

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE ON 10TH MARCH 2022

SUBJECT: Variation to Parking Charges

REPORT AUTHOR: Calvin Baylis

DATE: January 2022

EXTN: 01903 737649

AREA: Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

It was agreed at the Environment Committee of 17 November 2021 that the proposed charges as set out in Appendix A of this report be subject of consultation after which a report would be returned to Committee for final approval. This report provides the responses received from the consultation and these are set out in Appendix B.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To approve the increase to the short stay town centre parking charges as set out in Appendix A following consideration of the consultation responses.
2. To approve the increase to the seasonal parking charges as set out in Appendix A following consideration of the consultation responses.
3. To approve the recommended introduction of parking charges to the 5 car parks identified in Appendix A, and for this recommendation, and the consultation responses, to be forwarded to WSCC for consideration. Implementation to follow any approval.

1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1. Arun District Council have powers under Section 32-35 of the Road Traffic Act 1984 to vary the parking charges within the car parks which are covered by the Council's Parking Orders. The set of proposed charges shown in Appendix A, have been subject to consultation as required.
- 1.2. The consultation period ran from 2nd December 2021 to 14 January 2022, a total period of 6 weeks. Responses have continued to be received, those received up to 2 weeks following the consultation are included in the responses referred to in this report – a total of 304 comments have been received.
- 1.3. The proposed charges have been advertised as public notices in the Littlehampton Gazette and the Bognor Regis Observer and notices have also been displayed in

the car parks. A consultation letter together with a schedule of the proposed notices have also been sent to all District Councillors and all bodies as listed in Appendix C.

1.4. The full responses received in response to the consultation are shown in Appendix B.

2. WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

2.1. The list of consultees includes WSCC. Where ADC proposes to introduce charges to a car park, ADC will first require the approval of the Highways Authority (in accordance with Section 35(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984). This therefore is applicable to the proposal to charge in the 5 free car parks identified in Appendix A.

2.2. WSCC have advised that where there have been over 200 responses regarding the introduction of charging, WSCC require the approval of the Environment Committee before putting the proposal to the WSCC Cabinet Member.

2.3. The introduction of charging to these car parks will therefore follow the approval of the Environment Committee and that of WSCC.

2.4. This does not affect all other car parking charges proposals as they do not require consent by WSCC.

3. OFF-STREET PARKING STRATEGY

3.1. The Arun District Council's Off-Street Parking Strategy 2021-26 requires the Council to keep under review differential charging tariffs, including seasonal charges.

3.2. The Strategy has been created to deliver:

3.2.1. Investment in car parks through a planned investment strategy to ensure that they are fit for the future.

3.2.2. Employment of enhanced technology and information to improve customer experience.

3.2.3. Appropriate management and charging structures to support vitality and economic growth.

3.3. The car parks are a public asset and are used to support the community. Recent examples include provision of free parking during the early part of the pandemic, space available for testing and vaccination centres and space available for support for events.

3.4. To help provide support for the town centres a scheme has been in place in Littlehampton for 25 years and in Bognor Regis for 12 years to enable shoppers to have their first 2 hours free parking; no change is proposed to this arrangement.

3.5. The cost of managing car parks is met by the income generated by the ADC portfolio of parking.

4. INCREASE IN PARKING CHARGES

- 4.1. As the 17 November 2021 report referred, parking charges were last increased in town centres in 2016 and in seasonal charges were increased in 2021.
- 4.2. The proposed charges are needed to keep pace with inflation; if not increased the existing charges are effectively devalued.
- 4.3. The November report also referred to a comparison of the average parking charge for 1 and 2 hours in the other District & Boroughs within West Sussex. This can be seen at Appendix D.
- 4.4. The comparison shows that Arun has the second lowest charges up to 2 hours in the Town Centre car parks. In addition, Arun has the lowest charges up to 2 hours for a multi-storey car park.
- 4.5. The schedule of parking charges which has been consulted on is shown in Appendix A. This illustrates the potential amount of additional income that would be generated if Town Centre charges and Seasonal Charges are increased as well as Parking Permits. The estimates are based on past ticket sales prior to Covid.

5. RESPONSE TO INCREASE IN CHARGES

- 5.1. There were 73 responses referring to the increase in parking charges of which 56 were against an increase, and 17 were in favour. All responses can be seen in Appendix B.
- 5.2. Out of the 56 that disagree 34 respondents referred to Town Centre increases and 2 referred to the Seasonal car parks. The rest referred to the increase in general and were not car park specific.
- 5.3. The respondents who are against an increase were concerned that it would stop people from visiting the area and in particular would affect the viability of the Town Centres.
- 5.4. Both Arundel and Littlehampton Town Council object to the proposed parking charge increase. Bognor Regis Town Council had no comment to make.
- 5.5. As there is a 6 week lead in time in setting up the administration over the new charges, if approved, they will be in place by the 1st May 2022.

6. INTRODUCTION OF CHARGES INTO CAR PARKS

- 6.1. As the 17 November 2021 report set out the consultation included the proposal to introduce charging to 5 car parks currently available at no charge. These are set out in Appendix A.
- 6.2. This proposed that a £1.00 charge is introduced into the Grassmere, Links Avenue and Shrubbs Field car parks for parking over 2 hours with the first 2 hours being free parking. Charges will apply 7 days a week from 8am to 6pm. An annual permit of £20 will be available to allow all day parking in these car parks.
- 6.3. With regards to the Brookfield car park Littlehampton and the Bersted Brooks car park in Bersted a £1.00 charge would be introduced for parking over 1 hour with parking free for the first hour. Charges will apply 7 days a week from 8am to 6pm.

An annual permit of £20 will be available to allow all day parking in these car parks.

6.4. As there has been no charges at any of these car parks previously the possible income generated is difficult to establish; income, together with the use of the car park through issuing of tickets, will be reviewed after 12 months if introduced.

6.5. The charging regime can be used to manage the overall use of the car park ensuring that there is regular turnover and available spaces.

6.6. The current management costs and contributions for the Felpham and Middleton car parks are shown below:

Grassmere Car Park – 2021/22 costs

Income

Contribution Felpham Parish Council - £2420

Costs

Non Domestic Rates – £5863

Gully Clearance - £250

Ground Maintenance - £194

Water/Sewerage- £479

Annual total loss - £4,366

Links Avenue Car Park- 2021/22 costs

Income

Contribution from Felpham Parish Council – £1210

Costs

Non Domestic Rates - £1647

Water/Sewerage - £428

Grounds Maintenance £50

Annual loss total - £915

Shrubbs Field Car Park- 2021/22 costs

Income

Contribution from Middleton - £1780

Costs

Non domestic Rates -£7485

Annual Loss Total - £5705

6.7. In addition, the following sums have been spent on the Felpham car parks in the previous 2 years:

- Links Avenue resurfacing part of car park - £11,000,
- Grassmere Car Park Height barrier - £2,000

6.8. Further planned works relating to resurfacing and lining will be required over the coming years for these car parks.

6.9. No contribution is received for operating Bersted Brooks or Brookfield car parks. Future investment to improve and extend the parking capacity to the Bersted Brooks car parks is planned as part of the Country Park proposal. The Brookfield car park will be subject of review for future improvement.

7. RESPONSE TO INTRODUCTION OF CHARGES

7.1. Of the comments received (total of 304) 192 are not in support of the introduction of charging. Of these 129 comments related to Felpham/Middleton car parks, 2 related to Bersted Brooks and 44 comments related to Brookfield Park. The remainder did not specify which car park was being referred to.

7.2. All responses can be seen in Appendix B.

7.3. Felpham Parish Council and Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council disagree with the proposed introduction of charges.

8. SUMMARY OF ALL RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1. Most responses to the proposed increases in charges are opposed to the increase. This is not unusual compared to previous consultations on increasing charges. However, on this occasion 22% of respondents were in favour of the increase.

8.2. There has been no increase in the parking charges in the District's town centre car parks since 2016. There are no proposed changes to the 2 hours free parking scheme in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton enabling this benefit to continue.

8.3. As identified in Section 4 parking charges for town centres in the Arun District are lower than other West Sussex District and Borough Councils, and this is in addition to the free parking scheme.

8.4. There are few objections to increasing the seasonal parking charges.

8.5. Most objections received relate to the proposals to introduce charges in the 5 identified car parks currently not charged for. The overwhelming majority of these relate to the Middleton and Felpham car parks.

8.6. In each of the car parks where parking charges are proposed free parking will be retained for the first 2 hours in Middleton and Felpham and for the first hour at Brookfield and Bersted Parks. This is expected to enable many of the users of these car parks to continue to use the car parks at no cost.

8.7. By introducing charges in this way, it will enable the use of the car parks to be monitored and managed, and at the same time encouraging turnover of use enabling them to be available to more customers. If there is a need for customers to use the car park all day this would be available through the purchase of an annual permit at the cost of £20 per year.

8.8. The likely income generated by the introduction of charges is unclear as there has been no data collected for use of these car parks, however this would be reviewed after 12 months.

8.9. The requirement to maintain the ADC car parks will continue, this is set out, together with future improvements, in the Off-Parking Strategy 2021-26.

7. PROPOSAL(S):

To approve the increase to the short stay town centre parking charges as set out in Appendix A following consideration of the consultation responses.

To approve the increase to the seasonal parking charges as set out in Appendix A following consideration of the consultation responses.

To approve the recommended introduction of parking charges to the 5 car parks identified in Appendix A, and for this recommendation, and the consultation responses, to be forwarded to WSCC for consideration. Implementation to follow any approval.

3. OPTIONS:

1. Increase and introduce the Parking Charges as consulted.
2. Increase and introduce some of the Parking Charges as advertised.
3. Do not increase or introduce the Parking Charges as advertised.

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council	✓	
Relevant District Ward Councillors	✓	
Other groups/persons (please specify)	✓	
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial	✓	
Legal	✓	
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		✓
Sustainability		✓
Asset Management/Property/Land		✓
Technology		✓
Other (please explain)		✓

6. IMPLICATIONS:Financial

The proposed increase in charges is estimated to raise £146k additional income (based on pre Covid figures). This is shown at Appendix A. The introduction of parking charges to previously free car parks will also raise extra income and cannot be accurately quantified at this stage. The anticipated extra income will partly offset the revenue deficit projected in

the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

Legal

The Council is required to follow the correct legal process to determine and set the Off-Street Parking Charges in accordance with the Road Traffic Act 1984 and the constitution of the Council.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To determine the charging regime to be implemented for Arun District Councils Off Street Car Parks.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Variation to Parking Charges 17 November 2021](#)

[Off Street Car Parks Strategy 2021-26 17 November 2021](#)

[Appendix B - Parking Consultation](#)