

Notes of a Meeting of the Car Parking Working Party held on Monday, 28th October 2013 at Peter Gibbins

Present

Cllr. Sheila Beeton (convener)
Cllr. Peter Gibbins
Cllr. Tony Regan
Cllr. Kevin Taylor

Note: Meeting was on morning of powercut and general weather disruption so not everyone had been able to print off documentation.

1. Response received from CBC to our request for further information.

The Chairman circulated some initial thoughts on the responses received which was considered helpful. In general all cllrs agreed with these comments and there was a general sense of disappointment in the responses received from CBC.

Specifically it was agreed as follows:

Question 1 - Financial Information and Costings

Response refers us to the draft Partnership Agreement drawn up for use at West Mersea. This agreement provides no details of any of the financial information requested and would not be an appropriate model for Dedham as we do not own any car parks likely to be included in the scheme.

Question 2 - Implementation and Start-up works and associated costs

No information is given regarding groundworks, layout and proposed use of the respective areas as requested and the comment regarding the coach park is unhelpful. The response to the use of tear-off tickets as part of a possible incentive scheme is useful and needs to be discussed with businesses.

Question 3 - Annual Maintenance Works and Costs

A copy of a typical asset management plan would have been helpful; is this going to be agreed with DPC or simply provided? The Council would welcome a site visit to discuss both start-up and maintenance issues.

Question 4 - Agreements between NEPP and CBC

This response is helpful; however;

(Chairman's subsequent note: read article on NEPP in Essex County Standard 1.11.13 which indicates the launch of an investigation into the running of NPP)

Question 5 - Use of profit generated on the account

It is understood from this response that CBC and DPC respectively would be able to retain and spend their relevant share of any profit generated on the account. We would however wish to seek assurances that (1) adequate funding would be allocated initially to cover

necessary improvements and (2) that given the importance to Dedham of its ANOB status, our car parks will be maintained at a level above that of CBC's statutory obligations.

Question 6 – Initiative to provide public toilet facilities in the Mill Lane Car park

The referral of this issue to Community Services does not sound optimistic.

Question 7 – Collaboration with Suffolk Authorities

We should follow this up to establish views from the suggested consultation.

Summary

As reported earlier the Working Party were disappointed with the overall tenor of response which we believe did not suggest the existence of an adequate business plan for this project.

Action: Chairman to provide update to full council at November's Meeting and subsequent feedback to CBC.

2. To consider the output from the Weekday and Weekend Surveys (circulated report)

The report* was considered a helpful summary of the numbers and use of our carparks during the crucial summer holiday period.

Summary

The vast majority of visitors to the main (Mill Lane) car park in Dedham are visitors from outside the village.

Most visitors are willing to pay a small sum to help maintain the car park but would want any profit generated to be received by the Village.

Whilst visitors want the environment to be well managed and maintained they do not wish to see major change. Most people like the rural nature of the car park and do not particularly wish to see any additional facilities.

There is a major issue of car park capacity. The coach park is clearly under-utilised and the restriction of car parking in this area is completely ignored. There is lack of definition for the green space between the main car park and coach park.

3. To consider next steps regarding liaison with local businesses

There appeared to be some conflict between the survey evidence of business car parking in Mill Lane and that expressed informally at the Special Meeting or in subsequent discussion/correspondence.

The Working Party considered the issues of principle relating to permits. It was noted that apart from any free time given for parking, both residents and visitors would be required to pay for additional time. It was not therefore considered unreasonable for businesses/workers to pay for permits and the figure of £50 suggested by CBC was not considered to be excessive. It was however acknowledged that appropriate concessions should be given for part-time/occasional employees and that a scheme needed to be devised.

The Working Party saw no reason for there to be a limit to the number of permits requested or granted as it was not considered this would have significant impact on parking patterns in this category of user.

Agreed

That a letter be drafted and circulated by hand to all businesses in Dedham conveying the above views and seeking a response.

4. Further Action and Next Steps

The Working Party considered the issue of free time parking. Concern was expressed about the inconsistency between the current free time parking of two hours in the High Street and proposed free time of only one hour in the main car parks. It was agreed that there should be consistency between the two areas to prevent further pressure on parking in the High Street. It was recommended that free time parking be allocated for two hours in both areas.

Consideration was also given as to the rate of charging. Bearing in mind representations on this and views expressed in the survey – and the wish to demonstrate that the prime focus of change in the parking strategy relates to more effective parking arrangements rather than income generation – it is proposed that charging rates be amended as follows:

Two hours free parking in all car parks
£1.50 for between two and four hours
£3.00 per day in excess of four hours

Apart from the actions agreed above, it was agreed that an update be provided at the November Meeting of the Parish Council and that a substantive report and recommendations be included on the Agenda for the December Meeting.