instances buses and other large vehicles – including, potentially, emergency vehicles – often have difficulty negotiating the bends as a result of inconsiderately parked cars.

What challenges are there within your area/village/parish relating to off-street parking? (if off-street parking is provided.

No general off-street parking other than mentioned above.

Are there any other comments you would like to make about parking in your area?

Reduced investment in rural bus services will increase demand for parking capacity in Bath as many will have to drive into Bath instead of travelling by bus. If this demand for parking is not met, shoppers and other visitors will have to go elsewhere – and Bath's economy will suffer. It would be more sensible to invest in an improved rural bus service.

The context for this consultation states that "Bath and North East Somerset Council is in the early stages of developing a Parking Strategy for the whole B&NES authority area". It is surprising then that B&NES Council is pushing ahead with plans for a Park and Ride on Bathampton Meadows. Surely the strategy development should have come first. Only in an 'Alice in Wonderland' world do you develop your strategy *after* making large infrastructure decisions.