

The future of Ludlow's park and ride

*A paper from the Shropshire Councillors for Ludlow and Clee
Andy Boddington, Tracey Huffer, Richard Huffer and Vivienne Parry
July 2020*

Image: Elizabeth Dixon



1. A decade of decline at Ludlow's park and ride

- 1.1 **Gateway.** The Eco Park park and ride site is one of the principle gateways into Ludlow. It is often packed with visitors' cars at weekends and during festivals. The park and ride service is essential for Ludlow's visitor and retail economy. But due to neglect it has become an embarrassment to our town and its owners, Shropshire Council.



- 1.2 **Neglect.** Despite the importance of the park and ride service for Ludlow, the site has been neglected for more than a decade. The plastic grid parking surface has long exceeded its lifespan. It is broken, potholed and dangerous. The disabled parking signs were knocked over years ago. The concrete bases of the signs are a safety hazard. The bus shelter is a mess and has a broken pane. A litter bin is missing.



- 1.3 **Littering.** The park and ride site has been a significant locus for antisocial behaviour during the evenings for many years, especially at weekends. The physical evidence of night time activities can be seen most mornings. Soft drink and booze cans. Chip wrappers and polystyrene takeaway boxes. Vaping straws. Condoms. Nitrous oxide canisters and more. These are scattered in and around the parking area throughout year but especially in the warmer months.



Nitrous oxide canisters

- 1.4 **Antisocial behaviour.** Littering is just one part of the antisocial behaviour on the Eco Park. “Young Racers” skid around the car park area. They churn up the plastic grid surface and bump over the kerbs. In November 2017, they rammed and destroyed a tree. The fencing separating the park and ride from the NHS site has suffered damage. The noise made by the young racers has long been a significant disturbance for the residents of the houses at the west end of Sheet Village. A development of 68 homes east of the Eco Park is due to commence build out in 2021. The nearest homes will be around 120 metres from the bus shelter and will inevitably be disturbed by the sounds of revving engines and skidding tyres.



The rammed tree

- 1.5 **Bus service.** The bus service into town runs on a half hourly timetable. We cannot identify any other park and ride in the country with such an infrequent service. The low frequency of services is exacerbated by the lack of toilets and absence of electronic information on when buses will arrive. The shelter lacks an information board welcoming people to Ludlow and outlining its attractions.



Skid marks from circling and handbrake turns

2. Mapping a future for Ludlow's park and ride

- 2.1 **Repairing, improving, securing.** There is an urgent need for short term repairs to the park and ride area. We must also plan longer term improvements to facilities at the site. The site itself needs securing to prevent its continued use for antisocial behaviour.
- 2.2 **Timing and finance.** The initial actions we propose are long overdue and should be implemented immediately from current revenue budgets. We then propose actions for the next financial year. The extent of the works and actions we propose is not major. We see no reason why they should not be completed by the summer of 2021.
- 2.3 **Immediate repairs.** The bus shelter should be repaired and cleaned, and scruffy signage replaced. The disabled bay signs should be removed. Any potholes should be temporarily patched. The missing litter bin should be replaced with an extra bin on the south west corner of the parking area.
Action: Shropshire Council. Timing: Immediate.
- 2.4 **Replacing the parking surface.** The temporary plastic grid surface must be replaced. Any replacement should be porous to reduce runoff towards the balancing pond and Ledwyche Brook.
Action: Shropshire Council. Timing before Easter 2021.
- 2.5 **Securing the parking area.** A low post and rail barrier should surround the parking area to prevent vehicles driving over kerbs and grass to access it. Electronic barriers should be installed at the two entrances. These should automatically lock between 8pm and 6am.
Action: Shropshire Council. Timing: 2021/22 financial year.
- 2.6 **Charging for parking.** Shropshire Council should consider bring the park and ride into its charging regime at not higher than Band 6, maximum £2.40 a day. Many of the cars on the park and ride area belong to employees and a charge would bring parity with the town centre employees. It would also help promote active and sustainable travel. Users of the park and ride service should be given a discount on bus travel to and from the town centre.
Action: Shropshire Council. Timing: 2021/22 financial year.
- 2.7 **Tackling antisocial behaviour.** A secure parking area will minimise antisocial behaviour from young racers. Before this is in place, we would ask that Ludlow Senior Neighbourhood Team increase evening patrols around the Eco Park.
Action: Ludlow SNT. Timing: Immediate.
- 2.8 **Wildflower meadow at the Eco Park.** The NHS acquired land north of the park and ride for a new community hospital but this project was abandoned in 2013. The two hectare site has since been popular with dogwalkers but no other use for it has yet been found. The two hectare site has been mowed three times this year stunting wildflower growth and reducing biodiversity. We propose that this land is repurposed as a wildflower. Paths for walkers should be mowed along existing desire lines and the rest mowed once a year. This will save money. It will promote wildflowers and biodiversity. This cannot be a permanent arrangement as at some point the site will be developed. But there is no expectation of development in the next few years given the current permissions for housing and allocations of employment land in and around Ludlow.
Action: Shropshire Community Health Trust. Timing: Spring 2021.

2.9 **Improving bus services.** A more frequent bus service from the park and ride to Ludlow town centre is desirable. This should be discussed in the context of the provision of wider town services.

Action: Shropshire Council, Ludlow Town Council, unitary councillors.

2.9. **Process.** We will initially circulate this draft paper to Ludlow Town Council, Ludford Parish Council, In and Out of Ludlow, Ludlow 21, Bus Users Shropshire and other bodies with an interest in the future of the park and ride site. We welcome their views. We will also ask for public views and seek additional ideas. These will be collated in August and a final paper sent to Shropshire Council in September.

Comments should be sent to councillors@teamludlow.uk, preferably by 21 July.



Could the NHS site host a temporary wildflower meadow?

