MORPETH COMMUNITY CAR PARKING PLAN

APPROVED AT FULL COUNCIL ON

Wednesday 27th November 2013
1. **Background**

Car Parking in Morpeth Town is managed by Northumberland County Council. The current arrangements are:

- On Street Parking – Enforcement.
- Off Street Parking – Provision of Council managed car parks and enforcement of the use of car parks.

Morpeth has the following car parks with the following pay and display tariffs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAR PARK LOCATION</th>
<th>SPACES</th>
<th>TARIFF &amp; TIME PERIOD</th>
<th>CHARGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Back Riggs North</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>T3 – 3 hours maximum stay</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Square</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>T3 – 3 hours maximum stay</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation Yard</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>T3 – 3 hours maximum stay</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacre Street</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>T3 – 3 hours maximum stay</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newmarket East</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>T3 – 3 hours maximum stay</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newmarket West</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>T3 – 3 hours maximum stay</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Terrace North</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>T3 – 3 hours maximum stay</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Terrace South</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>T3 – 3 hours maximum stay</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whalebone Lane</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>T3 – 3 hours maximum stay</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Terrace</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>T3 – 3 hours maximum stay</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrisons Supermarket *</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>Private - 3 hours maximum</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St James</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>T4- All day</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey’s Yard</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>T4- All day</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathesons Gardens</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>T4- All day</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staithes Lane / Undercroft</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>T11- All day</td>
<td>Charges apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coopies Lane</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>T11- All day</td>
<td>No Charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway Station *</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Private – All day</td>
<td>No Charge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In July 2013, Northumberland County Council’s administration wrote to Morpeth Town Council requesting that we work together to develop a community based parking plan which would offer communities the opportunity to enjoy free parking.

The Town Council established a Car Parking Working Group to develop a Morpeth Town Community Car Parking Plan.

2. **Developing the Community Car Parking Plan**

The Car Parking Group considered a number of options and sought the opinions of adjacent parishes and the Morpeth Chamber of Trade. The group concluded that the preferred option for Morpeth is that :-
Parking should be without charge with a 3 hour restriction applied to premium space car parks.

The group also considered and concluded the following:-

- **Trial Period of 12 months to consider the impact on the town and traffic.** The concerns of the group centred around three areas: a) are there a sufficient number of parking spaces to cater for the increased demand following removal of charges b) re-opening of the former Morrison’s store, further increasing demand and reducing the number of available spaces c) that business staff & traders might contrive to circumvent the system and occupy premium spaces intended to attract visitors/shoppers

- **Restrict the prime central car parks to 3 hours maximum stay to encourage use by shoppers and visitors.** It is envisaged that this will be through the use of timer discs.

- **Encourage workers and businesses to use the long stay car parks on the edge of town.**

- **Introduce very short stay spaces (20 minutes max) at on street locations where appropriate.**

- **Continue penalties for illegal on-street parking and enforce time restrictions on short stay car parks.**

Morpeth Town Council revised its Car Parking Strategy which was approved by Full Council on 25th September 2013. A copy is attached as Appendix A.

3. **Consultation**

The Town Council issued a number of press releases regarding the progress of the Morpeth Community Car Parking Plan and a short questionnaire for residents, businesses and visitors to complete. The questionnaire was made available to businesses in the Town, distributed by Morpeth Chamber of Trade and Sanderson Arcade, in the Inside Morpeth Magazine and on-line at the Town Council website. A copy of the Car Parking Questionnaire is attached as Appendix B.
The results of the Questionnaire are as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREFERRED OPTION</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Removal of charges for car parking but with similar time constraints to those currently applied</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Parking charges and time constraints continue to be applied as at present</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES Response</th>
<th>NO Response</th>
<th>Don’t Know Response</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think more people will visit Morpeth if there is no charge for Car Parking?</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>If additional visitors come to Morpeth this may have a detrimental impact on traffic. – Reason for a trial period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there sufficient car parking spaces?</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>If there are insufficient spaces this will have a detrimental impact on traffic – Reason for a trial period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are Car parking Facilities acceptable and fit for purpose?</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Car Park repairs &amp; maintenance programme must be responsive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should there be time restrictions in the Car Parks after 6pm?</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>No evidence at this time to suggest introduction of time limits after 6pm is needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should there be time restrictions in the Car Parks on Sundays and Bank Holidays?</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>No evidence at this time to suggest introduction of time limits on Sundays and Bank Holidays is needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should very short stay spaces (20 minutes max) be introduced in some on-street locations?</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>On -street short stay spaces to be introduced by NCC after identification, consultation and assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Recommendations & Implementation**

With regard to the results of the public consultation and the conclusions of the Car Parking Working Group it is recommended that

*Parking should be without charge with a 3 hour restriction applied to premium space car parks.*
There is an introductory trial Period of 12 months to allow consideration of the impact on the town and traffic.

Prime central car parks are restricted to 3 hours maximum stay to encourage use by shoppers and visitors. It is envisaged that this will be through the use of timer discs.

Workers and businesses are encouraged to use the long stay car parks on the edge of the town centre through a programme of education, assisted by the Morpeth & District Chamber of Trade.

Very short stay spaces (20 minutes max) are introduced at on street locations where appropriate.

Enforcement continues for illegal on-street parking and enforce time restrictions on short stay car parks.

The premium space car parks (3 hours maximum stay) are:

| Back Riggs North  |
| Castle Square    |
| Corporation Yard |
| Dacre Street     |
| Newmarket East   |
| Newmarket West   |
| Stanley Terrace North |
| Stanley Terrace South |
| Whalebone Lane   |
| The Terrace      |

The long stay car parks are:

| St James    |
| Grey’s Yard |
| Mathesons Gardens |
| Staithes Lane / Undercroft |
| Coopies Lane |

**Timer Discs**

Morpeth Town Council's preferred option is to introduce promotional Morpeth Timer Discs supplied and distributed by Morpeth Town Council and a network of local traders. It is anticipated that the disc will be cost neutral through funding
raised by advertising. If this proves not to be practical then a nominal charge will be made.

**Automatic Number Plate Recognition System (ANPR)**

The Town Council has considered ANPR and concluded that the public car parks in Morpeth should not be managed using an ANPR scheme.

**Enforcement**

The time limited car parks must be monitored regularly by NCC Enforcement officers.

The long stay car parks must continue to be monitored on an ad hoc basis by NCC enforcement officers to control appropriate car parking (proper use of disabled bays, outside of bays, abandoned vehicles etc).

The on-street parking must be monitored regularly by NCC Enforcement officers.

**Trial Period**

It is agreed that a 12 month trial period be put in place to enable a formal review of traffic impacts and car parking usage.

5. **Conclusion**

*Parking in Council managed Car Parks in Morpeth shall be without charge with a 3 hour restriction applied to premium space car parks managed by use of timer discs for a 12 month trial period with effect from 1st April 2014.*

6. **NCC Intervention**

At the beginning of this process Morpeth Town Council were advised that they would have the responsibility to make a decision locally on what is the best parking solution for Morpeth Town. It was also suggested by NCC from the outset that any changes to the current parking arrangements would be assessed and measured and that a trial period would be a sensible approach. A trial period would also allow the charging infrastructure to remain in place (bagging ticket machines) so that any re-introductions of charging could be made with the lowest possible costs incurred.
After a significant amount of consideration and consultation with residents, businesses and other car park users, Morpeth Town Council was able to complete its community car parking plan and come to a conclusion as stated in 5 above. On 4th November at the end of the consultation period, the County Council Administration made a number of decisions regarding Car Parking in Morpeth without any consideration to the Town Council’s preferred options and without knowledge of the outcome of the public consultation. These are:-

a) There will be no trial period.
b) Timer Parking Discs issued are to be generic NCC discs with a purchase fee applied. There will be no support or assistance for the production of a promotional Morpeth Timer Disc.
c) Any parking income generated will not be given to the Town Council to use for re-investment into the area.

As a consequence of the decisions made by NCC, Morpeth Town Council has reluctantly agreed to proceed with its Community Car Parking Plan without a trial period and with the use of the NCC generic timer discs which users will have to purchase from NCC outlets. Concerns expressed in 2 above must be addressed by NCC following implementation of the no charges scheme.
CAR PARKING STRATEGY

1. Introduction

1.1 Northumberland County Council is responsible for off street parking provision and for the enforcement of on street parking in Morpeth. Morpeth Town Council has worked with Northumberland County Council to develop a community car parking plan to benefit the town.

1.2 Car Parking is an important element in facilitating the effective economic, environmental and social functions of the town and must meet the needs of users and the community.

1.3 Car Parking is one factor within the wider transport policy. Promotion and providing enhancements to encourage accessibility to the town through walking, cycling and use of public transport will have an impact on the parking policy, both for those without use of a car and as an alternative for car users.

1.4 Car Parking must be considered as part of the overall traffic management solution for the Morpeth.

1.5 Car Parking Solutions need to be flexible to be able to respond to changes in local circumstances including new developments, traffic network and shopping habits.
2. Off Street Car Parking

2.1 The provision of adequate car parking is essential with sufficient spaces to support businesses, shoppers, residents and visitors including provision for disabled users, motorcycles, coaches and lorries.

2.2 Car Parks should be fit for purpose and compliment the street scene with appropriate lighting, signage, safe access and litter bins.

2.3 Car Parking in Morpeth should be user friendly and be an easy experience.

2.4 Long stay car parks should be located on the edge of town. Consideration should be given to discourage short stay users. Employees and long stay visitors should be encouraged to use these facilities.

2.5 Short stay car parks should be located in the centre of town with time restrictions of 3 hours maximum applied to alleviate congestion and ensure turnover of spaces.

2.6 All car parks should be free of charge to users to boost footfall into the town.

2.7 If charges are introduced these should be to cover costs and not for income generation.

2.8 All car parks should have no time restrictions after 6pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

2.9 All car parks in Morpeth should be clearly signed on all approach roads into the town and from all main road access points with short and long stay parking identified.

2.10 Car parks may be used for other purposes from time to time – eg. NHS Breast Screening Units, Markets, Fairs, charity events and those promotional events which are considered beneficial to the community.

2.11 In exceptional circumstances, dispensations or short term permits may be issued to waive the time restrictions on a short stay car park where a justified case is submitted.
3. On Street Parking

3.1 Management of on street parking is essential to road safety, reduce obstructive parking and improve traffic movement.

3.2 Very Short stay parking bays should be explored at on-street locations allowing use for 30 minutes maximum.

3.3 Taxi Ranks should be identified with specific times and locations allowing the spaces to be used for very short stay public parking outside of these specific times.

3.4 Loading Spaces should be identified for businesses and subject to a 30 minute time limit for commercial vehicles and 10 minutes for private vehicles.

3.5 Parking outside of schools must be resolved by the use of school keep clear markings and enforced.

4. Disabled Parking

4.1 Designated and marked disabled spaces should be provided in each car park and on –street locations which will be free to those displaying a disabled blue badge parked in a designated bay.

4.2 Disabled blue badges must be clearly displayed including a time clock to meet the time limit restrictions where applicable.

4.3 Legally there must be adequate numbers of suitably designed parking spaces for disabled people.

4.4 Disabled Blue badge scheme parking is permitted on street in accordance with the national scheme.

5. Resident Parking

5.1 Resident Parking Schemes should be identified and introduced in accordance with the current legislation and following the appropriate consultation with interested stakeholders.

5.2 The primary aim of a resident parking scheme is to protect residents from external parking pressures.
5.3 A scheme will only be introduced where it has the support of the majority of households within the proposed zone / street.

5.4 Charges for resident parking (if any) will be to cover the administration of the specific resident parking scheme.

6. Enforcement

6.1 Enforcement is undertaken by Northumberland County Council.

6.2 Management and enforcement of on and off street parking regulations is essential to manage congestion, safety for road users and pedestrians and availability of car parking spaces in primary areas.

6.3 The aim of enforcement is to increase compliance with parking regulations.

6.4 Enforcement is required consistently and robustly at all times especially when illegal activity takes place.

6.5 Controlling the length of stay is significant for management of the premium short stay and very short stay spaces. The preferred option of Morpeth Town Council is time clock discs however other solutions may be available and their practicality, if proffered, can be assessed.
Morpeth Town Council
Car Parking Consultation

1. Do you think more people will visit Morpeth if there is no charge for Car Parking?
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Don’t know

2. If you think more people will visit Morpeth do you think there are sufficient car parking spaces?
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Don’t know

3. Do you think that the Car Parking facilities in Morpeth are acceptable and fit for purpose?
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Don’t know

4. Should there be time restrictions in the Car Parks after 6pm?
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Don’t know

5. Should there be time restrictions in the Car Parks on Sundays and Bank Holidays?
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Don’t know

6. Should very short stay spaces – (20 minutes max) be introduced in some on-street locations?
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Don’t know

7. Which would you prefer?
   [ ] Removal of charges for car parking but with similar time constraints to those currently applied
   [ ] Car parking charges and time constraints continue to be applied as at present

8. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?
   

About you....

9. First Name __________  10. Surname __________

11. Postcode __________

12. Do you....
   [ ] live in Morpeth?  [ ] work in Morpeth?  [ ] visit Morpeth?

Please complete and return to Morpeth Town Hall.