

Collated and summarised feedback Wetton and Ecton survey

Should we, as a community, collectively manage the visitors coming to Wetton?

Yes	25
No	23
Other	16

In summary: Almost even split in thinking the community should collectively do something

Other bodies should be involved such as police, SMDC, Staffordshire County Council, National Trust and possibly Chatsworth as in addition to residents are all stakeholders in the village

Does this include all of Wtton Parish including Back of Ecton? Without managing the visitors from Wetton Mill down the valley to the turn for Wetton there is no point. Managing Wetton alone will only push the problem elsewhere.

We do not have the resources or the manpower to deal with the problem. The Peak Park should assist the police to deal with the problem

PDNP, NT and Chatsworth should also take responsibility and contribute

What does this question even mean? Depends what ways are suggested

Should we make a case to the Peak Park National Trust and Chatsworth to restrict access to Thor's Cave

Yes - during Summer of 2021	11
Only on bank holidays	2
Only on weekends	5
Yes - permanently	11
No	22
Other	14

In summary: Slight majority would like to see some form of access restrictions

Only if Thor's Cave is being damaged should a case be made for restricted access (as was the case with Stonehenge for example). And it may become necessary to fortify the footpath which leads from the permissive path, as had to happen on Mam Tor due to the heavy footfall.

Visitor numbers have increased because PDNPA have actively advertised it as a must visit attraction. That needs to stop!

People will not take any notice even if restrictions are put in place

Visitors unlikely to 'check' opening hours.... better to have infrastructure and clear directions for parking etc so they can stay away from the main elements of the village

People should have freedom to visit. If it was applied to Thor's cave then it could be argued it should be applied elsewhere, eg, Mam Tor, Lud's Church.

Absolutely not, our wild places are incredibly important to people for many reasons and more should be available to people rather than less. The issue is the management of visitors not the fact that the cave is accessible.

Yes for 2021, with the possibility of extending it. The concession path should be closed and sign posts at Thor's Cave should indicate the path to the steps.

Due to damage and erosion in the last 12 months, the peak park and Chatsworth should work together to limit or ban access

Should car parking be managed?

Yes - Open the Playing Field for overspill parking	31
Yes - seek a different field for use as a central parking place	18
No - let visitors find places to park in and around the village	5
Other	13

In summary: Most votes to use playfield to alleviate parking - although some also strong arguments against it

I think a field for overspill is necessary for the time being; a different one from last year if possible, so children can enjoy the playing field. If there were enough volunteers, it would be great to have someone on the gate, charging £5 (example in Castleton) and taking the opportunity to chat and provide information to visitors.

It seems that the village fills up before the overflow car park so it is unclear whether offering additional parking will actually attract more people to Wetton. If any additional parking could be provided away from the village and residents such as in the valley or near Weag's Bridge this might be a better solution.

I suggest the field opposite to Wetton car park.

Restrict parking to car parks only. That includes all car parks including the car park on the junction of the Manifold Valley and Wetton hill. Ban all on road parking included Back of Ecton Lane

the old camping field, rather than an area for children to play

The village children need a safe place to play long term. A car parking area is not safe

Definitely NOT opening the play field. Don't increase capacity. It only perpetuates the visitor numbers

Should we put in place car parking restrictions in the Village?

Yes - Using Parking Cones	7
Yes - Apply to County Council Highways for yellow lines to be painted in parts of the village?	30
Yes - using 'No Parking' or 'Clearway' signs	12
No	6
Other	13

In summary: A majority would like to see yellow lines painted on village roads

Residents with no off-road parking should have reserved spaces in front of their property. Yellow lines on blind bend and along Mires? Restrict vehicle access to allow essential vehicles only on Mires?

Instead of cones around the village, I suggest professionally made signs in appropriate places stating 'residents parking' / 'turning space' etc. As an example, this can be seen in Edensor. I am not opposed to double yellows in some areas of the village where parking is hazardous or restricts access for farm vehicles or emergency vehicles.

We don't fully understand the timescales & protocols of establishing parking restrictions, but we feel some form of parking restriction is now required in the village. This might need to be a short term solution initially depending on whether or not numbers drop.

better to have clear way signs and residents parking permits.. this could then be enforced by Chatsworth employees or volunteers, similar to the Dovedale carpark

Ban all on road parking. Not by using yellow lines but by making the village, including Back of Ecton a no parking zone..

Not sure signage would have any effect and would be ignored. However temporary measures, such as the posts in the ground by the car park to protect verges, at peak times would be a good idea.

Cones are unsightly and often ignored. 'No Parking' signs have been removed by visitors. Yellow lines would remove the burden from residents proactively. Evidence of effective in Ilam

Should visitors be asked to pay for parking?

Yes - a significant sum per hour	6
Yes - just a nominal sum per hour	13
Yes - a one off daily rate	25
No, it should remain free parking	15
Other	12

In summary: A majority supports a charge for visitors' parking

By applying charges without parking restrictions on the roads people will only park on the roads

suggestion of £5 per vehicle per visit

A small nominal fee to help towards rubbish collection

Should be in line with what other car parks charge in the area

How should littering be managed?

More litter bins provided	30
More "Take your litter home" signs	30
Residents doing litter picking patrols	6
Nothing done.	1
Other	10

In summary: More Bins and Signs has a lot of support

I think more litter bins should be provided, perhaps at the start of the permissive path to Thors Cave, in the village car park and in any overspill car park. Again, volunteers would be needed to empty these bins. I would also suggest we have signs in the same three places with half a dozen bullet points (quick and easy to read) taken from the Countryside Code, one of which could relate to taking litter home.

Residents are already doing litter patrols, which is not the answer. There is a lack of bins near the permissive path but also people need to be more aware of their impact on the environment so signage would be beneficial.

Ask the village lengths-man to do it for extra work bonus

All of the above ... perhaps the parking fees could be used to pay for litter pickers.

How should we manage anti-social behaviour?

Set up our own patrols	3
Ask police for more presence at busy times	34
Do nothing	5
Other	15
CCTV at problem spots?	

In summary: Increased police presence is welcomed over any other approach

I'm not sure that we can manage anti-social behaviour with individuals who are probably going to visit Wetton only once; and if an individual or group is challenged, it is unlikely a positive solution would be achieved. When anyone is breaking the law, COVID or otherwise, the police should be contacted. I'm sure the police will increase their patrols if they receive a large number of calls on a regular basis. We could also write to our MP with any examples of anti-social behaviour and she would then have to pass on her concerns to DEFRA who would have a duty to act.

Patrolling ourselves is dangerous. I suspect the Police are too busy. Do we have a PCSO we can call on?

Better signage, not everyone is aware of the countryside code.

It's unfair to ask the Police for more patrols as they are stretched already, however consider paying toward a local dedicated PCSO. Alternatively, possible thought of volunteering services to be a Special Constable dedicated to local problem solving which would cost the local Force nothing and have the local interests at heart.

We are not vigilantes and can't be expected to deal with bad parking, bad language and aggression of some of the gangs of youth's etc.

Would you like to add any other comments please?

This is not a quick fix, increased numbers of visits to the countryside and beauty spots is happening all over the UK and creating the same issues. I'm sure many of us choose to live in Wetton because of its beautiful surroundings, so it is not surprising that individuals want to visit the area (around 20 million people live within an hour's drive of the Peak District); one of the reasons for the creation of National Parks in 1949 was to 'provide recreational opportunities for the public'. Some of the visitors in the last 12 months are visiting the countryside for the first time; we need to welcome them but also help to inform and educate them. I am happy to volunteer for emptying any additional bins, manning an overspill carpark and being involved with any signage relating to the Countryside Code. I do believe that as the UK returns to 'normality' with shops, pubs, nightclubs and foreign holidays, the number of visitors will decrease.

It's become apparent that the village has become a hotspot during these unprecedented times. I would imagine once lockdown has ended visitor numbers and visitor type will revert back to normal. I also think a car park outside of the village would be a sensible management strategy. This and some online management of Thor's Cave related walks, using SEO to advise people to park in the valley. Some more signage of where to park and where not to park would be ideal, I don't think the cones are a long term solution as they are a blight on our beautiful Peak District village.

Alternative parking should be in the Manifold Valley to encourage footfall across pre-existing constructed pathways to prevent erosion of the land and to also benefit the village of Wetton because we have lost our peaceful village at the weekends.

perhaps advice could be sought from bodies such as Peak Park, Peak Park Parishes Forum and others might help as we're not the only village suffering. Even during lockdown there have been issues and these will only get worse from the ends of March.

I suspect the problem will go away by itself after this year. Perhaps we should invite a couple of takeaway coffee vans and make some money out of the visitors? Deposits on the coffee cups though to prevent adding to the litter!

Would you like to add any other comments please? - continued

We are conscious this is a complex problem and we are keen to find a solution/compromise that meets the needs of all Wetton residents. We are keen that Peak Park, Chatsworth and The National Trust play their part in this process.

We would like better signage at Back of Ecton making it clear that there is no through route, no turning, no parking, access to properties only. The valley is closed now so drivers should be warned of the above before they get to the point of no return. Some drivers are extremely rude and abusive when we tell them they can't park on our property or drive down the valley. Some do it anyway.

There are businesses in the village that need the tourists. They have already had a devastating year. Restrictions would likely close those businesses permanently.

We don't feel it would be right to attempt to deny other people the opportunity to enjoy the area, which is after all why most of us live here in the first place.

Spaces owned by National Trust or Chatsworth Estate should be better managed by them, e.g. by erecting "NO LITTER, NO ILLEGAL BBQs, NO ILLEGAL CAMPING" signs, and the Trust or Estate should be asked to proactively organise clear-ups after every weekend over the summer, e.g. litter picking and clearing of larger items. This should not be left to the village to sort out. Wetton Mill was pretty messy with litter last weekend.

It is a complicated problem exacerbated by the Covid pandemic and advertising that the place to visit in Derbyshire is Thor's Cave. Many visitors come to walk the many routes locally and the village amenities: pub/cafe and toilets. Others merely come to 'walk to Thor's Cave', which could be enticed into the Tea-Room/Pub etc. Tourism is therefore very important to our village and should be harnessed to the village's benefit. However, the excessive volume will, as soon as hospitality industry opens again, prove a positive income provider. Thought does need to be made as to how/where the village can 'influence' the visitors for maximum benefit yet maximum protection of the rural life that residents moved here for. The car parking in the playing field last year was a prime example of decisive positive action which worked, however, if there was a field close to the main carpark available as 'overflow', mapping systems show the carpark and toilet already and when that is full, they could then find the alternative place to park, without driving all round the village. Also the speed at which visitors drive through the village, treating it like a race track needs to be addressed: maybe through Community Speed Watch or changing the speed limit permanently from the 30mph signs on entry to village.

I think it would be impossible to manage visitors to Wetton. Parking is a big problem and the use of cones around certain parts of the village though necessary, is an eyesore. Wetton 'the village of the cones' as we are now known. Hopefully when we regain some sort of normality things will improve. Remember that certain businesses in the village rely on visitors for their income

If you Google Thor's Cave there are lots of websites, some official, telling you to park in Wetton. These should be approached to take down their content and point out that there are steps up to Thor's Cave from the Manifold Way whereas from Wetton it's a hike to Thor's Cave which is possibly why the Air Ambulance has been called out on numerous occasions.

As with most things, Back of Ecton has been left out of any thoughts from the council. Back of Ecton Lane has been used as a parking spot restricting access to farm vehicles. 4*4 still travel down the no vehicle access part of the lane. Litter louts have populated the lane. If you want support from Back of Ecton residents remember they are part of the parish. The parish has a precept, a quarter of that comes from Back of Ecton residents nothing is spent here..

Thanks for taking this initiative on a difficult and emotional topic.

We should welcome visitors but expect them to act responsibly There are a lot of local businesses relying on them

A police presence at the cave occasionally during the weekend would soon put the news around on social media to those who are coming to use it for anything other than just satisfying curiosity.

I know parking is an issue but I honestly believe that by having the playing fields used (and abused) we caused more of a problem. If no parking they won't come or distribute between other villages so not so concentrated. Bins are pretty useless as they just pile up and bags left on floor.

What about emergency services access in blocked single track lanes?

Would you like to add any other comments please? - continued

The majority of visitors passing through TC are not the type of walkers we welcomed in previous years. We are now seeing lots of younger people with no respect for the village, residents and TC. Visitors are not interested in the village and we should not have to deal with them

Obviously, I have concerns regarding the extent villagers can get involved and challenge and the effectiveness of this. I'm particularly aware this might not be safe. I have seen people sworn at for asking to move cars and pick up litter. The visitors coming are very different. A lot of drugs and alcohol on the cave and people are not used to the country side.

Alcohol free zone on the village green, i.e. no pub customers beyond the pub beer garden

Chatsworth and the Peak Park should work together to find a solution. Signs for Thor's Cave have never been provided so visitors are trespassing, causing damage. They should provide a car park, allow no parking on the lane. Close Thor's Cave to the public. It has been dangerous and it is getting worse. The emergency services are called there regularly.