

Statement: CS20.01

Cabinet – 24TH JANUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 20 – Introduction of Pay and Display Parking for District Car Parks

Statement submitted by: Cllrs Geoff Gollop, Sharon Scott & Steve Smith

This is a generic report that deals with 16 district car parks. Unfortunately, one size does not fit all as each car park has a different character and different needs. Whilst we understand that this measure is needed to generate funds, we believe it should not be done to the detriment of the local community. We have a particular interest in the car park on Westbury Hill, but my comments may apply to others.

We are concerned about the offer of annual passes which is likely to result in many spaces being taken on a permanent basis. The report indicates the car park is well used. Local residents will confirm there are many occasions throughout the week when there are no spaces in the car park at all. The issue of annual passes would reduce the number of spaces available to those using the village. It would make this position worse and would appear to be totally inappropriate. The current free parking is meant to be limited to 3 hours and the increase to 4 will only make it harder for users to find a space.

This car park also contains the local GPs surgery. Many spaces are taken for brief periods while patients attend. It seems unreasonable and unfair to force patients, many of whom are older and inevitably unwell, to pay to visit the surgery. Would it be possible to have a first half hour free facility as in Whiteladies Road on street parking. We realise the charges would have to increase to be cost neutral, but that would seem much fairer.

In addition, Westbury is one of the few High Streets that still has banks available, and many people visit for a brief visit to their bank. Again, a free half hour would help to retain that custom and ensure a fast turnover of spaces. The neighbouring Church Hall is used for youth groups, and classes for children. Parents drop off and collect and only park for very short spells.

We are concerned that, as currently proposed, patients will be discouraged, bank customers will choose other locations and the reduction in passing trade will risk the viability of remaining High Street businesses. Please consult with local businesses before enforcing these proposals

Our final concern is regarding Sunday charging. The car park is used on a Sunday morning, used by the congregations of the 2 neighbouring Churches, but otherwise by very few people. Both churches provide strong contributions to our local community and have benefitted from free parking ever since the car park has operated. Is it possible to operate the other 6 days until 7pm and either have no restriction on Sundays or have it operating from 1pm rather than penalising church goers.

We fully understand the financial situation and recognise that this car park has to contribute, but we are also concerned about the impact on local business and the local community.

Cllr Geoff Gollop, Cllr Sharon Scott, Cllr Steve Smith