

## **APPENDIX C. OPTIONS FOR CAR PARKING**

### **Car Parking**

Solutions relating to car parking were to be developed as part of the redevelopment proposals as despite attempts to restrict vehicles movement vehicles still drive into and park in the recreation ground. With the exception of maintenance vehicles the proposed redevelopment aimed to restrict all vehicles from the site.

Currently the main users who drive and park within the recreation ground are users of Bancroft hall and the Bowls club with limited parking by the tennis club. Bancroft hall is shortly due to be demolished which will mitigate the need for parking. Both the Bowls club and Tennis Clubs leases only provides them with pedestrian access into the recreation ground.

There has been some resistance from existing users of the recreation ground being charged for car parking. The Bowls club state unless adequate parking is provided the club may not be able to continue.

### **Restrictive covenant**

The site was conveyed to the Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 1924 with a restrictive covenant confining use to a public recreation ground or for purposes incidental there to. The conveyance includes the adjoining public car park. Legal advice has been sought relating to the impact of the covenant. It is legal's view that the current use as a car park is not in breach of the covenant. The car park is incidental to / associated with the public use of Bancroft Recreation Ground. Accessible parking encourages the public to visit. If a portion of the car park was reserved exclusively for use by a private club this could constitute a breach of the covenant as it would not be equitable for all users.

Therefore any alterations to the current car parking provision must be equally available for all users of the Recreation Ground.

### **Public Car Park**

The adjacent long stay public car park contains 125 car parking spaces including 3 disabled bays. As evidenced by the Parks & Countryside Developments Managers experience of regular visits to the site during Monday – Friday the majority of the time there are a number of vacant parking bays and this surplus capacity could be used for users of the Recreation Ground. During the 2016 bowls season Parking Services have been asked to conduct visitor counts to further identify availability of parking spaces including weekends.

Current charges are:

Time	Charge
Up to 1 hr	£1.00
Up to 2 hrs	£2.00
Up to 3 hrs	£2.50
Over 3 hrs	£4.50
After 18.00	Free
Sundays	Free

In 2014/15 £109,695 was received in income from this car park. This relates to an average annual income of £877.56 per parking space.

### **Options for car parking**

Two options for car parking have been considered that would not constitute a breach of the restrictive covenant which confines use of the land to a public recreation ground or for purposes incidental there to.

### **Provide no alternative parking provision.**

Both the lease for the bowls club and the tennis club expressly state that only pedestrian access to the site is permitted. There is no provision for parking or vehicular access to the site. Like other facilities in the town users are expected to make their own arrangements for parking. Often there are spare parking spaces in the adjoining car park which could be used and paid for by users of the Recreation Ground.

### **Pros**

Would be consistent with other town centre facilities where users have to pay car parking fees to use facilities in the town. There is free parking available after 18.00 Mon – Sat and free parking all day on Sundays.

### **Cons**

Other Council owned bowling greens have some limited free parking for users. The Hitchin bowls club state that if free parking is not provided it will detract users of the green and there is a risk that the club will cease to exist. There may be the occasional time when at peak periods the car park is full and no spaces available for users of the Bowls or Tennis club.

**Option B. investigate amendments to the existing TRO making available for purchase parking passes for limited periods of use and will be stated on the permit and charged accordingly.**

Currently NHDC make available season tickets at the following rates.

Season Ticket	Price from 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2015
1 Month	£74.00
3 months	£183.00
6 months	£340.00
12 months	£629.00

The season ticket provides unlimited parking at long stay car parks.

The Bowls club do not require unlimited parking but do require parking at specific times when matches are being played.

Consideration could be given to a change in the Road Traffic Order (TRO) to allow new season tickets to be issued that limit the times of use. E.g. if matches are played on Saturday and Wednesday afternoons between May & September a pass could be issued specifically for these times and charged for on a pro-rata basis.

The cost of these new permits will have to be agreed but as a guide, if a 12 month pass was used 6 days a week it costs approximately £2.00 per day for car parking. Therefore the cost of parking for one afternoon would be £1.00.

#### **Pros**

When spaces are available this would provide parking for users of the bowls club. Having a charge for season tickets could encourage car sharing.

#### **Cons**

There may be the occasional time when at peak periods the car park was full and no spaces available for users of the Bowls club.

Legal advise is that providing the season tickets are paid for and available for all users this would not be a breach of the covenant.

#### **Officers Recommendation for Car Parking**

Officers would recommend option B. To investigate amendments to the existing TRO making available for purchase parking passes for limited periods of use and will be stated on the permit and charged accordingly.

If this option is adopted officers will approach the clubs to determine their requirements and set a charge according to the anticipated level of use.