

From: [REDACTED]

7<sup>th</sup> Dec 2023

To: Cllr Carl Rylett

Cc: Clerk, Eynsham Parish Council,

Dear Cllr Rylett,

### **The on-street storage of household waste and recycling bins in the Market Square**

I own Number One Church Street, a small terraced property fronting Market Square. The property has been tenanted since 2020 following refurbishment, the most visible external element of which was the repainting of the front door, replacing the rather bright lemon yellow door that residents may remember with something altogether more appropriate! The last tenants, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As part of the handover process they reported concerns they had with the on-street storage of household waste bins which has led me to investigate further, hence my approach to EPC.

### **On-street bin storage issues**

There are a number of issues arising from the storage of household waste bins on-street within Market Square:

1. **Visual amenity**

No one living in or visiting Eynsham would disagree that the sight of household waste bins randomly strewn across the frontages of properties detracts from the appearance of the Market Square. I note that this has been mentioned in EPC Minutes of meetings.

2. **Pedestrian and resident safety and vehicular conflict**

The on-street storage of bins can force pedestrians into the path of vehicles which travel one-way (east to west) through the Square. This problem is particularly acute where vehicles exit the Square along Church Street, which is a well-known bottleneck, affecting properties from Number One Church St westwards. As you are aware vehicles using this route include the large Co-Op delivery lorries accessing the Co-Op service yard. Inconsiderately placed bins can also serve to affect the visibility from a driver's point of view of residents exiting their front doors and the ability of residents to see approaching vehicles as they step out, as the large bins form a solid wall, for example rendering any children invisible to approaching drivers.

3. **Environmental Health**

Household waste bins left underneath or in front of opening windows result in unpleasant odours and insects attracted by the bins entering the houses during warm weather.

## **Suggested objectives**

I would argue that in addressing the issues of on-street bin storage identified above, that the following objectives should be paramount and in this order of priority:

1. Pedestrian safety
2. Ensuring high environmental health standards
3. Minimising adverse impacts on the townscape of Market Square

## **A way forward**

I have taken some time to review Minutes of Eynsham Parish Council (EPC) and note that concerns regarding the on-street storage of household bins in the Market Square date back to at least 2021. However I am unable to determine if this has been resolved to date. I am therefore writing to offer some thoughts on the matter, some practical information to help inform any future decisions, to request some short-term action to resolve immediate safety and amenity concerns and also to request that you engage me in any relevant discussions, along with other affected residents.

## **The need for on-street storage of household waste bins**

I can't speak for all residents around the Square, but it is certainly the case that residents of Number One Church St have no other option than on-street storage. There is no rear or side access to the small rear garden and there is no separate internal hallway from the front door to the back door. If household and food waste and green and blue recycling bins were stored in the rear garden, these would have to be dragged through the kitchen and living rooms which is clearly not just undesirable but a danger to the health of residents of the house.

I am not sure how many houses are in the same situation as Number One. But where residents do benefit from side or rear access to gardens then they should be required to store their bins on their property other than on waste collection days, as per normal practice. It would not require a great deal of effort to establish which properties benefit from outdoor areas with access for off-street bin storage and which do not. This might in itself considerably reduce the number of bins permanently stored on-street.

## **Options**

For those instances where there is no other option than on-street bin storage, I have identified a number of possible options for dealing with the safety and amenity issues of bin storage. You may well already have thought about some or all of these options and have further options for consideration. Nevertheless I hope this approach can be a trigger for short and long term solutions.

### **Option 1. Residents are reminded of their obligations to store bins with consideration for appearance and safety**

Residents on Market Square are reminded of their responsibilities to store bins on their own properties where this is possible. Where this not possible then clear guidance should be given to ensure bins are stored with regard to the safety of pedestrians and in a way that minimises any negative impact on the appearance of the Square.

In this context I have frequently noted bins clustered in locations which conflict with the objectives listed above. For example, bins from multiple properties are being stored immediately to the left (when viewed from the Square) of the door to Number One Church

Street. I regard this as a specific risk to the safety of pedestrians using the designated footway and also to residents of Number One as they leave their property, particularly where young children are involved (as was the case with the last tenants). I have made the tenants of Number One aware of this previously and advised them to move the bins away from the front door sufficient to protect sightlines. Frustratingly they report bins being left or moved to positions immediately adjacent to their door.

In short, bins should be sufficiently distant from doorways to ensure the visibility of pedestrians, especially children, from vehicles and vice versa and also kept away from opening windows for environmental health reasons. This suggests that the optimal position of bin storage would be away from opening doors and opening ground floor windows. There are ample stretches of blank frontage around the Square to accommodate this.

### **Option 2. Demarcated areas for bin storage**

A slight development of Option 1 above would be to clearly demarcate the identified bin storage areas. Whilst I am not a fan of excessive signage and road markings, EPC does seem to have set something of a precedent with the white-lining and labelling in foot high letters of the 'footpath' on the south side of the Square. The addition of clearly marked zones for bin storage would be a minor addition to the existing surface markings and would not detract further from the appearance of the Square. Rather, the containment of bins in limited, demarcated areas could actually be an improvement. The result of a survey of onstreet bin storage might also show that this storage zone can be quite limited in extent, to accommodate only those bins that cannot be stored off-street.

### **Option 3. Shared bin store in Market Square**

Some residents storing waste bins on-street have reported use of the bins by the general public. Of course we welcome people keeping the Square clear of litter but in our experience rubbish is often put into the wrong bins and excessive use could limit residents' own ability to dispose of waste correctly. One solution would be to build a dedicated and lockable bin store, conveniently located for residents with no off-street storage option. The appearance of the store could be mitigated through a green roof. This option would also tackle concerns voiced by Cllrs previously regarding the appearance of multiple waste bins strewn around the Square, but would of course come at a greater cost.

### **Option 4. Provision of rear/side access to properties without such provision**

A fourth option would be to arrange rear or side access for properties without current provision. I can only speak for Number One Church Street where this would mean an agreement with St Peter's regarding access through the churchyard. This would, I suspect, not be acceptable and the cost of altering the rear wall and overcoming the height difference would be high and equally unacceptable.

Of the above options I suspect Option 2 is the best option, in meeting the objectives at minimal cost and in delivering a solution that is easily understood and monitored.

There may well be other options and I would personally be happy to join a discussion of all options with interested parties, including site visits as needed. However, for the pedestrian and resident safety reasons outlined above in particular, I do not regard 'Do Nothing' as an acceptable option.

## **Street drainage**

As a final and separate point, it is apparent that as a result of resurfacing over a long period of time, the surface level of Church Street (and the wider Square) has been raised. The street surface level is now above that of the rainwater downpipe and the threshold to Number One Church Street.

Moreover the finished surface profile is not 'throwing' water away from frontages, rather water is ponding against properties.

This could well be a cause of damp in the street elevation of the properties. It is also likely to be a cause of the deterioration of the front door frame of Number One Church Street which I had to replace in its entirety in 2019. If the new oak doorframe deteriorates faster than would normally be expected then the cause would undoubtedly be the issue with water not draining away from the frontages.

I would be grateful therefore if you could advise who we should contact to undertake remedial action to either reprofile the street surface or to install a street drain to intercept flows back towards the properties.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this matter further. Yours

sincerely,

