

<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>Management of Car Park at the Rear of the Corn Exchange</b>
<b>PROPOSER:</b>	Trudi Barrett, Town Clerk
<b>SUPPORTED BY:(if applicable)</b>	
<b>BACKGROUND:</b> Please describe the reasons for this paper. Is it on behalf of a Working Group? Please provide relevant details, e.g. previous decisions by the Town Council or any external advice. Who is likely to benefit from this decision?	<p>The Town Council owns the small car park at the rear of the Corn Exchange, which has 14 spaces in total. Two of the spaces are marked for disabled use. The spaces on one side of the car park are reserved for permit holders only between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Saturday, who are the occupants of the Corn Exchange: Town Council, TBC and library staff. The remaining spaces are for public use with a one-hour parking restriction in place between 8am and 3pm, Monday to Saturday. There are no restrictions outside of these times.</p> <p>The public parking spaces are intended for those wishing to ‘pop and shop’ in the town centre, not for long stay parking during the day. The one-hour restriction means that more shoppers can make use of this facility and support the High Street. There is no charge for parking.</p> <p>Market stall holders who have paid for pitches under the Corn Exchange are permitted to park in the public area all day for their convenience with unloading/loading and ready access to their vehicles. The stallholders usually attend on Saturdays. There are specific arrangements for special events such as the Christmas Fayre.</p> <p>In July 2023 the Finance &amp; Asset Management Committee first considered the long-standing misuse of the car park by some people employed in the town. Certain individuals were regularly parking their cars in the car park during their working hours, making the spaces unavailable for shoppers or other visitors. Following discussion with those concerned, it was agreed in September 2023 to reduce the hours that the one-hour parking restriction was in place to 8am to 3pm (previously 8am to 4pm), Monday to Saturday with no restrictions outside of these times.</p> <p>However, this did not change the behaviour of those ignoring the rules and in response to continuing abuse of the parking conditions, other options for management of the car park were considered. In May 2024 contact was made with a parking management company (NPM) to discuss the services they offer and on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 the Finance &amp; Asset Management Committee resolved to recommend to full Council that NPM be contracted to manage the car parking at the rear of the Corn Exchange.</p> <p>Full Council considered this matter on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024. There was considerable concern about the implications of management of the car park by a parking management company and the introduction of fines. The following was therefore agreed by full Council at that meeting:</p> <p><b>“It was unanimously RESOLVED to refer management of the car park at the rear of the Corn Exchange to the Finance &amp; Asset Management Committee for further consideration and to seek a solution acceptable to all parties. Any alternative proposal should come back to full Council for discussion and approval. If no such solution could be found, then the current system of management would be retained.”</b></p> <p>At the Finance &amp; Asset Management Committee meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 Councillors again considered management of the car park. In the light of continuing concerns from members of the public, it was resolved to leave management of the car park in abeyance for six months and to reconsider the matter after that time in the light of the prevailing situation.</p>
<b>ISSUES:</b> Summarise the key issues arising from the Background (above). Are there any key dates that are relevant?	<p>Six months have passed since the decision by the Finance &amp; Asset Management Committee regarding reconsideration of management of the car park and the review is due.</p> <p>In recent months, officers have not noticed the previous high level of misuse of the car park; perhaps those concerned have found alternative parking or there have been changes in personnel. There do not seem to have been frequent problems with parking capacity.</p>
<b>LEGAL OBLIGATIONS:</b> Wherever possible please check on any likely legal implications.	<p>The car park is owned by the Town Council, which has a duty to maintain a safe facility.</p>

Management of Car Park at the Rear of the Corn Exchange cont.

<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:</b> <i>Please state the costs if known-capital costs as well as on-going revenue costs.  State whether funding will be from external sources or from the Town Council.</i>	<p>If it were decided to engage NPM to manage the car park, the costs would be as follows:</p> <p>NPM would not charge for the installation of their equipment and signage and there would be no ongoing maintenance charge. The system would be offered free of cost on a 24-month service level agreement.</p> <p>The Council could choose to provide the option of paid-for parking after an initial free period, via an app-based payment system, PopPay. This would provide a small income from the car park. NPM would take a percentage of the revenue: 5% of any transaction up to £9.99 and 10% of any transaction over £9.99 to cover the, PopPay charges, etc.</p> <p>Fines would be issued for non-compliance with the parking conditions, £100, reduced to £60 if paid within the first two weeks of issue. NPM would retain any income from fines.</p> <p>If it is decided to maintain the status quo, there would be no cost to the Council for ongoing management of the car park.</p>				
<b>COMMUNITY BENEFIT</b> <i>Please state what benefit this proposal will bring to the community (mandatory)</i>	<p>Efficient management of the public car park at the rear of the car park.</p>				
<b>COMMUNICATIONS:</b> <i>Who else should be informed if the proposal is approved?</i>	<p>This would depend on the decision taken.</p>				
<b>MEDIA AND PROMOTIONS:</b>	<i>Does this need media coverage? As above</i>	YES		NO	
<b>TOWN CLERK'S COMMENTS:</b> Including any implications on Town Council staff requirements.	<p>When management of the car park was considered previously, there were objections from members of the public regarding the possible introduction of parking charges and fines for non-compliance. Objections came not only from those ignoring the rules but also from local residents and traders.</p> <p>The unauthorised use of the car park seems to have diminished since that time, usually leaving sufficient spaces for short term parking by the general public.</p>				
<b>PROPOSAL:</b> What specifically do you want the Town Council to decide on?	<p>Whether to maintain the current system of management of the car park or to propose an alternative arrangement to full Council.</p>				

Date of Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting at which this will be considered: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025

*For office use only*

<b>APPROVED:</b>		<b>DATE:</b>		<b>MINUTE</b>	
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