



## **VERWOOD TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE DORSET COUNCILS PROPOSED PARKING CHARGING STRATEGY**

### **CHARGING**

1. Verwood is not comparable to the other towns in level 1. We have a sizeable population but in comparison to the other towns of Ferndown, Beaminster, Charminster, Gillingham, Sturminster Newtown and West Bexington our high street is small and much less vibrant.
2. The standardization of parking charges across Dorset is understandable due to the new unitary authority.
3. We are concerned on the effect on businesses in Verwood and that people here only pop into the shops and do not stay long anyway. The Potters Wheel Car Park is used by many elderly residents, due to health mobility issues, who visit the café's which are a lifeline for them to meet other people and is good for their mental health. They will not be able to just walk into the town centre instead. Therefore, if charges are forthcoming, we feel that the first two hours should be free.
4. Many residents use their cars as the bus service in the parish is hourly which may involve a simple errand being transformed into a lengthy wait for the bus home. There is no bus service on the C2 east of Three Legged Cross. The introduction of parking charges should be supplemented by an improved bus service.
5. The Hub is a central focal point for the Verwood community. Those wishing to subscribe to the Gym etc, some medical events or to attend films may decide not to support The Hub which could affect the current financial situation of The Hub. Consideration should be given to incorporate free parking for users.
6. We feel that the car park at the Doctors Surgery on Station Road should remain free of charge.
7. There is concern that parking in side streets may happen due to charging. The streets are already busy anyway.
8. Public car parks should have investment now in car charging points for electric vehicles for the future, the Potters Wheel have such points now.
9. Consideration should be given if charges do apply for free parking between 6pm and 6am.
10. If charging is to be put in place, then card or phone-app payments are needed immediately for all car parks due to the cashless society but cash transactions should also be available.
11. If charges are to be brought in then they should be phased in over a period of time. There never have been charges here so an immediate introduction at a high level (as proposed) will be likely to have a significant impact on the usage of the Town Centre.

12. When considering the Dorset Local Plan that was recently consulted on, and the push to improve and use local town centres, the introduction of parking charges seems contrary to that aim.

## **CONCLUSION**

Overall the Town Council feel that parking charges should not be made in Verwood, as it will be detrimental to the town centre and the elder residents with mobility issues but if charges are introduced then the first two hours should be free.

## **PARKING PERMITS.**

1. The standardization of permit charges would be welcome as it allows consistency across the authority.
2. Concern is raised, as in our comments regarding charging, that there may be an increase in side street parking.
3. What terms of permit will be given? Short/Long term (for shoppers/workers)
4. Where will the Parking Permits be able to be used, the whole of Dorset or just East Dorset/North Dorset/West Dorset? Many of our Verwood residents visit Ringwood as the nearest town where this parking permit would not be valid.
5. We would recommend that two permits are prepared, one to cover the local area, to include Ferndown/Wimborne etc as that would cover trips that are already being undertaken. It is considered that it would be more acceptable if charges were to be paid, that this included parking in other towns not just Verwood. The Second permit could be a full Dorset Wide permit for those that want it.

## **CONCLUSION**

Overall, the Town Council feel that a parking permit for just Verwood would not benefit any of our residents. However, if the parking permit covered the whole of Dorset or at least East Dorset area this would be more appropriate.