

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

10 March 2022 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Edwards (Chair), English (Vice-Chair for the meeting), Bicknell, Chace, Goodheart, Haywood [Substituting for Huntley], Needs, Thurston, Warr and Worne.

Councillors Pendleton and Stanley were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

730. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Huntley and Staniforth.

As Councillor Staniforth had sent apologies, Councillor English was nominated to stand in as Vice-Chair for the evening, which was agreed by the Committee.

731. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Chace declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 8 as Chair of Friends of Brookfield Park, and also that he was a Member of Littlehampton Town Council.

Councillor English declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 8 as he was a Member of Felpham Parish Council, and was also a resident of Felpham.

Councillor Worne declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 9, as she was a Member of Yapton Parish Council and was on the Committee responsible for the Playground.

Councillor Haywood declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 8 as she was a Member of Middleton-On-Sea Parish Council.

732. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022 were approved by the Committee. These would be signed at the end of the meeting.

733. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed one question had been submitted, which is briefly summarised below:

1. From Councillor Glen Hewlett to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Edwards, regarding proposals to charge for car parking in Felpham.

A supplementary question was also asked.

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(A schedule of the full question asked and the response provided can be found on the [Environment Committee Public Question Web page](#))

The Chair then drew Public Question Time to a close.

734. OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no updates from Members regarding Outside Bodies.

735. SOLAR TOGETHER SUSSEX SCHEME

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Principal Environmental Health Officer presented the report to the Committee, who explained that for the past 2 years the council had taken part in a Solar Together Sussex Project, which enabled residents to access a group buying scheme in relation to solar panels. There was a proposal for a further auction to take place and in addition to solar panels this would include battery storage and electric vehicle charge points. The scheme was run by West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and covered the whole of Sussex. Each participating district and borough paid WSCC for the mailout costs, for Arun this was £2521. The council would receive a commission for each installation. The aim was that it would be cost neutral to the council, and any surplus money would be put into the Your Energy Sussex Fuel Poverty Fund, which was explained further at paragraph 1.9 in the report. Paragraph 1.12 contained information from the auction that took place in 2020, which had been successful, and included 52 installations, which meant costs were recovered and there was a surplus which went into the West Sussex Fuel Poverty fund. Data was not yet available for the 2021 auction.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- Was the word auction misleading for the public or could alternative wording be used? It was suggested that the word 'tender' may be more appropriate. The Principal Environmental Health Officer would look into this.
- Clarification was sought around the figures in paragraph 1.9. This was provided.

The recommendations were Proposed by Councillor Thurston and Seconded by Councillor Worne.

The Committee

RESOLVED - That

1. Arun District Council's participation in the third Solar Together Sussex scheme auction be approved
2. The contribution that the council was due to receive for its initial investment to the Solar Together scheme of £2,521 continue to be

waived, to further support the Solar Together Sussex scheme for the mailout costs for the upcoming third auction.

3. Authority be delegated to the Group Head of Technical Services to approve Arun District Council's participation in future auctions, and to approve reinvestment of fees from the third and any future Solar Together auctions.

736. AMENDMENT TO OFF STREET PARKING ORDER TO INCLUDE RESTRICTIONS COVERING ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Customer & Parking Services Manager presented the report to the Committee. He explained that the wording of the recommendation had changed slightly, which was now 'To approve that the amendments to the Councils Off Street Parking Order, as identified within the proposals, be put out for consultation, and to give delegated authority to the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services to make a final decision on these amendments once the consultation is complete'.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- The wording on page 20, paragraph 2.5 did not flow well. The Customer & Parking Services Manager explained that the wording needed to be very detailed in this way, and other councils had used very similar wording.
- Whether someone on a slow charge could remain in the parking bay all day.
- Whether bays would be allocated specifically for disabled users.
- It was imperative that Arun had multi-functional charging stations. The quantities and timeframes of the electronic charging bays were discussed. There was no fixed number, however this would be demand-led.

The recommendation was Proposed by Councillor Bicknell and Seconded by Councillor Needs.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the amendments to the councils Off Street Parking Order, as identified within the proposals, be put out for consultation, and delegated authority be given to the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services to make a final decision on these amendments once the consultation is complete.

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737. VARIATION TO PARKING CHARGES

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Customer & Parking Services Manager presented the report to the Committee. He explained that it had been agreed by the Committee in November that the proposed parking charges, shown in Appendix A, be put out for consultation. This had now taken place and the reports showed the results of the consultation. He highlighted that most of the comments received referred to the proposals to introduce charges to free car parks, in particular Grassmere, Links Avenue and Shrubbs Field. All of those responses were opposed to the introduction of charges. Felpham Parish Council and Middleton-On-Sea Parish Council were also opposed to this. With regards to increasing existing charges, most of the responses were opposed to the increases as was usually the case, however on this occasion 22% of the respondents were in favour of the increases. There were fewer objections to the seasonal car park charge increases, however those that did respond were opposed to the increases.

The Chair confirmed that questions and discussion would be taken on each recommendation separately.

A discussion then took place on Recommendation 1, and the following points were made by Members and non-Committee Members given permission to speak by the Committee:

- There was concern as a large amount of the car parking had been lost in Littlehampton town centre. Residents were unhappy with the current loss of parking, and charges should not be increased at this point in time.
- The Appendix D compared Arun with Worthing and Chichester, which were charging more and it was felt Arun should not be compared to the larger towns. People should be encouraged to come to Bognor and Littlehampton town centres and not deterred by higher parking charges.
- Other Members felt the compassions in Appendix D highlighted that the costs should be increased, and that the rises were not large for the benefits this would bring to the Council.
- We were in a climate emergency and visitors should be encouraged to use public transport.
- Town centre footfall was not yet back to pre-pandemic levels, and it was felt that increasing car parking charges would not benefit the council or the town centres.
- Car parks needed to be maintained, and the money received from car park charges was required, which could also assist with investing in better solutions for the environment.
- It was a difficult choice as there was a very good disc scheme which provided 2 hours free parking to those that had the disc. Therefore regular town users may not be effected by a rise in charges, however visitors to the town did need to be encouraged.

A discussion then took place on Recommendation 2, and the following points were made:

- The council needed the income, the prices were fairly reasonable, if this was voted against the money would then need to be found somewhere else.
- It was hoped that the money could be used to make the car parks more attractive, and the residents would benefit from this.
- Would improvements be made to the car parks with the additional money? The Customer & Parking Services Manager explained that maintenance such as ensuring surfaces were level would be carried out. The appearances of the car parks would also be looked at, and where possible this would be done such as planting carried out.
- Was money made from car parking and parking fines ringfenced solely for car park improvements and maintenance? The Customer & Parking Services Manager confirmed that money received from parking fines was ringfenced (after the costs of enforcement were taken out), the surplus went towards paying for maintenance and improvement of car parks.
- It was asked whether the financial information could be broken down further in the reports to show exactly how much income each car park had generated in recent years and expected future income.

A discussion then took place on Recommendation 3, and the following points were made by Members and non-Committee Members given permission to speak by the Committee:

- There was concern regarding the costs of administering, ticketing and controlling charges in these car parks and whether costs would exceed revenues.
- There was concern that charging for the car parks could negatively impact the local sports teams who used them and the areas in general.
- Brookfield Park car park was a very small car park, and after installation of the machine it was felt very little money would be made.
- There was concern that people would instead park in the residential areas causing issues for the residents.
- It was asked why there was 2 hour free car parking in the village car parks, however only 1 hour in the rural areas where people may stay for longer if they went for long walks.
- Clarification was sought regarding the actual charges and how these would be implemented and enforced, which was provided by the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services.
- Members wanted to know the costs involved in installing a parking machine. The Customer & Parking Services Manager explained this depended on how many were purchased and it may be that some machines could be relocated from other car parks where they no longer required so many.
- There was concern that if the trial was not successful, the charges would be increased.
- Felpham Parish Council had paid contributions to maintain the car park for many years. The car park should not be described as a free car park, as it was

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something the residents of Felpham paid for with the contributions from the Felpham Parish Council.

- 2 hours was insufficient time to carry out activities for which people may want to park, such as going out for dinner.
- Littlehampton Town Council did not contribute towards Brookfield Car Park.
- How the electricity would get to the car park machines. The Customer & Parking Services Manager explained that the machines were solar powered and did not require mains electricity.
- It was suggested that the Parish Councils be approached to see if additional contributions could be provided by them after recovery from Covid.
- If parking charges were introduced to these car parks, the contributions from the Parish Councils would probably stop, and that income would be lost. The car parks were not free, it was just a different way of paying for the car park.
- There was concern around taking a decision with limited information regarding the costings.
- Arun was reliant on community groups and organisations around parks and gardens such as Friends of Bersted Brooks. If the recommendation was approved there should be consideration as to whether some sort of seasonal permits could be offered to these groups.
- There was concern that charging in these car parks would not generate significant income or offer value for money.

During the course of the above discussion, Councillor Haywood re-confirmed that she had an interest in the item as Chair of Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council. Cllr Chace also re-confirmed he had an interest as Chairman of Brookfield Park, and as Ward Councillor.

The recommendations were Proposed by Councillor Bicknell and Seconded by Councillor Edwards.

A recorded vote was requested and the recommendations would be voted upon separately.

Those voting for Recommendation 1 were Councillors Bicknell, English and Thurston (3). Those voting against were Councillors Chace, Edwards, Goodheart, Haywood, Needs, Warr and Worne (7). There were no abstentions. The vote was therefore lost.

Those voting for Recommendation 2 were Councillors Chace, Edwards, English, Thurston and Worne (5). Those voting against were Councillors Bicknell, Goodheart, Haywood, Needs and Warr (5). There were no abstentions. This being a tied vote, the Chair used his casting vote in favour, and the recommendation was declared carried.

There were no Councillors that voted for Recommendation 3. Those voting against were Councillors Bicknell, Chace, Edwards, English, Goodheart, Haywood, Needs, Warr and Worne (9). Councillor Thurston abstained from voting. The vote was therefore lost.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the increase to the seasonal parking charges, as set out in Appendix A following consideration of the consultation responses, be approved.

Following earlier comments made by Members, the Chair suggested that Officers entered into discussions with the Parish Councils regarding their contribution amounts, and the Littlehampton Town Council who currently do not contribute. This was taken as an action by the Customer & Parking Services Manager.

738. TRANSFER OF SECTION 106 FUNDING

At the beginning of this Item, Councillor Worne re-declared her Personal Interest in the Item, as she was a Member of Yapton Parish Council and was part of the Committee responsible for the Playground.

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services presented the report and explained the recommendation to the Committee.

There were no Member questions, however it was highlighted how important this was for Yapton.

The recommendation was Proposed by Councillor English and Seconded by Councillor Chace.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Committee authorised the transfer of the Funds detailed below to Yapton Parish Council by way of a Deed of Agreement for the purposes set out below:

Planning Ref	Location	Amount	S106 Agreed Spend	Parish Council Proposed Spend
Y/30/13	Land South of Fellows Gardens	£45,009.39	For child play area contribution and public open space contribution, to make good a deficiency in public open space provision arising from this development	Yapton Parish Council intend to spend on the replacement of the play equipment and associated landscaping works on King George V Playing Field, Yapton

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Y/22/14	Land at Kings Close	£39,183.42	For children's play area and open space contribution, to make good a deficiency in public open space provision arising from this development	Yapton Parish Council intend to spend on the replacement of the play equipment and associated landscaping works on King George V Playing Field, Yapton
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739. WORK PROGRAMME

At the beginning of the Item, the Chair asked the Vice-Chair to take over as Chair for the duration of the Item.

The Vice-Chair in the Chair asked if Members had anything they wished to add to the 2022/23 Work Programme.

It was noted that the Environment Agency would be invited to provide a Member Seminar open to all Arun District Councillors.

Councillor Edwards requested the permission of the Vice-Chair in the Chair and the Committee, to make a statement regarding Bersted Brooks, which was an item on the Work Programme. Upon the invitation of the Vice-Chair in the Chair, Councillor Edwards went on to give his statement which was in response to a question that he had answered at Full Council the previous evening. He explained that by withholding the draft figures from his response given at Full Council, he had not intended to mislead anyone, however wanted to give an answer based on confirmed costs and not draft ones. With hindsight, he felt he should have supplied these draft figures as part of his response, and it had not been his intention to mislead Councillor Stanley or anyone else. If that was Cllr Stanley's perception, Cllr Edwards was happy to apologise unreservedly. He wanted to reassure Councillor Stanley and other Members that he had not been trying to hide anything and as soon as the actual costed figures and project timelines were available, they would be shared with Members.

Further detail regarding the Houses of Multiple Occupation Item was requested, which was provided by the Group Head of Technical Services.

It was requested that the Bognor Regis Beach Access Working Party be added to the Work Programme for information updates. It was confirmed the first meeting of this Working Party would take place at 9.30am on 9 May 2022 at Bognor Regis Town Hall.

The Work Programme was noted.

(The meeting concluded at 8.29 pm)