

CAR PARKING FEES AND CHARGES 2022 AND PARKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHRISTMAS 2021 IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Every year, prior to next year's parking clocks being advertised for sale, the Environment and Coastal Services Portfolio Holder reviews the cost of parking clocks and pay and display charges to consider whether any adjustments should be made. At the same time, the parking arrangements in support of local businesses for Christmas this year (2021) are also published.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Car Park charges in the New Forest District towns and villages have not increased since January 2018. In the period since the last increase, our operating costs have increased significantly. Last year our summer amenity (e.g. coastal) charges were increased by £1.00 per tariff and at the same time the summer charging period in these car parks was reduced by 2 months to give a more reasonable winter/summer tariff split that more accurately reflected the usage of these car parks.
- 2.2 The Council has invested in electric vehicle charging points (EVCP's) and now has 25 fast chargers (22Kwh) operational in 9 of our town and village car parks with another 4 fast chargers going into Lyndhurst car park this autumn.
- 2.3 As a policy, NFDC have not used car park as an income generation but as a benefit to the economy and as a way of supporting High Streets. There has been considerable investment in car parking infrastructure and technology as well as maintenance and landscaping all of which has been funded by surpluses generated. The Council remains committed to ensure that it continues to support local businesses and provide residents and visitors with the benefits of low-cost parking and accordingly charges remain extremely competitive. Following a comprehensive review, the following changes are proposed (to come into force from 1st January 2022).

3. PARKING CLOCK CHARGES

3.1 Short Stay Shoppers Clocks

The current annual cost is £25.00. Last year's officer's recommendation was to increase this to £30.00. However, due to the impact of Covid the decision was made to hold the price at £25.00 to reflect the fact that those who had a 2020 Short Stay 'shoppers' Clock were unable to get their full value from the clock throughout the year due to the town and village car parks being made free by NFDC in April and May 2020 as part of the Council's response to Covid. In 2021 users of the clock have been able to make full use of the clock and it is felt that the time is now right to

increase the annual cost to £30.00 to help cover the on-going costs associated with the management and operation of over 6,000 parking spaces throughout the district. This £5.00 increase still means that users can park for up to 3 hours for only 12 pence/day which still represents exceptional value.

3.2 Annual Long Stay clocks

Current annual cost for 2020 is £120.00. Last year, officers suggested an increase to £140.00 for the Annual Long Stay Clock but the decision was made to keep the price at £120.00 for the same reasons as 3.1 above and then increase the price to £140.00 in 2022. Honouring this commitment, the Annual Long Stay Clock price will be £140.00 in 2022.

3.3 Quarterly Long stay clocks

As per 3.2 above, the price of these clocks will increase to £40.00 per quarterly clock. It is anticipated that there will be a new system by 2023 which will allow more options for spreading the payments throughout the year.

4. CAR PARK CHARGES

4.1 Currently, NFDC has a mixture of tariffs with the major split being between the town and village car park tariff and the amenity (coastal) car park tariff.

4.2 Town and Village Centre Car Parks

These tariffs will continue to be held frozen at 2018 prices to support town and village centre businesses and encourage residents to shop locally.

4.3 Amenity Car Parks

All amenity car park charges will remain frozen at 2021 prices.

5. FREE PARKING DAYS IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

5.1 In addition to the above charges the council would also like to confirm its intention to have 4 days this year (2021) when charges do not apply in town and village centre car parks to assist businesses. These days are:

- Small Business Saturday (this year on the 4th December 2021)
- The last weekend before Christmas (18th/19th December 2021)
- An additional day where Town and Parish Councils may request free parking in support of their Christmas events.

6. IMPROVING AND ENHANCING THE CAR PARKS

6.1 Improvement and enhancing our car parks remains a priority. There is a rolling programme of grounds and car park maintenance with 2 dedicated staff in our car parks 5 days a week. In addition, we are always looking at how we can best improve the experience for all our car park users, as well as ensuring that they are regularly inspected, safe and fit for purpose.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL, CRIME AND DISORDER AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are now 25 fast (22 Kwh) Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP's) operating in 9 of our car parks. As of the date of this report, there have been 27,000 Kwh of charging of electric vehicles using green energy which has resulted in a reduction of 2500 Kgs of CO2 emissions. 4 fast (22Kwh) chargers are being installed in Lyndhurst car park this autumn with further plans to install more EVCP's across the district, particularly in the amenity areas where the need is currently assessed as highest. These EVCP's encourage visitors to the area and help support the local economy whilst reducing emissions overall which improves air quality in the district.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The impact of the coronavirus lockdowns on parking income plus changing habits of the workplace with more people working from home has impacted on town and village income. This has been partially offset by 'Staycation' visitors parking in the amenity car parks but the overall annual income has dropped significantly.
- 8.2 We are now looking at replacing our parking clocks in 2023 with a new system which we envisage will replicate as closely as possible the functionality of the current parking clocks. The costs associated with the above plans are estimated at £150K and these costs will be covered by the change in the clock prices for 2022.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 In these difficult times these proposals continue to support our local economy and businesses. This is done by ensuring ongoing investment in our real estate and using technology to improve the user experience whilst providing access to low-cost parking which continues to be a key priority.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the increase in parking charges with regard to NFDC parking clocks as set out in section 3 be agreed; namely;
- Short stay annual clocks from £25.00 to £30.00
Long stay annual clocks from £120.00 to £140.00
Long stay quarterly clocks from £35.00 to £40.00
- (ii) That the 2022 town and village car park tariffs stay held at the current 2018 price;
- (iii) That the 2022 amenity car park tariffs stay held at the current 2021 price; and
- (iv) That the Council allocate 4 days of free parking in town centre car parks to support local businesses during December 2021, as detailed in paragraph 5.1.

11. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I have agreed to the recommendations of this report.



Sign: Cllr Steve Davies

Date: 22 September 2021

For Further Information please contact:

David Hurd

Environmental Enforcement and Amenities Manager

Email: david.hurd@nfdc.gov.uk

Date on which notice given of this decision – 22 September 2021

Last date for call-in – 29 September 2021