

Kirkmichael Car Park

Plans were drawn up by Perth and Kinross Council early in 2007 for a car park at Kirkmichael. The proposed car park is located just across the river from the main street, at the “village end” of the Bannerfield open space.

1. Community survey

Members of the local community were canvassed during March on their opinions on the car park proposals, and opinions were gathered during an open day which was organised by the Community Council and held in the village. At the open day, local people were asked what features they would like to see at the car park, and they were invited to express their views on the proposals presented by Perth and Kinross Council.

The community survey indicates a high level of support for the car park in principle. A number of aspects of the car park were specifically commented on by the community as follows:

2. Number of spaces

The comments received about the proposed number of spaces would tend to indicate that the proposals are about right, although there were several comments about the proposed layout of spaces, as follows:

- Number of spaces shown is not really enough but seems to make best use of available space.
- Too many spaces.
- Too many parking spaces in lines.
- Stagger car parking spaces to follow curve of land – NOT UNIFORM!

3. Coach parking

Coach parking was considered and views expressed both for and against:

- Coach parking please to bring tourists to the village.
- What about coach parking?
- Don't want coach spaces.
- Coach parking a must.

4. Proposed form of the car park

A number of people suggested that the plans were not particularly innovative, and some recalled that the original plans for the car park, drawn up in 1995 proposed a less linear and geometric form. There was also a body of opinion that materials used in the construction of the car park should be in keeping with the car park's rural setting:

- 1995 Drawing 2A. File Ref. LT.KMCPRY. This is the best solution. John Manning's is good too. But not draft plan.
- What is wrong with going back to the 1995 plan which was much more in keeping with the location?
- Proposal is far too square and ugly. It needs to be “softened” by curving outlines and paths. Refer to Council drawing proposal September 1995, Drawn by R.Y; Drawing number – 2a; File ref – LT-LMCPRY, with the addition of recycling point.
- Looks very municipal – straight lines and tarmac – no planting – please could you do better?
- Tarmac will look very suburban. Something like cinders and logs would look better and more in keeping with the area.
- Tar macadam would be best.
- Surface of car park?

5. Landscaping

Several people mentioned that trees / flowers etc. should be planted to landscape the facility:

- I would like a flowerbed and some trees
- Any planting proposed?

- Trees and flowers
- Trees and bushes to be planted around the outside area.
- What will happen to the wild daffodils that grow on the bank near the road?

6. Recycling facilities

There were a number of comments on the proposed recycling facilities. While the majority of comments were in favour of the facilities, there were some concerns about their size and location:

- Is there enough space for a recycling point where indicated (with paper, plastics etc.)?
- Recycling point should be at the river end of the car park.
- Don't like the re-cycling point at the front of the car park. Could it go down the side with willow fencing around it, to hide it!
- Must have recycling include – perhaps in the middle of park? Planting around would be great.
- Recycling to be easily accessible and “emptyable” even if cars are parked so entrance is good place.
- Recycling point should not cause cars to stop on main roadway and restrict traffic flow. => create stopping place for 1 – 2 cars in addition to parking places.
- Recycling point not on. This was never discussed when car park was originally thought of.
- Re-cycling point should be sited at the far end of car park.
- Recycling bins need to be moved – folk will either park in disabled spaces or park on our roadway and block access! Also an eyesore – move to better place.

7. Tourist information

A number of suggestions were made with a view to providing better visitor information for the area than at present:

- An orientation board showing walks and facilities would be good.
- A Tourist Information board would be helpful.
- Cateran Trail route and notice board. Very good idea.

8. Seats and benches

As was proposed in the 1995 plan, the provision of seats and benches was suggested:

- Seats and bench(es) by the river would be good especially for visitors.
- A picnic bench would be nice by the river.
- Picnic bench if possible.

9. Bins

Although there is support for the placement of bins at the car park – including those specifically for use by dog walkers – there are concerns about how frequently these would be emptied:

- Would bins ever be emptied? The black bins in the village and near the hall are all overflowing – the day after the bin-men were in the village.
- Dog waste bin is a “must” to encourage people to clear up after their dogs.
- Dog bin? Who would empty it?
- Bins – frequently emptied!

10. Logistical concerns

A number of questions were raised about the logistics of the car park placement and the possible impact on adjacent houses and facilities, as follows:

- Will Council maintain road access and how far? Does it include road at Fire Station and houses along the road?
- The drains of Blair Bratach, Torridon and other bungalows have central near proposed car park.
- No scale / dimensions given on the plan!

11. Fire station – logistical concerns

A number of concerns were raised specific to the Fire Station which is opposite the proposed entrance to the car park and recycling facilities:

- When washing appliance, water does not drain off roadway - ensure provision for water drainage when fire appliance is washed.
- If car park is full – do fire service personnel cars overspill on to the Bannerfield as usual?

12. Appraisal

There is strong support among the local community for the development of a car park in Kirkmichael at the location proposed. The proposed size of the car park appears to be in proportion with likely usage requirements, and coach parking provision should be taken into consideration. An element of coach parking could help to bring additional visitors and economic benefits to the village.

There is substantial support for a car park which has character and which is designed to fit with and complement its rural location. The original plan of September 1995 (Drawn by R.Y; Drawing number – 2a; File ref – LT-LMCPRY) appears to broadly address many of the concerns raised about the Council's current plan. Ideally, the 1995 plan should be slightly amended to reflect current guidance on disabled parking and it should be adjusted to include recycling facilities. The materials used to construct the car park should be appropriate to the location – balancing usage and usability requirements using a loose dressing material.

The location of the proposed recycling facilities requires further consideration. Provision needs to be made to enable people to pull up and use the facilities for a short while, without blocking access to other users of the car park, to residents who live past the car park, or to the Fire Service, which needs clearance to drive out the appliance when there is a call out. Although there have been some calls for the recycling facilities to be located at the end of the car park, the impact on the picnic site and access would need to be taken into account. As many recycling options as possible should be accommodated, including plastic which is only provided for at present in Blairgowrie or Pitlochry. There should be a sign at the recycling facilities to indicate that cardboard can be recycled in the specially designated bins at the entrance to Kirkmichael school across the road.

The car park presents the area with a good, and needed, opportunity to provide visitor services. An information board, providing details about the Catevan Trail and other walks in the area, and about visitor services is required. A picnic bench or two by the river could encourage more visitors to stop and linger in the village. Sensitive landscaping around the car park could help to make it a pleasant and aesthetically pleasing space.

Bins need to be provided at the car park, and the needs of a variety of users should be accommodated. In particular, those who use the picnic benches should have easy access to bins; those who use the Bannerfield to exercise their dogs – either residents or visitors – should have facilities to dispose of dog waste, and those using the recycling facilities should have convenient means of disposing of small items (e.g. plastic bags) which cannot be recycled on site. The bins should be kept in good order and kept from overflowing.

Drainage issues need to be taken into account – both within the car park and of the ground in front of the car park; and work will need to be undertaken to ensure that the drainage of any of the local houses (which soaks away into the River Ardle) is not impacted at all by the car park construction.

Consideration needs to be given to the improvement of the road surface from the access point on the public road to the car park entrance. At present the surface is in relatively poor condition.