

Petworth Business Association

% 19 East Street, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0AB

Melanie Burgoyne
Chichester District Council
East Pallant House
1 East Pallant
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1TY.

17th December 2016

Dear Melanie,

In reply to your question regarding the Petworth Business Association's (PBA) view on losing spaces in Pound Street car park, please find my response on behalf of the PBA committee below.

If you ask a local business association if it is in favour of losing capacity from its primary visitor car park for any alternative use, the answer will of course be 'no'. The Pound Street car park is one of Petworth's most strategically important community assets, and commitments to preserving its capacity can be found in Chichester District Council's 2010-20 Car Parking Strategy, South Downs National Park's Preferred Options document, and as an emerging policy in Petworth Town Council's Neighbourhood Development Plan. There are extremely poor public transport links in Petworth so the local economy relies almost solely on parking spaces being available.

In relation to the proposed alternative use of these car parking spaces as a skateboard facility, I would make it clear that the PBA is absolutely in favour of better community facilities for Petworth including the long-anticipated skateboard park. PBA continues to play a proactive role in the community, with many business owners living in the town, so we do speak with a purely self-interested voice.

It is hard to understand why Pound Street car park is being considered for this facility over the unused spaces in Sylvia Beaufoy car park, and the reasons this alternative location has been dismissed by CDC members earlier this year remain a mystery to many in Petworth. Safety concerns were cited yet these could easily have been mitigated in working up to a planning application (as previously happened when members went on to approve the same site for the same purpose many years ago). It has been demonstrated that there is space available in the

unused disabled parking bays of Sylvia Beaufoy car park, so how can it possibly be preferable to lose existing capacity in the primary car park?

Unlike Sylvia Beaufoy car park, Pound Street car park is the primary place for visitors to park, and therefore plays a crucial role in supporting the economy of a small rural market town in a difficult era for high street retailing. While I'm sure there will be times when 11 car parking bays are found to be unoccupied, that doesn't answer two crucial points. Firstly at peak times the car park is full, so those peaks would in future yield 5-7% fewer car visits (and therefore spend) visits to the town depending on how you view permit holder usage.

Secondly, bearing in mind that the progressive plans afoot in Petworth (Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), Petworth Town Council Traffic Proposals, Petworth Vision plans) aim to make it a more thriving destination, I would expect the number of peak-capacity days to increase over time, compounding any loss of any car parking bays. Additionally the PTC working traffic proposals include plans to reduce the number of on-street parking spaces in the town centre (for very good reasons), which will add further pressure on the Pound Street car park.

I would therefore suggest that to favour Pound Street car park for a skateboard park facility over Sylvia Beaufoy car park would make no sense whatsoever in economic or town planning terms.

If the placement of a skateboard park is to take precedent over car parking spaces in Pound Street car park, I'm certain PBA would not want to deny this facility to the people of Petworth, however it is surely imperative that all alternative sites have been fully explored first. With a Neighbourhood Development Plan reaching draft stage in the next 3 months, I would suggest a more appropriate space could be designated for this project and delivered fairly quickly.

Only if it can be genuinely be demonstrated that the need for this facility is so immediate that it can't wait for the NDP, and that all other alternative site options have been exhausted, and that Petworth Town Council is unified in its desire to proceed, would PBA withdraw objection to this facility.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AR', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Alex Rees
Chairman
Petworth Business Association