**Pavement parking will incur official attention**

Wokingham Borough Council has announced measures designed to stop motorists from parking on footpaths and too close to road junctions.

MERA receives regular complaints that pavement parking obstructs pedestrians, particularly those with prams who are forced out onto the road. It is recognised nationally that pedestrians with visual impairments are disadvantaged by pavement parking and there has been a call for the practice to be banned nationwide as it is in London.

We have also received a growing number of complaints relating to motorists parking too close to road junctions. Parking in this way can prove difficult to navigate when driving and has led to several witnessed near misses.

We have been asking motorists to park safely on the road for some time and we have also drawn attention to the state of some of our grass verges that have been ruined by vehicles being driven over them. However, this has been to no avail and the number of such cases appears to be increasing as these practices are copied by others.

Acknowledging that this is becoming a growing problem, Wokingham Borough Council has recruited six more parking enforcement officers for the whole of the Borough. Up until now, the parking staff have had the power only to issue tickets to those caught parking inappropriately where traffic regulation orders are in place. The police are responsible for prosecuting parking offences where such orders are not in force.

However, in future, parking infringement notices will be issued by parking enforcement officers to motorists who have parked over the kerb or too close to junctions. Although the issuing of such a notice will not automatically incur a fine, a database will be drawn up to which the police have access, and they will be able to take further action if required. This will free up the time currently spent by the police on dealing with unlawful parking, given the constraints on their time caused by recent austerity measures.

The new arrangements are due to come into effect before the end of November 2019.