

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Car Parking Task and Finish Forum held at Blackdown House on 9 January 2020

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.50 pm

21 Public speaking

There were no public speakers at the meeting.

22 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 December 2019 were agreed as a true record, subject to Tony Woodward replacing Tony McCollum in the list of declarations of interest.

Councillor Val Ranger expressed a concern about minute 19 (12) regarding School Lane car park, Newton Poppleford and whether the discussion on all similar village car parks should include comments on whether running costs should be met from elsewhere.

It was noted that members had made comments at the 19 December meeting regarding Newton Poppleford, Broadclyst, Sidbury and Jarvis Close car parks that all these car parks had a great community benefit and that the cost of each of these car parks does not actually reflect the money spent on them, but a nominal cost spread across all car parks, pro-rata with the number of spaces

It was accepted that there was a need to be even-handed amongst all villages. Cllr Howe suggested that the possibility of giving smaller EDDC car parks to the parish councils should be investigated, as several larger villages already were responsible for car parks in their parish and precepted their parishioners accordingly.

23 Declarations of interest

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations - .
Councillor Andrew Colman, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations - .
Councillor Bruce De Saram, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations - .
Councillor Maddy Chapman, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations - .
Councillor Paul Millar, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations - .
Councillor Tony Woodward, Personal, Exmouth Town Councillor

Minutes 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations –
Councillor Kim Bloxham, Personal, Cranbrook Town Councillor

Minute 26 Review of Council's Car Parking Operations –
Councillor Jack Rowland, Personal, Seaton Town Council

24 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

25 Confidential/exempt items

There were no matters which the officers recommended be dealt with in this way.

26 Review of Councils Car Parking Operations

The Chairman gave a summary to the work of the Car Parking Task and Finish Forum (TAFF) which was set up following the item being called-in. The first meeting established the facts and that the issue was essential part of the council's budget to increase its income from car parks. The second meeting highlighted detailed costings per car park with 15 of these being cost-negative costing the council £100k. The third discussed the financially negative car parks. This meeting would discuss the effect of raising the hourly rate to £1.10 and the £2 winter offer.

Andrew Ennis, Service Lead Environmental Health & Car Parks highlighted the income generated by a few car parks with the total gross income from car parks being £3.2m, reserved parking £43k and penalty charges £40k as an example. The costs of overheads allocated to car parks included business rates, VAT, maintenance charges, management costs, Streetscene and customer services to name a few.

Discussions on the effect of raising the hourly rate to £1.10 were as follows:

-) Raising the hourly rate by an extra £0.10 to £1.10 (£0.55 for half an hour) would result in an estimated £277,000 of extra revenue, providing it did not deter existing customers.
-) Concern expressed about the fiddly nature of increasing the charges by £0.05 and £0.10.
-) Suggestion to instead of increasing by £0.10, raise the half hourly rate from £0.50 to £0.70.
-) Working towards card and phone payment in every car park. Collecting money by phone was the cheapest way.
-) Need to investigate possibility of all car parks going cash less in the future.
-) Concerns that making payments by mobile phone only would disadvantage some, but it was acknowledged that most people had a payment card of some kind.
-) Concern of how a blanket charge was going to work on the different sizes of car park in the district. Effect of this on the smaller car parks.
-) Encourage customers to use a cashless method of paying by charging more for transactions made by cash.
-) Need to phase out cash payments over time and move to phone and card.
-) There was a significant cost to the cash machines used in car parks and the collection of cash.
-) Importance of ensuring the viability of town centres.
-) Suggestion to reduce the stay in short stay car parks from 3 to 2 hours to encourage turnover as the council's car parks were very busy.

RECOMMENDED 1. that £1 be the minimum charge in a car park, except in those car parks that are seen as an exception. This would include the transferability of car park tickets between car parks, using unspent time purchased on a ticket. Andrew Ennis, Service Lead – Environment and Car Parks would provide an estimate of the additional income created by this increase.

2. that over time the Council would wish to encourage customers to move away from cash payments to card and phone, but that the phasing out of cash payments be deferred to await a report on the consequences from Andrew Ennis – Service Lead – Environment and Car Parks and provide information on the possibility of making an additional charge for cash payments.

Discussions on the £2 Winter Offer were as follows:

-) This offer had been established since December 2013 in response to a request from towns and chambers of commerce, had been a great success and revenue earner for the council.
-) Concern that the £2 Winter Offer over filled the council's car parks and provided cheap car parking for town centre workers.
-) The £2 Winter Offer brought people into town and promoted a community feel.
-) In response to a suggestion that we compare our charges with other similar councils, it was noted that this exercise was undertaken in 2012 and that we were roughly in the middle of the level of charges for car parks.

RECOMMENDED that the £2 Winter Offer remains all day for long stay car parks and for 4 hours in short stay car parks and that permit holders be allowed the same offer for 1 November 2020 to 31 March 2021.

27 Date of next meeting

Thursday 13 February 2020 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber

Attendance List

Councillors present:

K Bloxham
M Chapman
A Colman
B De Saram
A Dent (Chairman)
M Howe
P Millar
V Ranger
J Rowland
E Rylance
T Woodward

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

B Ingham

V Johns
G Jung
T McCollum
G Pook

Officers in attendance:

Andrew Ennis, Service Lead Environmental Health and Car Parks
Christopher Lane

Councillor apologies:

J Whibley

Chairman

Date: