

## Off-Street Parking Proposals – Response to Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken on the proposals relating to Parking Charges as discussed at Cabinet in November. A number of stakeholders were contacted and feedback was requested on the proposals, along with advertisements being placed in local press and in all affected car parks.

Consultation closed on 16<sup>th</sup> December and the results were as follows:

There were 22 responses to the consultation.

Of the responses received, 18 responses objected to the proposal, 3 questioned whether the proposal went far enough to change people's behaviour in helping to address air quality issues and one expressed no concerns. Comments received are as detailed below.

**Please Note: All comments have not been redacted or amended in any way except to remove personal data or offensive material.**

1. Business in Chichester: As a business owner for XXXXX shop chichester I formally object to the parking charges increase. In fact there should be free parking on Sundays like it used to be. Since the parking charges increase and Sunday parking charges came into being I have experienced a decline in customer footfall. We should trial a measured parking scheme to provide visitors incentive designed to increase dwell times. As with other townships Midhurst, Petworth, East Wittering they have 2 hours free parking. Our City centre needs to be supported by fair rates and parking charges.
2. Representative from a political party in Chichester: By raising car park charges this just encourages out of town shopping. It reduces additional footfall as people will just come into town for specific activities to minimise the cost of parking – for example they will just come for the theatre when parking charges have ended rather than come early and have a drink or meal or shop before the theatre.  
More shops will close. Shoppers will go to other towns where parking is cheaper. I totally disagree with raising parking charges
3. Business in Chichester: Being a store on the High street is incredibly challenging at the moment – we have lost approximately 10 stores this year in Chichester, or ones that made an impact on the High street with their footprint, which to be fair, have been replaced by not so exciting businesses

that will not really direct specific footfall to the High Street. Winchester City some years ago had the same problem as Chichester, they now offer FREE parking on a Sunday – and to be honest at various times of the year you can visit the High Street and it is absolutely heaving with people.

We need to make Chichester a destination area, to save what we have, and allow people to come and park and enjoy, not put them off with high charges, the number of times I hear people outside our window, saying how the town has changed with so many vacant premises. The Landlords are asking for too high rents, and if we couple that with parking charges we will see even more stores closing. **BACK THE HIGH STREET – SAVE CHICHESTER** this beautiful City.

4. Business in Chichester: I am writing to express my strong concerns about the opposed car parking rises across Chichester. Is there anything more that Chichester council can do to deter customers away from the town centre is to raise the car parking charges! Why don't someone with an ounce of common sense look around the town centre and see that this high street along with others around the country are struggling to keep their doors open. I have been working as a store manager in Chichester for about 10 years now and have seen the decline in customers staying for the long day out, more and more likely I am hearing from customers that they must hurry up as their car parking is running out and they won't pay any more as the car parking is too expensive! The greedy counselors are proposing to raise the charges which is "disgusting" just to make a bit more money which in my opinion will have the opposite effect as customers would probably decide to go to other places that are encouraging customers into their town centres not the opposite. I hope by my concerns someone from the council will take notice!
5. Business in Chichester: I hope this email finds you well, I just want to let you know as a retailer on Chichester High Street I object to the increase of parking charges in the car park. Chichester has a high number of elderly clientele who live predominantly off of their pensions, I have found that many customers complain already about the cost and don't have the money to spend on the items they want to purchase as there is a high cost in parking. Due to these comments I feel this will prevent high footfall into Chichester as your pricing people who drive out of the town, also people will avoid public transport as trains are rarely on time and have huge delays. please take this into consideration when making final decisions on costs.
6. Business in Chichester: We are a small business owner in the heart of Chichester and are pleased to say we have reached our first birthday at our shop down XXXXX.  
That being said, it's not been an easy ride with the state of the high street gradually declining since we first moved to the area in 2017. Shops are

closing, many have been empty for years and the general feel when strolling through town isn't pleasant, with an increase in homeless men and women congregating around town in a drunken or drugged state. To top it all off we have Brexit making many consumers nervous. To now hear that the council plans to increase parking charges in Chichester adds insult to injury for many of the business owners trying to get through what can only be described as a difficult time in retail. From my understanding, the council has argued that it is their policy to increase parking charges on an annual basis however policies should surely be revisited as times change. Car parks in Midhurst, Petworth and East Wittering offer 2 hours free parking so I would hope that the Chichester District Council would consider helping out local businesses by trialing something similar and disregard the "annual increase policy" while they're at it. Can we not try to give businesses a fighting chance to make it through these tough times?!

7. Business in Chichester: Please be advised that I have read all the latest proposals with regards to the parking order and wish to express my absolute dismay. I can not, for one moment support a council who offer very little support ( or initiatives ) for our local high street traders, who are currently loosing precious ground to the on line retailers. Any increase in parking will effectivly hand over what little footfall we have left to neighbouring cities and towns. increasing the parking WILL then factor highly in the amount of time shoppers will want to spend in Chichester. many shoppers want to pop in and pop out. but being charged around £2.00 just to buy a card and some wrap will result in said shopper opting to park fro free in any of the larger establishments outside of the city. Parking increases will further demoralize independent store owners, and will leave us little choice but to protest, both vocally, via the ballot box and with a blanket cessastion of funds that the council collects. Please be under no doubt that I will find away to mobilise every independant retailer in Chichester in order to make sure our voices are heard.

As a suggestion, you may need to consider the following:

- Any increase in parking should only ever be used to subsidise free parking within the city on Sundays, as well as Wednesdays. Chichester shoppers should not be penalised in order for Chichester to offer free parking in Midhurst, Selsey and Petworth. This is an unacceptable situation.
- Any retailer will tell you that the current parking charges in Chichester are already too expensive, and as such doesnt afford shoppers the opportunity to explore the city fully.
- There will be a drastic downturn in footfall the moment your parking charge increases come into effect. As such, you should also consider the ramifactions that this will cause. As a tennant, I can quite clearly see many more empty retail units as we move forward.

- Many of my customers refer to my shop as a "destination shop", meaning that my shop is the sole reason for coming to Chichester. And there are a growing number of destination shops within the city walls. Once these have closed-up, you will find that all that's left to occupy the empty retail units are low rent pop-ups, vape stores, head shops and worse. By increasing the parking, you will sadly, find history as being left with no choice but to refer to the council as the architects of Chichester's demise.

Would it not be easier to find a way to incentivise Chichester's shoppers with a far better deal, to encourage (not dissuade) commerce?

I cannot endorse your proposed changes, and will challenge this order every step of the way. Not just for the survival of my own shop, but also for every indie shop within Chichester. We work long hours, for little reward (I have not drawn salary in two years in order to keep my shop open). So, it is safe to assume that I consider your proposals as a total stab in the back.

Chichester's councillors NEED to start working with a progressive attitude towards commerce and development, and encourage the entrepreneurial spirit that is currently busting a gut to keep Chichester viable.

Chichester's mantle is fading fast. Your parking order could extinguish the indie spark. There is far more to Chichester than Festivals of Speed, Revivalist days and race events. Instead of going for yet another "Cash Grab", perhaps you should listen to what is being foretold, and work towards cheaper parking across the district, so that retailers can work unencumbered by haphazard, amateurish local policy. Failing to do so, will stoke the fires of a rebellion, and herald the start of what Chichester District Council and its councillors will one day regard as the beginning of Chichester's continued spiral downwards towards "Ghost Town" status. A mere shadow of its former self. And for the avoidance of doubt, please do not misinterpret this email as hyperthetical follie. The challenges facing indie retailers in Chichester are extreme. Your new parking proposition WILL tip the scales and commence an irreversible process once it gets started.

8. Resident: I find it quite remarkable that Chichester council are even considering increased parking charges throughout the city. As the city sinks even deeper into a ghost town, with shops closing every week, what can possibly be achieved by these increases. Nobody will want to visit Chichester at all. Surely every effort should be being made to encourage visitors and shoppers to visit.
9. Business in Chichester: I own XXXXXX, I am most concerned that you propose an increase to parking charges. I believe every effort should be made to keep charges to a minimum in these difficult times. I do, however have a proposal that would help us all. We often have customers who say they cannot buy anything at the moment as their parking ticket is due to expire, so I propose you replace these with a pay on departure machine instead. Whilst I

realise there would be heavy costs initially for you ,in the long term, you will profit from this as customers would remain in the town longer. Therefore it is a win- win situation for us all as we would all make more money I also note your concerns about traffic queues I have a shop in XXXX Horsham and it is run by the council land it recognises the car on entry and you pay at machines when you leave . I think you are given plenty of time to depart . I know it has been very successful . Please consider this as a positive solution to this issue.

10. Chichester City Councillor: I note that CDC are proposing increases in parking charges for the district. Under our Declaration of a Climate Emergency but within the framework of business viability we must encourage more travel on public transport and an increase in walking/cycling. Needing to drive to town centres, equally, should not be seen as a 'cash cow' for revenue purposes for local authorities. A balance must be struck.

11. Business in Chichester: I'm a business owner in Chichester and right opposite me there is a car park it is full everyday there's not a problem with the parking it's the people like us who have to pay such a high rent price and rates and also pay a High permit price. Please consider this.

12. Business in Chichester: We would like to bring to your attention our concerns as a Chichester business, with you increasing the car parking charges yet again.

Recently, we have had lots of complaints from customers with the specific increase in the County Hall car park. The increase from £3 all day on a Saturday to £8 is absolutely ludicrous and quite frankly, business crippling. A lot of people relied on that car park for being the 'only reasonably priced, off street car park in Chichester' to use at the weekends. This is especially helped on a Sunday; as it is a slow day for Chichester's retail anyway, let alone the busiest car park going from being free to park all day, to now £3. We know for a fact with our customers, that the parking in Chichester is something that puts people off visiting, and the above issue mentioned is not helping with driving footfall into the city; especially so close to the busiest trading season. The average age of people in Chichester is 65 years old, and they do not want to use the Park and Ride system, however the only alternative is to pay extortionate pay-per-hour car parks. When places local to us (eg. Portfield Retail Park, Ocean Retail Park, Port Solent etc) offer free parking whilst using the facilities, this inevitably makes people shop elsewhere. With the retail market as it is, big high street stores are constantly closing around us in Chichester, it seems to be that you want Chichester to have no retail?

More nearby to us, Midhurst, Petworth and East Wittering all offer 2 hours free parking as STANDARD when you shop there. This should indefinitely be something you should be looking into to help grow Chichester as a 'great

place to shop' rather than deterring people away. It seems to be that the shoppers of Chichester are at an unfair disadvantage and it is increasingly causing a negative impact on the footfall who travel further afield to shop with us here. We totally object to any increases in parking charges in which you are looking to put in place, and we speak for all our customers who have raised their concerns with us too. We look forward to hearing from you.

13. Business in Chichester: My name is XXXX and I am the Store Manager of the XXXX in Chichester XXXXX. I am writing to formally object to the proposed parking charge increases in Chichester Town Centre. In a period of economic uncertainty and a struggling high street, I deem it vital that there are no actions to potentially deter visitors to the city centre in order to preserve and maintain the High Street which is a vital part of the community.

14. Business in Chichester: I wish to give my opinion on parking in Chichester. I run and own the XXXXX, which is over 7 and half years old, I also own and run the new XXXXX. We rely on visitors staying a sensible amount of time in the city for our trade and feel that this is not supported by the District in Chichester. Knowing towns close by have free parking schemes and low parking rates while you continue to raise charges in the city makes residents uncared for and taken for a fool.

I am disgusted at the parking charge change at County Hall. A lot of my traders chose to park here as it was an excellent rate of £2.50 a day, now with the change to over £11 for the day they are struggling to find places to park, making the decision to trade with us a difficult and potentially curtailing an attraction in the city. Visitors are also saying the same thing. I would urge you to take a sensible view of the situation, raising parking fees and not providing free parking may give your coffers a boost in the short term, but a long term view for your reputation and for the city you serve, who rely on visitors being able to put money into the local economy.

15. Business in Chichester: We would like to email our objection to the council thinking of increasing the parking charges in Chichester. With car parks in Midhurst, Petworth and East Wittering allowing 2 hours free parking we find it ludicrous that Chichester council are considering increasing parking prices when maybe we should be following these other areas. Chichester in the last year has suffered with foot fall and the amount of shops disappearing we need to find a way to bring the public back into the town not deter them. We need to pull together to bring our town back to life.

16. Business in Chichester: I wish to object to the potential raise in parking charges.

As a small business manager in central Chichester I urge you to certainly not raise any parking charges. As a retail and leisure centre we struggle enough

with the empty shops and other buildings without giving people less reason to come here. We independents are competing on a daily basis with the big chains and online shopping. We shouldn't have to compete against our council as well. Independent business is the way to move our city forward and if you continue to oppose us with higher charges imposed on our potential customers we will all be forced to bow out of the high street. Many people who visit Chichester will be unhappy with even higher charges to park. There are so many towns and villages around and about us that offer free or nominal parking charges. You should be trying to lower charges. The car parks seem well enough maintained with the current prices paid. You could offer an incentive to use the multi-storey carpark and lower charges for long stays in all carparks. Lastly you should certainly be looking to the future to create park & rides, electric busses and a fully pedestrianised centre. To make our city more inviting. I am very hopeful that you will consider the detrimental affect this will have on our high street.

17. Resident: Chichester city council need to wake up. All the high street shops are struggling to make ends meet. The rents & business rates must be some of the highest in the south & now they are proposing to increase parking charges yet again. Also the proposed on street parking charges they plan to introduce will also impact on the shops. People have to travel to work & as the bus & train service is diabolical where are these vital workers supposed to park? Maybe the council should consider making the whole of chichester a car park after all the shops will disappear so it could be used as a park & ride for the small towns around us. Wake up please you are slowly draining the life blood out of what was once a beautiful place.
18. Sussex Police: Sussex Police would generally not get involved in your changes to parking as we do not have any enforcement in that area, so we do not need to have a say on it, but what you have proposed seems fair and reasonable
19. East Wittering and Bracklesham Parish Council: The proposed car parking increases of up to 30% in some of the city centre car parks will not meet the aims of reducing air pollution, but will adversely affect city businesses, and we would like to see CDC working to develop more viable solutions to air pollution issues which do not punish city centre businesses.
20. Business in Chichester: At a time when bricks and mortar retailers are struggling, and where those same retailers in city locations struggle more than some others, it seems absolute madness to do anything that may negatively impact the health of those businesses. These same businesses employ local people and pay local taxes.

We then face an increase to the already high parking charges in the city, at a time when shopping centres are either reducing or in some cases stopping parking charges to make it more attractive as a shopping destination. It is easy to dress this up in some other way, but the reality is nothing more than short term revenue driving over the medium term health of the city. It is a quite desperate move when the council appear to do nothing which positively impacts their city retailers.

### **Comments from Councillors**

21. Councillor Adrian Moss: It is my view that Chichester District Council is missing a significant opportunity to look at how CAR PARKING Charges could be revised to take into account changing visitor behaviour and the threat to the High Street.

First of all I believe that any Car Parking charge should have been fixed for 12 months not 2 years, whilst a full strategic review was undertaken into how our District can appraise the pressures on the High Street. Ideally all charges should have been frozen at current rates for 12 months whilst this review was undertaken and to encourage visitors.

Here in summary are my objections to the revised charges

Evening Car Parking charges should be abolished to safe guard night life, The Theatre and New Park Centre

Significant incentive car park charges should be applied to Avenue de Chartres Car park. This car park often has many free spaces. We need to fill this with enthusiastic visitors. We also need to improve the access into the city centre and ambience of the car park

Any increases in parking charges should be in City Centre Car Parks where pollution is an issue

Little London and Baffins Lane should focus on increased Blue Badge and electric vehicle parking. Charges in these car parks could be increased significantly for other vehicles

Without affecting revenue "Incentive parking" should be applied. Car parks are often almost empty by 4.30pm and rarely very full at 9.30am.

A scheme should be introduced that incentives people to return to Chichester on a regular basis

Charges in the coastal and rural area are acceptable.

Additional comments:

Workplace parking levy should be investigated

Parking is free at out of town shopping centres. We need to find a way to get these people into town using electric busses.

CDC needs to look at new ways to incentivise visitors and residents. Putting parking charges by xx% is neither innovative or encouraging visitors.

People need to be given a reason to come to Chichester, It is as the BID say about psychology. Give them an incentive and they will come.

We do need to offer more events and make specific car parks free for a period of time.

Car Parking Strategy need to include a full review across the District to make our policy ready for the changing markets.

Chichester does not need to be revolutionary but does need to be progressive.

22. Councillor Sarah Sharpe: I would like to object to changes to car parking charges in that they are **not high enough**. You should be charging **more** for people to park in the City Centre especially. I think you should also park for evenings in **all** car parks. The polluter pays. Your prices for parking are ridiculously low compared to the buses to pay over 8 hours to park in Midhurst is £2.30 whereas the bus return to Chichester costs £8.20. This is not a good ratio. Any extra money you make from car parking could be put into sustainable travel and supporting buses. I think you should have lower prices for smaller cars and electric cars to prioritize and encourage people not to have large SUVs and to nudge people into less polluting vehicles.

I think that Little London especially should be more for blue badges and more space should be put towards the market (the picture from the Chichester Vision needs to become a reality please). I would encourage you to look into the **Workplace Parking Levy** as this is an excellent revenue source to plough back into the City and public transport eg building bus lanes, putting towards bike hire scheme etc as Nottingham have done – they financed their tram system with this: <https://www.centreforcities.org/reader/funding-financing-inclusive-growth-cities/reviewing-funding-finance-options-available-city-combined-authorities/1-nottingham-workplace-parking-levy/>  
<https://bettertransport.org.uk/blog/better-transport/winning-policy-nottinghams-workplace-parking-levy>

Reasons why I object to these inadequate price rises: My objections are based on the need to improve air quality, encourage more sustainable lifestyles, reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, act in response to our declared Climate Emergency, reduce occurrences of asthma and other breathing-related illnesses and reduce obesity. I.E. car parking charges should support public health agenda and help to reduce NHS costs.