

# Oakham Task & Finish Group



## Oakham Residents Group

### Reports to Oakham Town Task & Finish Group Meeting

16th August 2018

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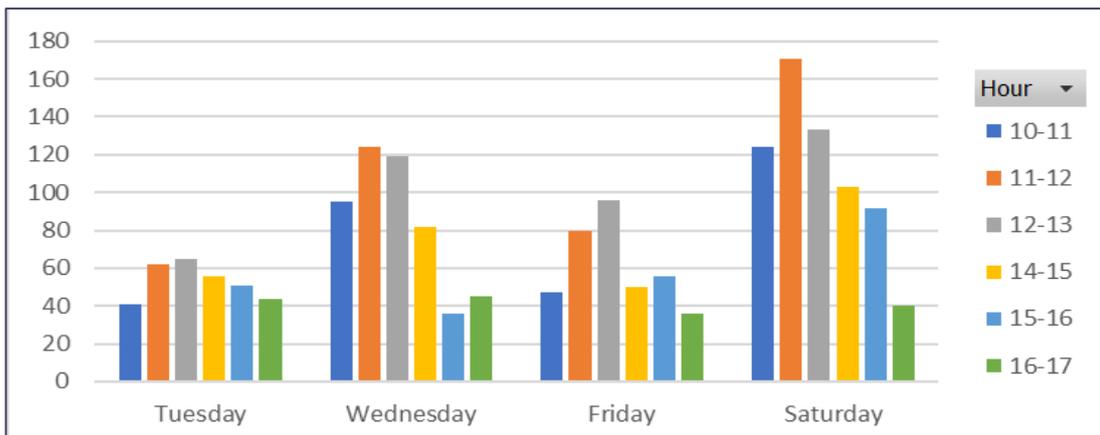
Reports prepared by Joy Clough, Co-ordinator, Oakham Residents Group, on the basis of data collected and presented by volunteer members of the Group



## 1 – KPI 5: Oakham twice-weekly Market 2018 – Oakham Residents Group Report

Oakham is a ‘Market Town’ with a market charter dating back to 1252. The market is a vital part of the town’s historical identity. Local people feel very strongly about the market, no matter how little they may actually use it (see comments in Appendix 1).

The market is also vital to the life and vibrancy of the town centre, and can provide a local mechanism for a diverse range of local enterprises to start, flourish and grow, adding to the sustainable mix of retail services on offer in the town.



*Graph showing footfall in the Market Place over four days.*

That the footfall average in the Market Place is higher than the other roads off the High Street is entirely due to shoppers visiting the Wednesday and Saturday markets. The graph clearly shows the spike in numbers on Wednesdays and Saturdays. There would be a similar considerable footfall spike on the chart for Gaol Street on the one Saturday a month when the popular Farmer’s Market is held there.

Both the size and the composition of Oakham Market have changed over recent years, within the memory of many residents. Twenty to thirty years ago the market was larger with up to perhaps 30 stalls and a waiting list. There was a good range of stalls selling provisions, with three greengrocers, fishmonger, meat and game, cheese and dairy products, bakery items etc. There was also a wide offering of other stalls. By then the area in front of the Post Office had been paved with York slabs and the market stalls extended to the Buttercross.

But in January 2014 the Post Office Counter was closed and relocated to the High Street, and the market manager is of the opinion that it is from this point that the market has slowly declined and shrunk back to mostly fit within the main Market Square. The empty Post Office building no longer draws people up to the top of Market Place. The future use of this building is critical to the growth of the Market and footfall in the Market Place.

Today, the number of market traders is below the average for towns of this size. There are fewer stalls and the offering is ever changing as stalls come and go. We have lost two of the three greengrocers – possibly due to competition with the supermarkets – but there are more specialist and local food offerings now. There is also a varied range of other products for sale and an extremely large and popular fresh flower and plant stall, in keeping with modern trends.

	National Small Town Benchmark	Oakham Wednesday Market	Oakham Saturday Market
Average number of market traders	15	14	14

In the ORG's Survey of Visitors to Rutland, 26% of those questioned had visited the market in Oakham.

In the Oakham Town Centre Visitor Survey, 44 % of respondents picked the market out as being a positive aspect of the town, with only 3% seeing it as having a negative aspect.

The result of the companion Oakham Town Centre Users Survey was slightly more complex as only 41% of local people highlighted the market as a positive aspect of the town, and of the 12% who thought it a negative aspect, many were commenting on its decline over recent years.

Comments about the market made by local people as part of one-way and Neighbourhood Plan consultations in 2017 are added below.

### **Appendix 1: Comments about the Market from the 2017 consultation documents**

The market needs special attention. The roadworks have recently reduced the number of traders. Emphasis should be on an increase in traders as Oakham is a Market Town and this brings in visitors.

We need better markets.

Support for the market.

Please don't ruin the twice weekly market. We use the market each time and find it a marvellous addition to Oakham's poor retail offering.

Local, trendy crafts from more alternative market stalls (jewellery, bags, clothes, shoes) like Covent Garden.

Indoor market, more regular market.

Indoor markets are a magnet for visitors and we certainly should have one.

Wednesday and Saturday markets are a plus for Oakham and the farmers' market should be expanded.

Encourage larger market Wednesday & Saturday. Encourage art & craft markets in Market Place.

You could make the Market Place better for the stall holders.

Save our market!

The 'market' is no longer a market as such.

The attraction of an 'ancient' market.

The Market Square: Currently we have a twice weekly market with 3 in particular first class traders,

The reduction of the stalls area in the Market Place allowing for wider pavements would be another erosion of its character and charm. We need to keep things original as possible, retain its rustic appearance not clinicalise the town. We want Oakham to be an active, busy town, not a clean cut picture postcard.

My thoughts are that we are known as a market town but in reality we don't have much of a market to boast about! How nice would it be if we had this space to open up an area where we could introduce local and out of area market stalls who can trade 365 days of the year, coffee bars that can use outside seating during the warmer months of the year promote the town's market which seems to us to be in decline.

*Joy Clough  
Oakham Residents Group  
August 2018*

## 2 – KPI 8: Oakham Footfall Survey 2018 – Oakham Residents Group Report

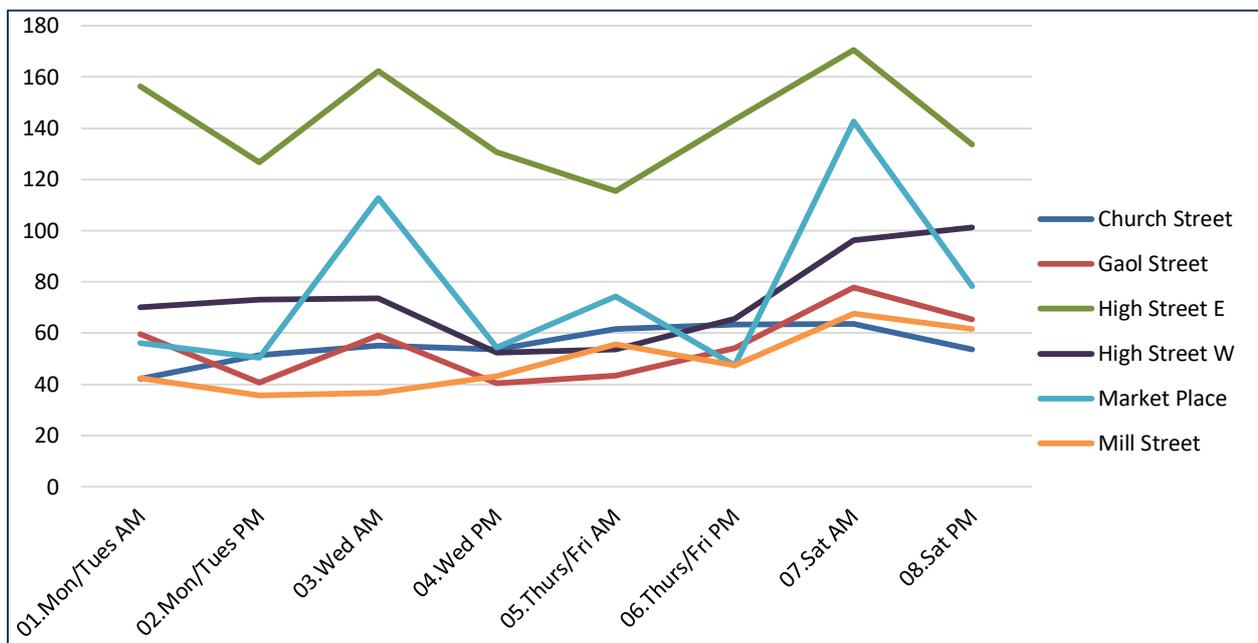
The people who come into Oakham town centre – residents, workers, visitors and shoppers – are vital to the success of the businesses within the town centre. Provided there is adequate available disposable income in the population, the more people who are attracted into the town, the better the trade, and the more prosperous local businesses become. One might expect that this in turn would benefit the town, for example by making longer opening hours or Sunday opening more viable, and by attracting other businesses, and thus more employment, to the town.

To build a picture of how Oakham currently functions, a footfall sample was taken in six locations around the town over a four-day period. These locations were:

- High Street – east, between Mill St and Gaol St
- High Street – west, between Gaol St and New St
- Church Street
- Mill Street
- Gaol Street
- Market Place

The sample taken was six 10-minute counts, three at hourly intervals between 10 am and 1 pm, to compare with national benchmarking figures, and another three at hourly intervals from 2pm to 5pm, to complete the bigger picture. These counts were done on four days: two non-busy days and the two market days, Wednesday and Saturday. Individual graphs have been produced for each location and are available.

An ideal sample would have been taken at exactly the same times on the same days across the six locations. However as we were reliant on the time available to our volunteers, the counts were made over a three-week period. The readings for each half day are consecutive, but the days are not necessarily consecutive, and some morning and afternoon counts were taken in different weeks. We are very grateful for the time given to the task by members of the Oakham Residents Group.



*Line graph showing average footfall in the six locations over the four days*

The line graph shows quite clearly that the eastern half of the High Street is by far the most popular destination for town users, with an average footfall that is 50% to 65% higher than that of any other location.

Pedestrians access the central stretch of High Street via three roads at the east end and three at the west end, all of which lead to car parks which circle the town centre. There are also two well-used passages through to the High Street from South Street which are used by people walking into town along Penn Street and across South Street (see map). However, the footfall count would seem to indicate that visitors arriving via any one of these various routes do not circulate around the other shopping roads, thus depriving Church Street, Mill Street, Gaol Street and off-street shops (such as Crown Walk, Knights' Yard and the Maltings) of the benefit of the higher footfall enjoyed in the High Street. Of the other town centre shopping streets, Mill Street has the lowest overall footfall.

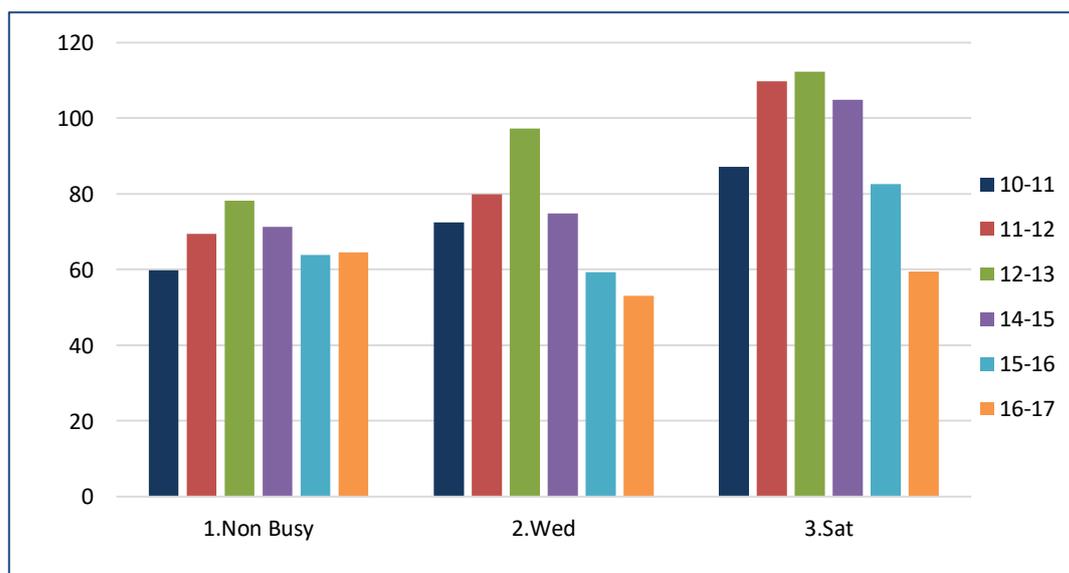
Average number of passers-by per 10 minutes by location taken over four full days					
High St – east	Market Place	High St – west	Church St	Gaol St	Mill St
142	77	73	56	55	49

In comparison with other similar sized benchmarked towns, and using only the comparable data from the three 10am to 1pm readings, Oakham High Street is performing very well, with an average of 166 passers-by per 10 minutes on market days and 135 on non-market days. This compares to 98 and 86 respectively for small towns nationally on market day and non-market days. The other locations in the town however do not compare so well, falling well below the benchmarking figures, as can be seen in the table below.

	National Small Town Benchmark	Oakham High Street from Mill St to Gaol St	Average of all other locations in Oakham
Market day	98	166	78
Non market day	86	135	56

These data indicate that the footfall pattern in Oakham town centre needs examination, and measures should be considered to encourage a better flow of visitors around these smaller side streets and off-street shopping areas. How to increase footfall in Church Street, Gaol Street and Mill Street, and therefore improve trade, is an issue which should be explored.

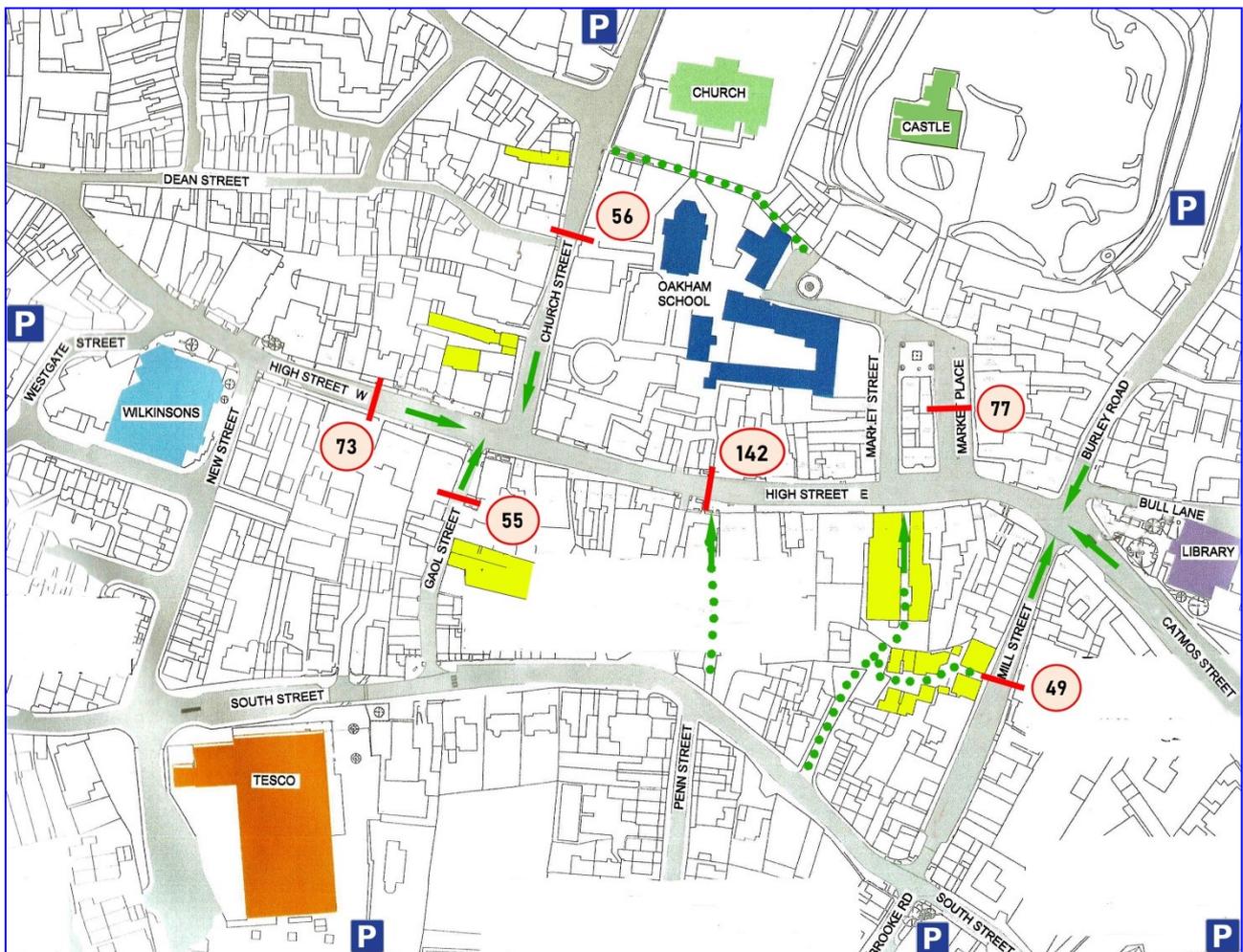
There is a noticeable difference in the average footfall between market and non-market days across the town. On the Wednesday (mid-week) market days the average footfall is 7% higher than on the other weekdays, but on the Saturday market day the difference is considerably higher at 35%. This does illustrate the contributory value of the market in drawing people into the town. An increase in footfall in the town would possibly encourage new traders to the market, which in turn would attract more shoppers.



Graph showing comparison of footfall across the town between market days and non-market days

The graph also illustrates the gradual rise in the footfall count through the morning up to and including lunchtime, after which it starts to drop down, declining quite rapidly at the end of the afternoon, particularly on market days. The figures confirm that the average morning footfall was 15% higher than afternoon footfall.

The one exception to this pattern can be seen on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Church Street, where at the end of the school day many pupils from Oakham School take this road for permitted free time in town. This anomaly has somewhat skewed the graph above by raising the average figures for the two later afternoon readings on non-busy days.



*Oakham Town Footfall Analysis – Average Footfall Results.*

- Approximate location of footfall count
- 49 Average footfall count over four days
- P Town centre car parks (approximate locations)
- Pedestrian passages to High Street and Market Place
- ➔ Pedestrian access along roads feeding to High Street
- Off-street shopping arcades and yards

*Joy Clough,  
Oakham Residents Group  
August 2013*

### 3 – KPI 9: Car Parking in Oakham 2018 – Oakham Residents’ Group Report

#### 1. Introduction

Oakham is the County Town of Rutland, and services a large rural area with some 52 villages. Public transport is not particularly good, either into the town from the villages and neighbouring towns, or around the town itself to bring residents in to the centre. Reliance on the car is therefore essential for many people. There is a very great perception amongst residents and businesses alike that the parking facilities in the town centre are inadequate.

Oakham needs to provide parking for those shoppers who require a short stay to run quick errands, and parking for those who require a few hours in town, as well as longer term parking for those who work in the town, including the large number of employees of the Rutland County Council whose offices are on the edge of the town centre. Also into the equation must be factored the needs of town centre residents living in older properties without off-road parking.

Oakham Residents Group survey results in the town indicate that a high proportion of Oakham and Barleythorpe residents visit the town once a week or more, and that although half of them walk into town, half come by car. Of the out-of-town visitors interviewed, 78% had come by car. As the town population grows and tourism increases, the demand for parking will grow, and if parking availability is unequal to the demand then people will go elsewhere. The provision of adequate and convenient car parking facilities is therefore a key element of town centre vitality and economic success.

#### 2. Survey Methodology

A parking survey was undertaken by members of the Oakham Residents Group. The aim was to collect data to produce a snapshot of the occupancy of all the town’s parking across one week. Vacant parking spaces were counted at five regular intervals each day, for a full seven days. Whole days were counted, but due to limitations in the volunteers’ available time the seven days were not necessarily consecutive as they were collected over a two-week period. Several of the smaller streets with resident-only parking were measured just three times a day. With some 20 roads and seven car parks it was a big undertaking, and we are grateful to all the volunteers who helped. The full data which form the basis of this report are available.

**3. “Oakham! Where you can’t park’ em!”** were regrettably the first words uttered by the BBC One Show presenter who visited Oakham this year for a televised report. It was, otherwise, a very complimentary piece about our County Town. The collected parking data confirm this statement, as every car park registers 70% to 95% occupancy Monday to Saturday in the time slots of late morning, early afternoon and late afternoon (fig. 1). The on-street parking is yet more stretched to capacity, with only four of the 30 Monday to Saturday time slots registering less than 70% occupancy, again rising to 95% occupancy at times (fig. 2).

We are told that the British Parking Association suggests that acceptable parking occupancy should be no more than 75% to 85%, and these benchmark lines have been added to each graph. During the period the car park data were collected the figures tell us that at peak times a minimum of 60 and a maximum of over 120 parking spaces would need to be found to bring occupancy down below these benchmarks. The average parking occupancy rates of 69% for small towns nationally on market days and 63% on non-market days are goals we can currently only dream of. There is no discernible difference in Oakham between occupancy on market and non-market days.

In real terms this means that visitors to Oakham at peak times could be searching for one of only 30 available spaces across all seven car parks, with the possibility of not finding any space at all in their chosen car park, since the raw data in the sample weeks show four of the car parks have time slots with zero vacancies.

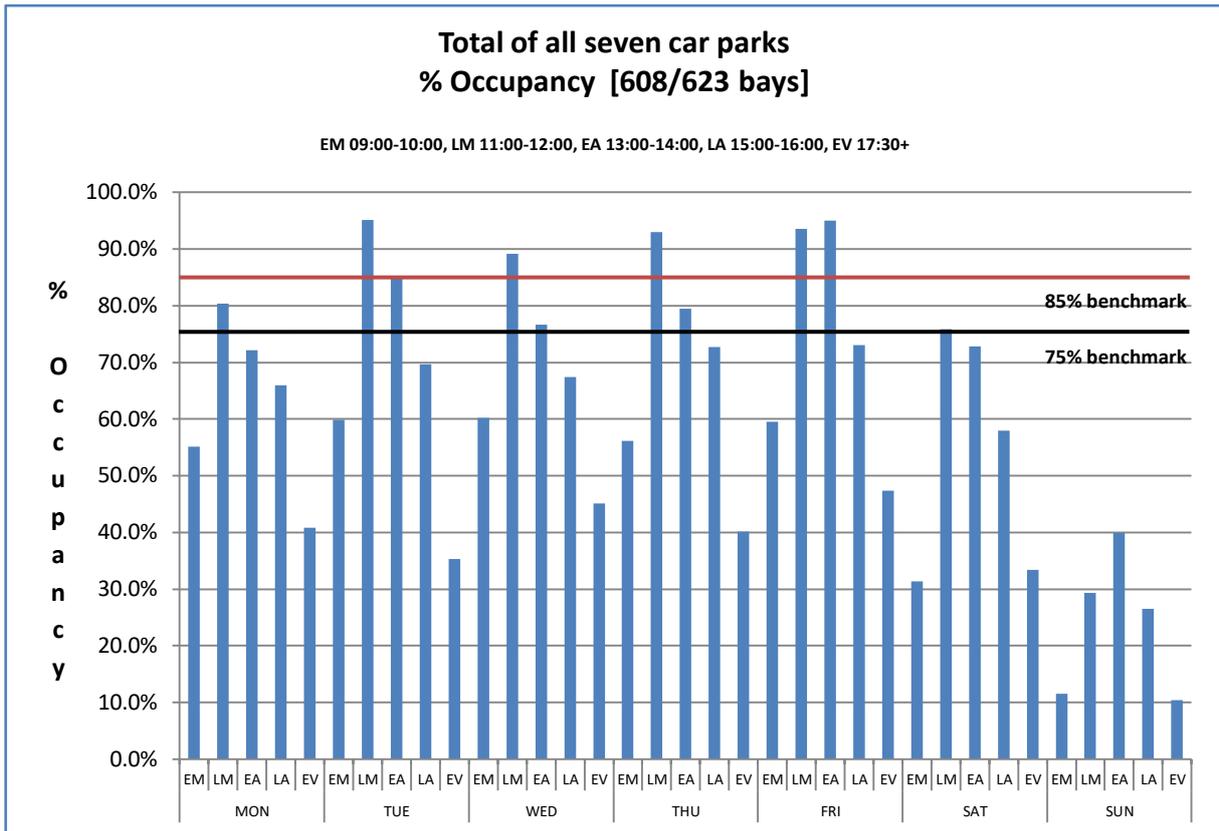


Fig. 1. Graph showing total percentage occupancy of all seven town car parks (608 bays + 15 museum & children's centre bays in South Street car park = 623 bays)

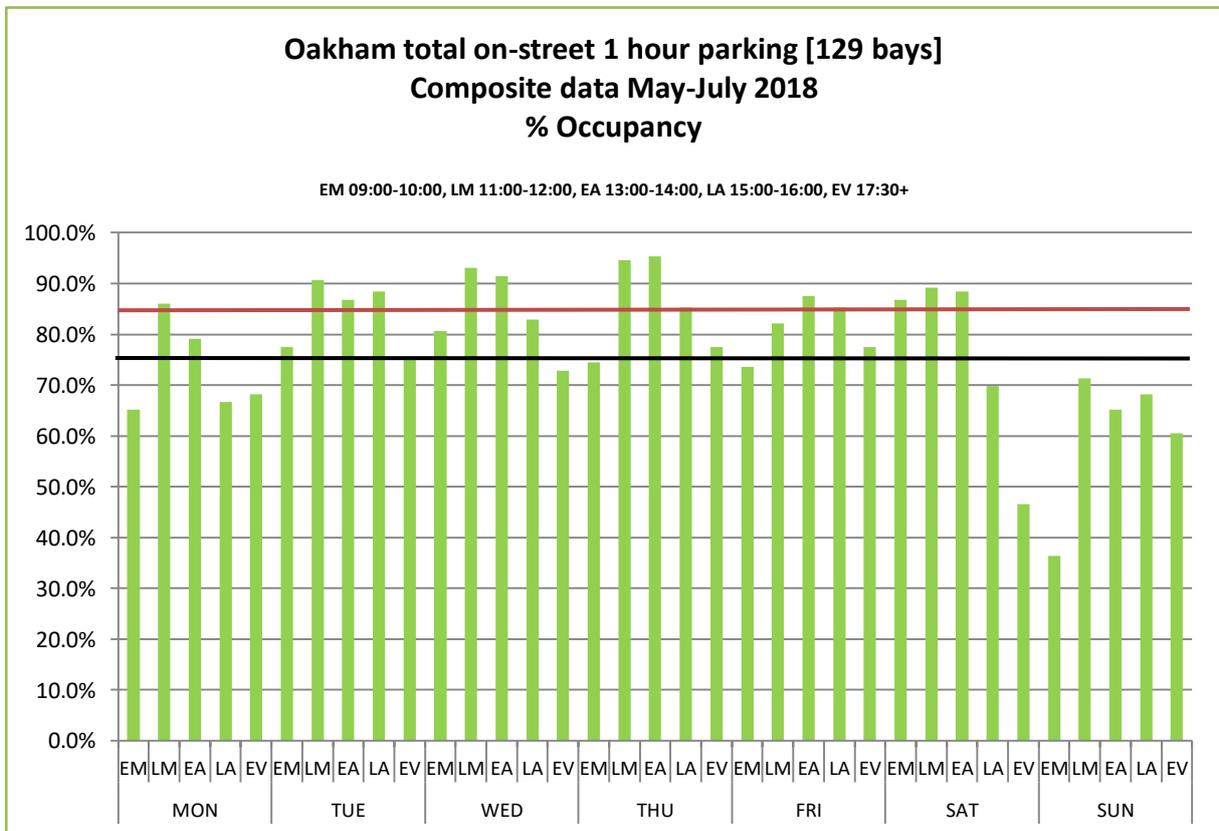


Fig. 2. Graph showing total percentage occupancy of all one-hour limited on-street parking bays

#### 4. Parking Provision

Oakham has seven town centre car parks with a total of 703 spaces, including 31 blue badge spaces, and 14 parent and child spaces in Tesco car park

Car parks in Oakham town centre				
Brooke Road	42 spaces	short stay	pay and display 80p per hr up to 4 hours	
Church Street	75 spaces	short stay	pay and display 80p per hr up to 4 hours	Incl 3 blue badge spaces
Tesco	216 spaces	short stay	2hrs free maximum stay	Incl 14 mother and child and 11 blue badge spaces
Burley Road	104 spaces	long stay	pay and display 80p per hr	Incl 4 blue badge spaces
Westgate	74 spaces	long stay	pay and display 80p per hr	Incl 5 blue badge spaces
South Street	70 spaces	long stay	pay and display 80p per hr	Filled to near capacity Mon-Fri , thought to include many RCC employees. Incl 2 blue badge, 5 museum and 10 children's centre spaces
Catmose (RCC Offices)	77 spaces	long stay	pay and display 80p per hr 2hrs free parking Saturday	Filled to capacity Mon-Fri with RCC employees Incl 6 blue badge spaces
Catmose (RCC Offices) overflow car park	45 spaces	long stay	pay and display 80p per hr	Filled to capacity Mon-Fri with RCC employees
<b>Total</b>	<b>703 spaces</b>			

There are also 232 free on-street parking spaces available in Oakham. The spaces closest to the centre are limited to 1hr parking, but there are also both 2hr shared (public and residents) and unrestricted parking a very short walk out of the immediate centre. In addition there are also 148 dedicated residents' parking spaces close to the centre, plus 24 reserved spaces in an off-road car park beyond the level crossing for Barleythorpe Road residents.

On-street parking in Oakham town centre		
Unrestricted parking	36 spaces	Station Road
2 hour/residents shared parking 8am-6pm	42 spaces	Station Road & Northgate
1 hour limited parking 8am-6pm	147 spaces	Distributed across the town
Blue Badge holders unrestricted	5 spaces	Market Street & Church Street
Blue Badge holders 3hrs 8am-6pm	2 spaces	Catmose Street (by Library) & Westgate
<b>Total</b>	<b>232 spaces</b>	
Residents only parking 8am-8pm	159 spaces (+ 42 shared)	236 residents parking permits issued @ £40 pa
Residents private car park Barleythorpe Road	24 spaces	Specific parking permits @ £200 per car pa

#### 5. The Car Parks

Catmose Car Park is primarily used Monday to Friday for Council employees with season tickets. Although the public or Council visitors may pay and park there after 10am occupancy is usually at or near maximum. This car park was therefore only counted at weekends, but despite its closeness to the town centre and the lure of 2 hrs free parking, it was found to be very little used.

South Street Car Park across the road from Catmose is also used by council employees and town traders. It is filled to 90-100% occupancy from before 9am till 5pm (earlier on Friday afternoons) (fig. 3). It also has five spaces reserved for visitors to Rutland County Museum and ten for the Catmose Street Visions children's centre during their respective operating hours, and two blue badge spaces.

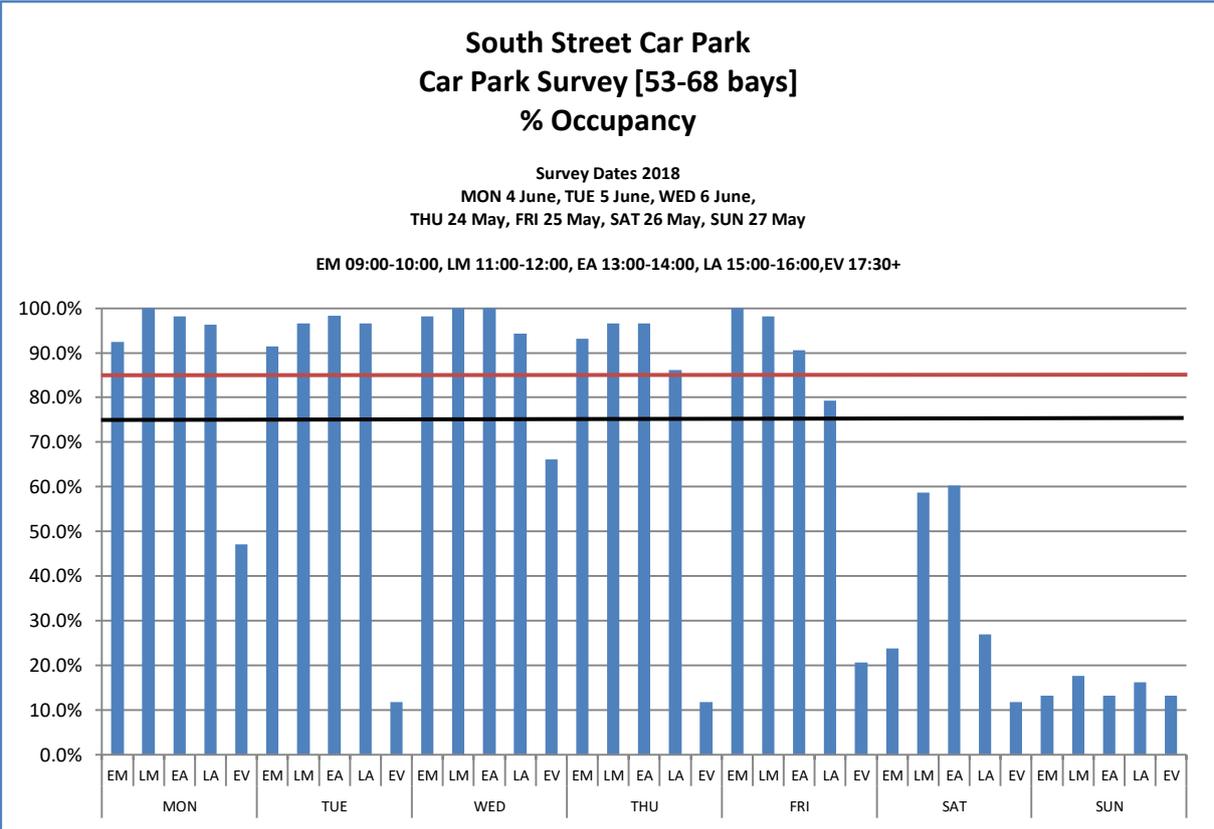


Fig. 3. Graph showing South Street car park occupancy (53 bays + 15 museum & children’s centre = 68 bays)

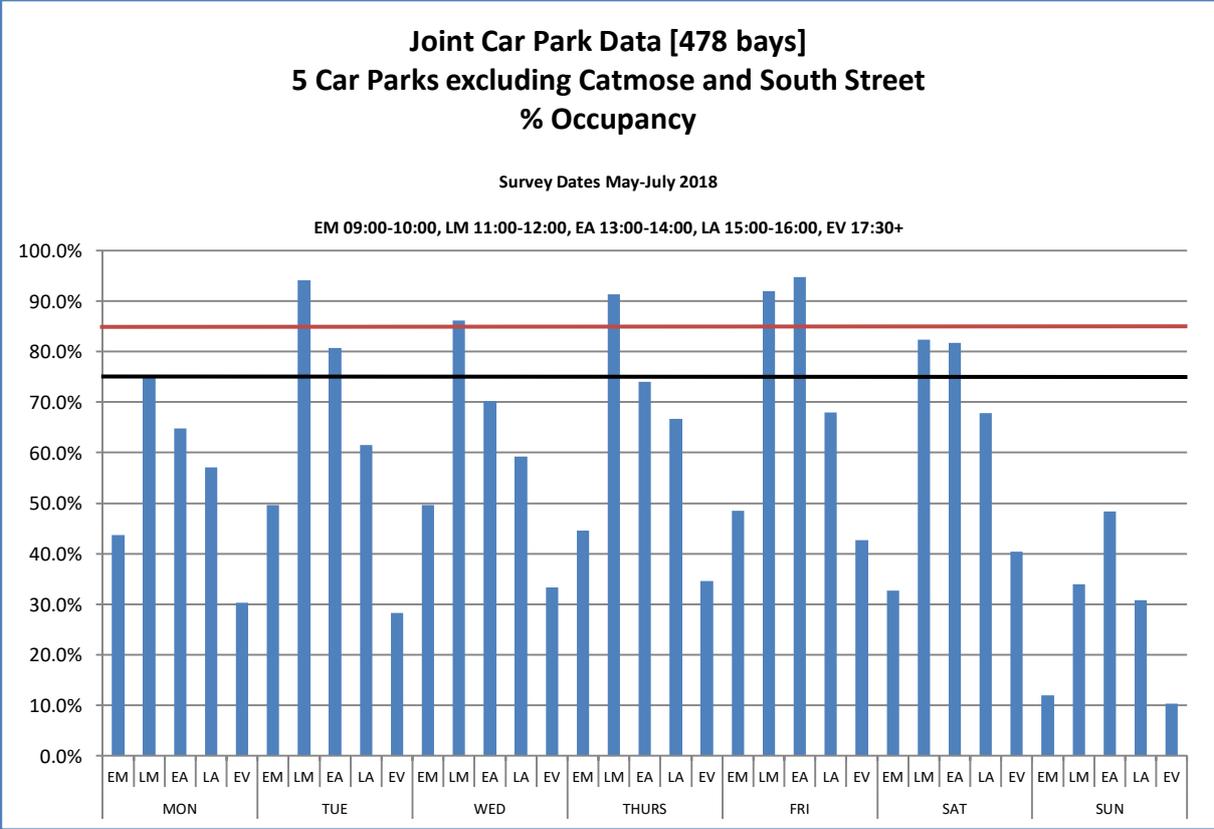


Fig. 4. Composite graph showing occupancy of all car parks apart from South Street and Catmose.

The remaining town car parks have a slightly different occupancy pattern in that the early morning slot averages at about 60%, only rising to unacceptably high levels late morning and early afternoon, before dropping down over the late afternoon (fig. 4). This would suggest that these other car parks are more used by visitors and shoppers than workers in Oakham.

### 6. Public On-Street Parking

The national average for on-street parking occupancy in benchmarked small towns is 80%. Oakham’s on-street parking is more solidly used than that of the car parks and the composite graph of all the one-hour parking in the town shows occupancy at all times (excepting the last reading on Saturday evening and the first on Sunday morning) to be at over 60% rising to 95%. In fact Melton Road has 50% of its readings showing a full 100% occupancy (fig. 5). To attain that 80% benchmark at peak times would require a further 20 on-street parking spaces.

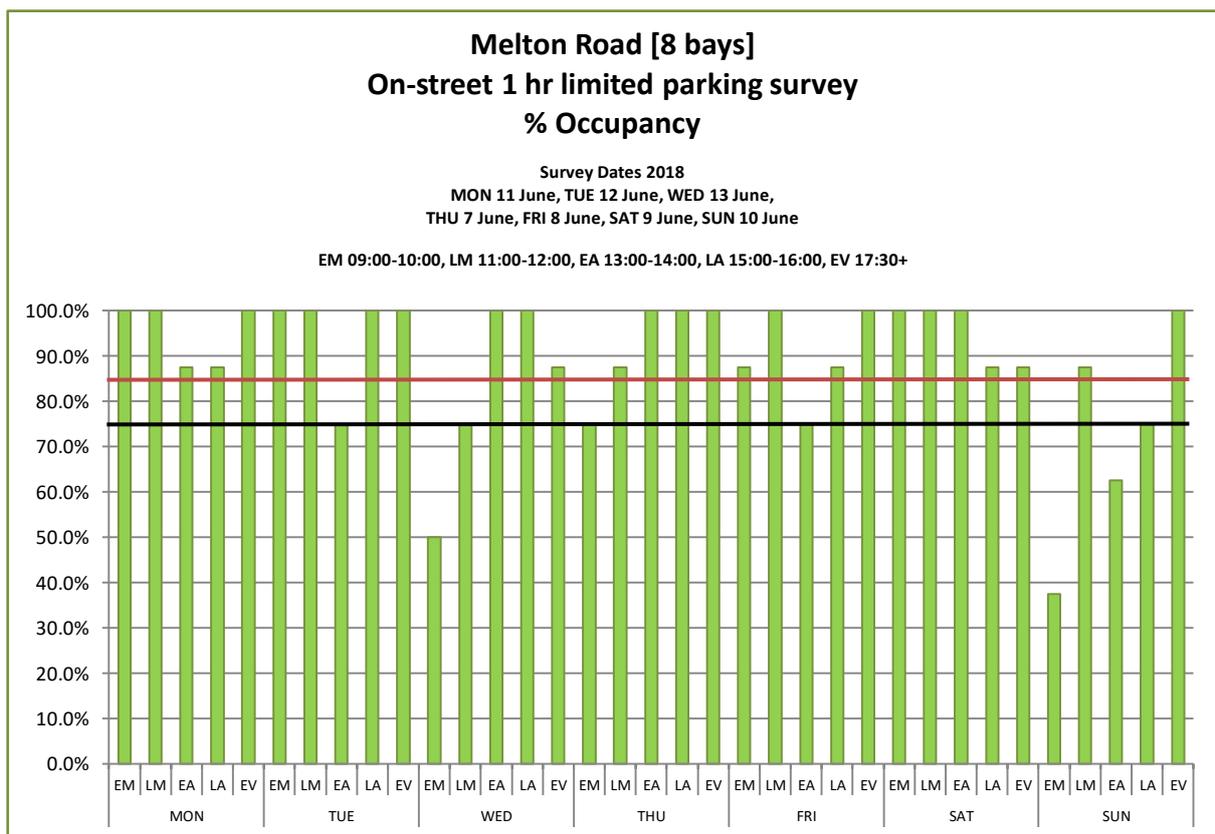
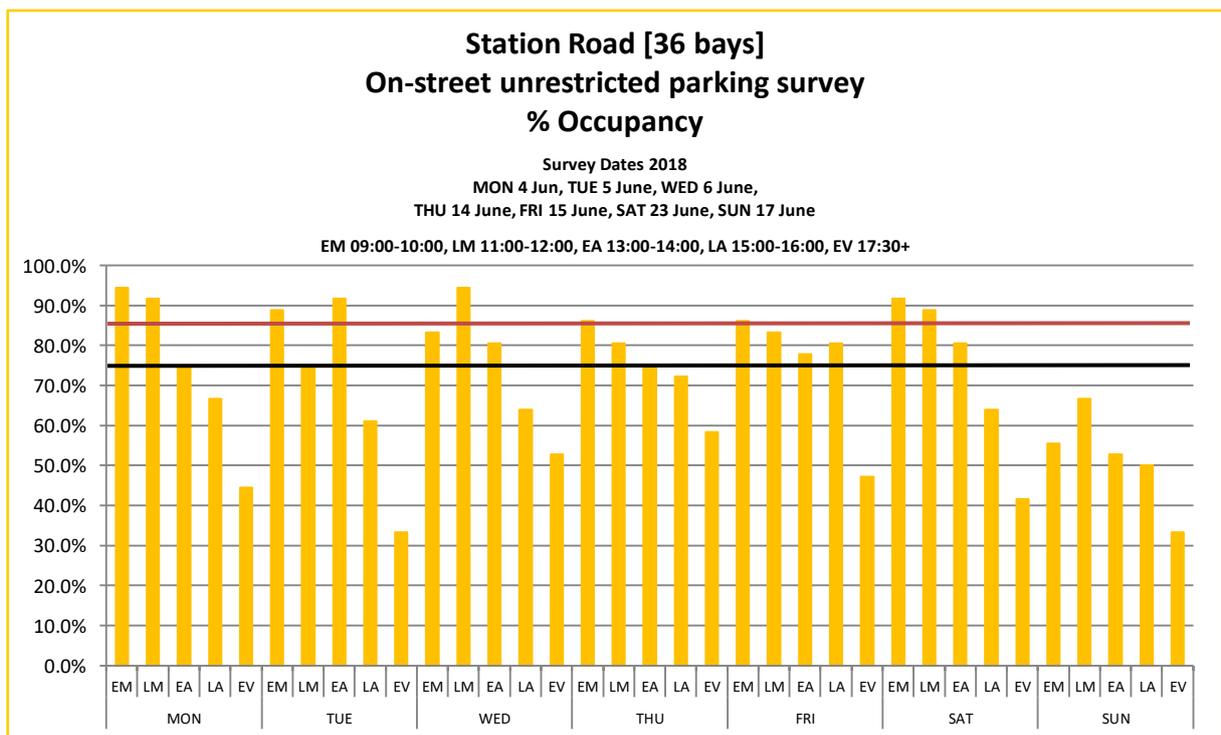
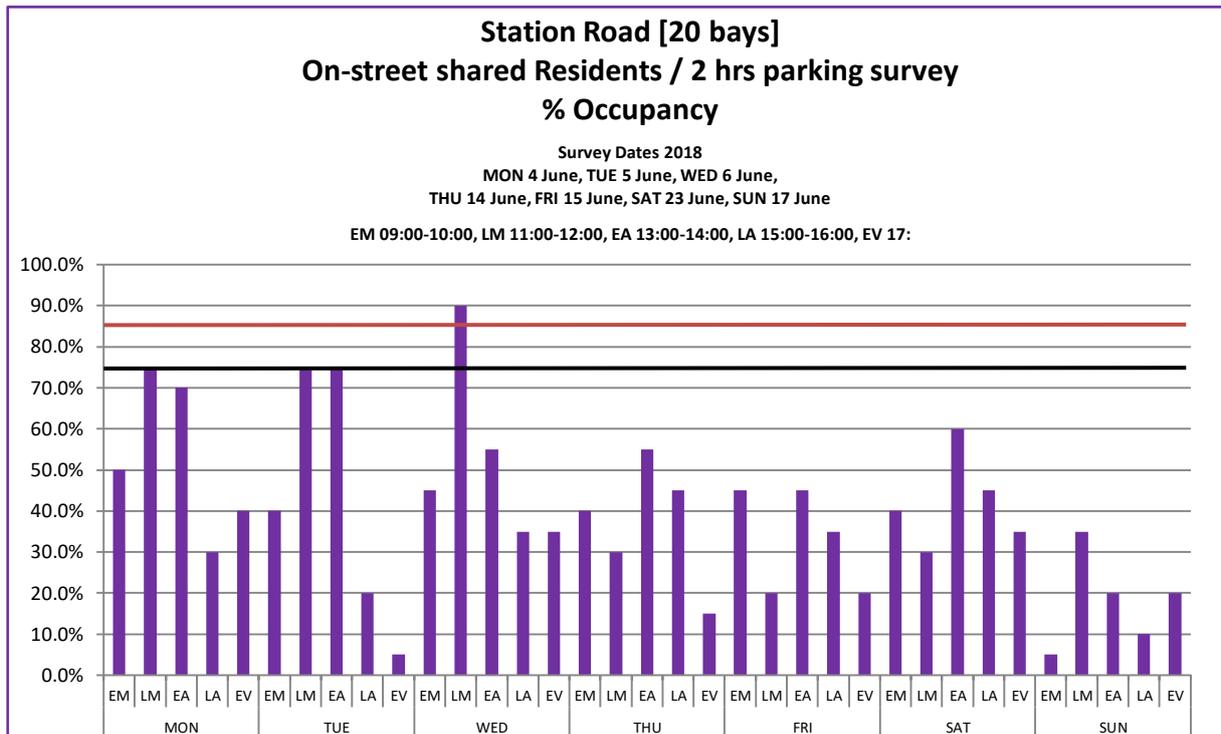


Fig. 5. Graph showing occupancy of Melton Road on-street parking bays

The unrestricted parking in Station Road is the furthest available on-street parking within easy walking distance of the town centre, and is used to acceptable capacity Monday–Saturday. However, the shared residents / 2hr spaces there are considerably under-used (figs. 6 & 7).

The only public on-street parking unmeasured for this study and excluded from the calculations was the Market Place. There are 18 parking spaces in the centre of the square. Two days of observation found that the centre was a merry-go-round of cars circling the centre through most of the day, re-filling empty parking spaces as soon as they appeared.



Figs. 6 (above) & 7 (below). Graphs showing occupancy of unrestricted and shared parking spaces on Station Road.

### 7. Long Stay/Short Stay Allocation

Oakham's on-street parking is mostly (63%) 1hr and of the rest 16% is 2 hrs, 19% unrestricted and 3% blue badge. The car parks have only a small percentage (4%) more long stay than short stay. Across the town there are only 34 more long stay car park spaces than short stay. This means that overall Oakham has 119 (12%) fewer long stay spaces than short, which is a reversal of the average figures for small towns nationally which are recorded as having 15% fewer short stay than long stay spaces. This seems to indicate that there may be a shortage of long stay parking in Oakham, but it is unclear what benefits, if any, would be gained by converting any of the short stay provision to long stay.

Breakdown of town centre parking by location and type	Oakham		National Benchmark for Small Towns: % of total parking
	Available spaces	% of parking	
<b>Car Park spaces</b>			
Short stay spaces (4 hours and under)	319	46%	29%
Long stay spaces (over 4 hours)	353	50%	61%
Blue Badge spaces	31	4%	7%
<b>Total Car Park spaces</b>	<b>703</b>		
<b>On-street spaces</b>			
Short stay spaces (1hr and 2hr)	189	81%	82%
Long stay spaces (unrestricted)	36	16%	12%
Blue Badge spaces	7	3%	6%
<b>Total on-street spaces</b>	<b>232</b>		
<b>Overall available spaces</b>			
Short stay spaces (4 hours and under)	508	54%	38%
Long stay spaces (over 4 hours)	389	42%	53%
Blue Badge spaces	38	4%	7%
<b>Total of all available spaces</b>	<b>935</b>		

### 8. Blue Badge Parking

The other area where Oakham differs markedly from the national benchmarked average is in the provision of blue badge parking. Across the town there are 38 such spaces, which is 4% of total parking availability, as compared to 7% nationally, which for Oakham would be 65 spaces.

Oakham has 31 blue badge spaces allocated across six car parks, but only seven on-street designated spaces. This is half the national average. These are spaced out across the centre with most sited in Market Street. A comment received from the volunteer who counted the occupancy rates in Westgate was: *'There are a number of people who abandon their cars across the gateways of the three houses there. Often these are blue badge holders'*. Also, in Market Street it was reported that there could be twice as many blue badge cars as spaces, the rest being parked on the double yellow lines – as indeed they are often seen to be in other parts of the town (as may be their right). It is unclear if this indicates inadequate provision, or that on-street spaces are not located in the most appropriate places. That said, overall occupancy never rose above 70% (fig. 8).

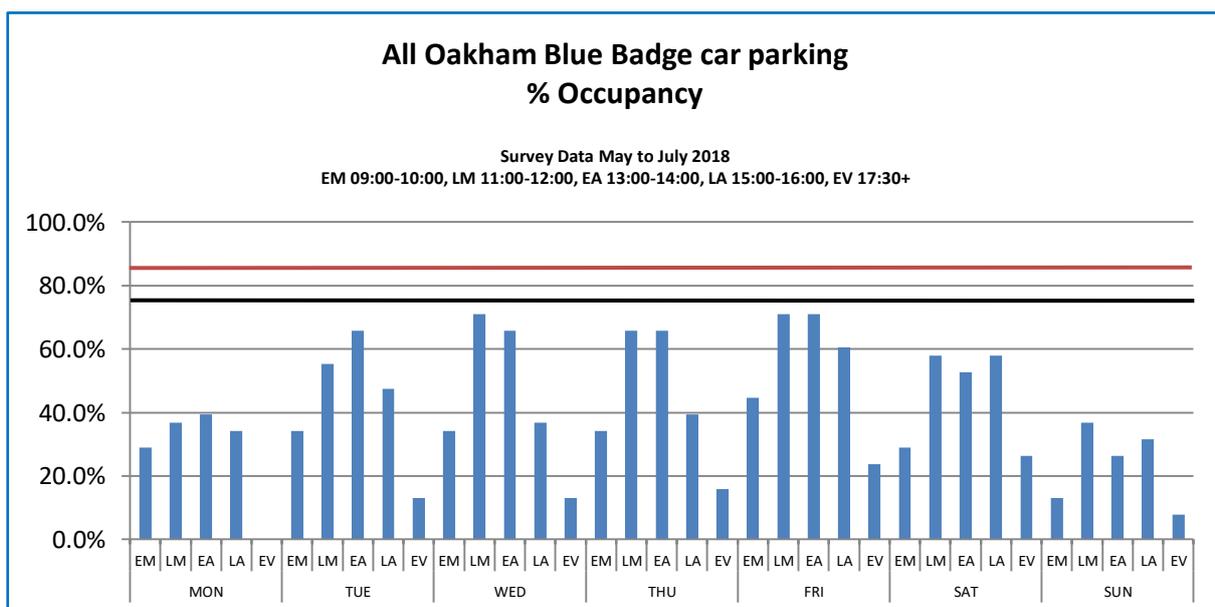
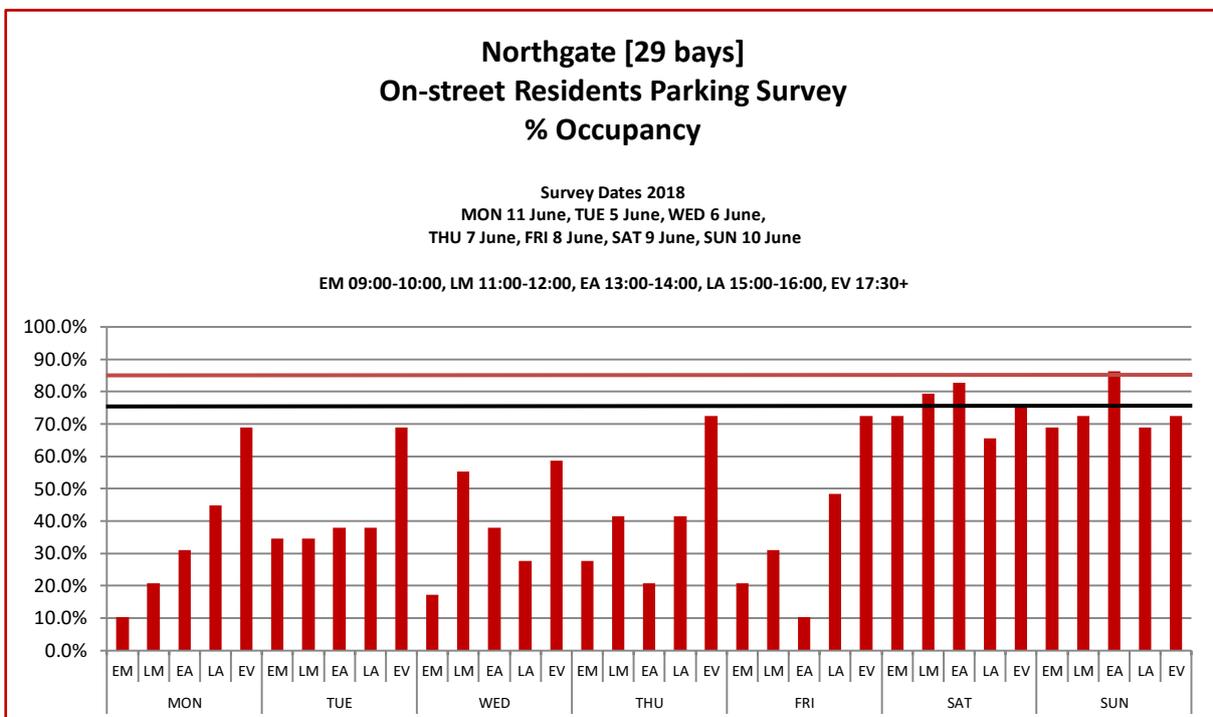
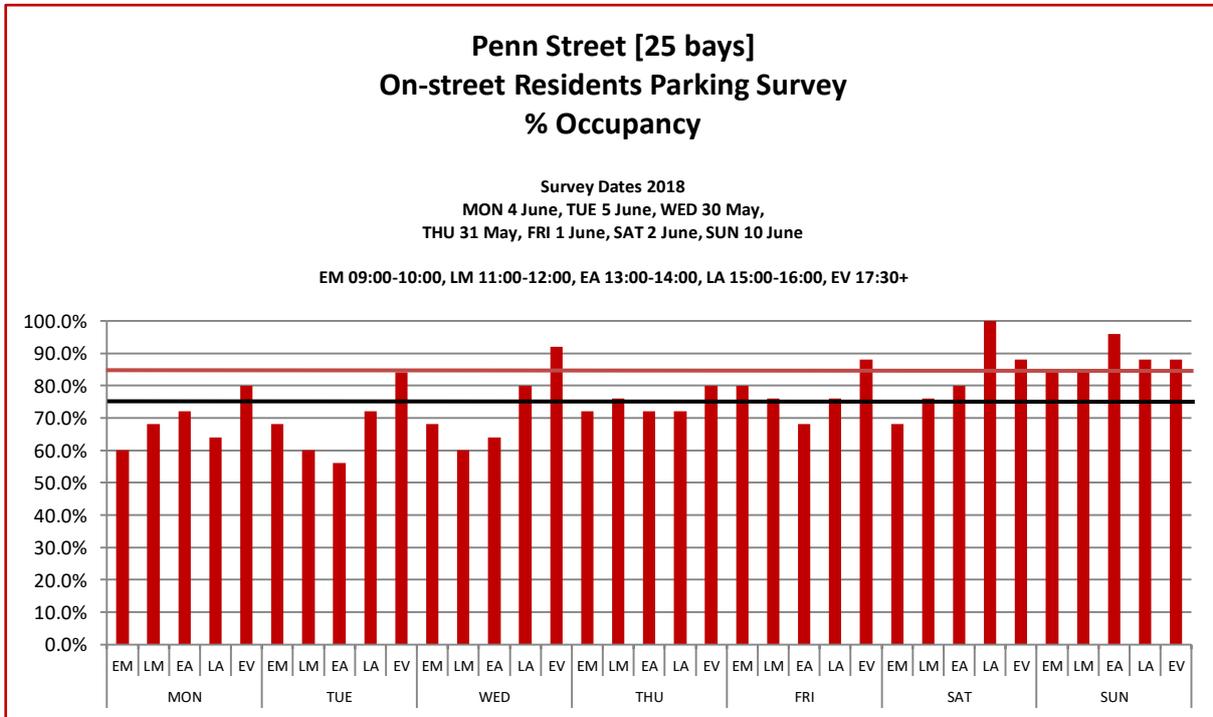


Fig. 8. Graph showing occupancy of all Blue Badge parking spaces in the town

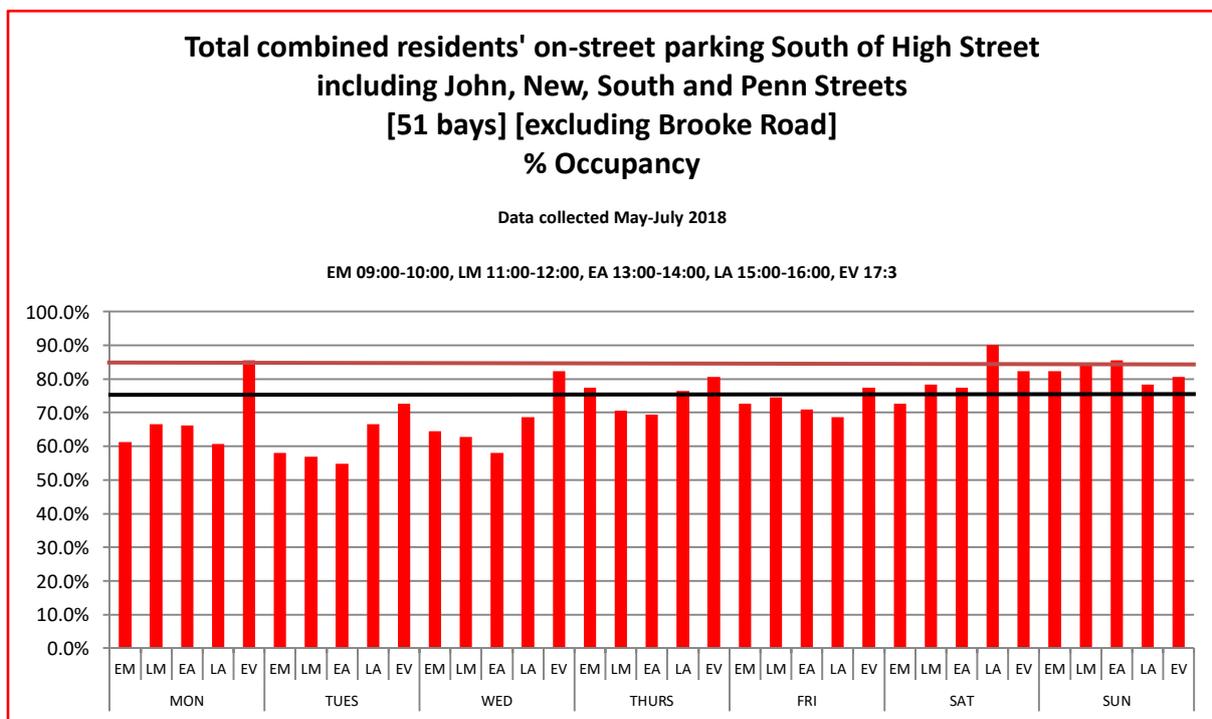
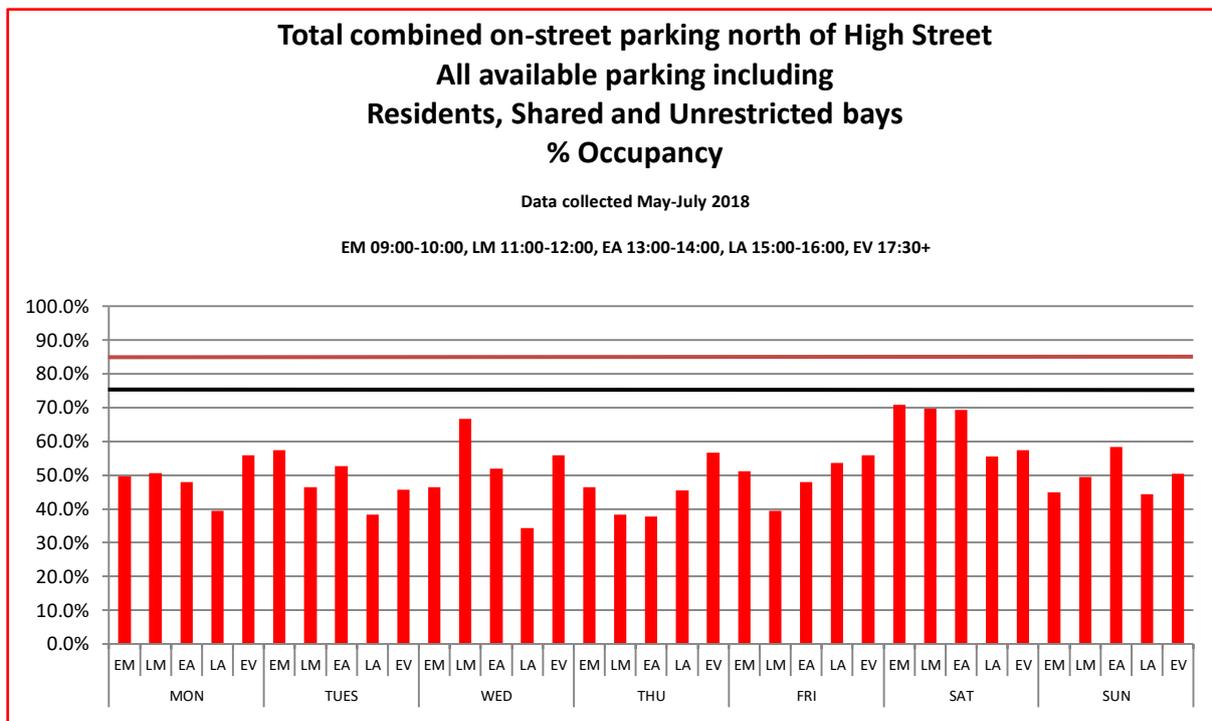
### 9. Residents' Parking

Oakham has many predominantly residential streets within the town centre. Very many of the houses in these streets, as well as a number of flats above retail and business premises, do not have off-road parking. The general pattern of residential parking is that where there is a spread of age groups, and people going off to work in their cars, there tends to be higher occupancy at weekends and evenings. In areas of predominantly older people there appears to be less variation in the occupancy level through the day. This may perhaps account for the contrast in occupancy between Northgate and Penn Street (figs. 9 & 10).



*Figs. 9 (above) and 10 (below). Graphs showing the percentage occupancy of Penn Street and Northgate residents' on-street parking spaces*

Rutland County Council has issued 236 residents' permits at a cost of £40 pa, including 31 permits for streets with no designated residents' spaces. There are currently 159 resident-only parking spaces in the town centre. There are 94 permits for 71 spaces in the northern parking zone. However Northgate and Station Road to the north of the High Street also have 42 shared parking spaces (residents or 2hr public parking). In addition Station Road has 36 unrestricted parking bays. This northern zone was never observed to rise above 70% occupancy (fig. 11). This means that the needs of daytime visitors and residents mesh reasonably well, and there is adequate parking which could also accommodate permit holders from the High Street and Melton Road.



*Figs. 11 (above) & 12 (below). Graphs comparing percentage occupancy of all residents' on-street parking spaces in the northern and southern parts of the town*

The situation is rather different to the south of the High Street where 99 permit holders share 73 parking bays. Here the parking bays are in substantial use, averaging 70% occupancy through the day and rising to 90% (fig. 12). Further, with no other on-street parking available, in the evening it is quite common to see vehicles parked half on the pavement on the single yellow lines in Penn Street. With the number of mobility scooters in this area, likely to increase on completion of a large retirement home there, this is less than desirable.

The occupancy of the 11 spaces on Brooke Road for which 16 permits have been issued was not counted. The problems of Brooke Road relate more seriously to traffic flow and safety, which is a different issue.

Ten residents' permits have also been issued for Long Row and two for Burley Road. Since observation shows that there are enough residents' bays in each location, these two roads have not been factored into the calculations.

There is no provision in Oakham for residents to buy temporary visitors' permits, unlike certain other towns. North of the High Street there would be little difficulty accommodating a few such extra cars, but south of the High Street this could be more problematic. It would depend on the level of demand.

### **10. Coaches and Camper Vans**

It is possible for coach drivers to set down and pick up their passengers at the bus stops on the High Street outside or opposite Crown Walk, and then to take their coaches to a designated but remote parking area on Kilburn Road. However there is currently no provision for camper vans, the marked spaces in the car parks being too small for them or indeed for minibuses. Several respondents of the Rutland Visitors Survey were camping just a few miles from Oakham but had not visited Oakham and were not intending to as they had found nowhere to park. There is an opportunity now to consider how this might be rectified.

### **11. Cost of Parking**

For people who work in the town and need regular parking there are several available options.

Weekly parking permits	£15 for Monday to Friday	£18 for Monday to Saturday
Season tickets	£437 for Monday to Friday	£520 for Monday to Saturday

All of these weekly or season tickets represent discounted prices and are valid in the long stay car parks and for up to four hours in the short stay car parks. Currently there are 53 Monday–Friday and 30 Monday–Saturday season ticket holders, and 119 further season tickets are held by RCC employees. The total of 202 season tickets represents 41% of short stay and long stay car park spaces combined (excluding Tesco where they are not valid), or 57% of the long stay spaces. The incidence of season ticket use in the various car parks was not examined but clearly their regular use limits the number of spaces available for other car park users

Pay and Display parking in Oakham is charged at 80p per hour. For both long stay and short stay car parks this is 40p for half an hour, 80p for each of the first 3 hours and £4 for over 3 hours. In short stay car parks the maximum time allowed is 4 hours. The exception is the Tesco car park where, by agreement, there is 2 hours free parking regardless of whether people shop in the store. This car park is by far the largest of the car parks, with 216 spaces, and is about the same distance from the town centre as the Church Street, Brooke Road and Burley Road car parks. The penalty for overstaying the 2 hours is, however, a £70 fine, and there is an ANPR system in place to enforce this. The overstay penalty in the Council's car parks is £50 and other penalties can also be applied, such as for over-sized or wrongly parked vehicles.

In the Council Car parks, payment at the machines is by coin at the machine or by card using RingGo, for which there is an additional charge of 20p. There have been a number of issues with parking machines not working properly. At the time of the parking survey the machine in Westgate was out of order. We include the full report from the survey volunteer, who was visiting this car park five times a day for 2½ weeks. These comments would probably be applicable to any car park with a faulty machine.

*Westgate Car Park*

*During the survey there was an issue with the ticket machine. It was out of order for at least two weeks and the sign advised people to pay on RingGo or use coins only. However the machine rejected any attempt to put coins in thus leaving only the RingGo option. There was another phone number listed with the option to use a debit or credit card which would incur 'a small [unspecified] convenience charge'.*

*On umpteen occasions when doing the survey I found puzzled people trying to sort this out. Some of the difficulties were:-*

- *No mobile phone*
- *No access to internet on phone to download RingGo app*
- *Mobile phone but no credit card with them*

*A lot of people I spoke to said they would*

- *Go and find a car park space somewhere else*
- *Go and park in Tesco*
- *Give up – they had come to Westgate car park because 'all the others were full'*

Nowadays the Pay and Display method of payment in many places is being replaced by more 'intelligent' systems. The disadvantage of the former method is that visitors must decide 'up front' how much time they wish to spend and when that time is running low must return to their cars.

A system of taking a ticket and paying pro rata on return for the exact amount of time taken is more conducive to people relaxing and taking their time in town. During days on which volunteers were interviewing locals and visitors in the town centre, all reported that quite a number of people could not stop to give their views as they were in danger of over-running their parking tickets. Someone who has no time to stop and chat has no time to pop into another shop, or stop for coffee or refreshment. If increasing the footfall and hence trade in Oakham is our aim then our parking payment system would seem to be actively obstructing this.

*Joy Clough  
Oakham Residents Group  
August 2018*