

## **Parking Charges 2021/22**

Dear Hitchin Committee Colleagues:

**Action Required: For discussion and decision at Hitchin Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.  
Any comments or recommendations to be reported to NHDC  
Cabinet on March 16<sup>th</sup> 2021.**

**Detail:**

Please see email from Louise Symes appended below and Appendix 1 (attached separately) with proposed parking charges for 2021/22.

We are asked to provide comments from the Committee on the proposed charges. We can also take a view on implementation date of the charges.

Thanks.

Ian Albert  
Chair, NHDC Hitchin Committee

## **Email from Louise Symes:**

You may recall that we consulted you this time last year with respect to our proposed tariff increases for 2020/21. This was in accordance with the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFS) and agreeing to increase the parking tariffs by 2% in accordance with inflation. While these tariff increases along with a 4% increase in Season Tickets were agreed by Cabinet in March 2020, these increases were not implemented, due to the Coronavirus.

In accordance with the MTFS we are currently working towards proposals for 2021/2022, which are implementing last year's rise and a proposed further inflationary tariff of 2% which results in an additional £38,300. However, we are currently leaving the 1 hour tariff as it is, the proposed tariff increases for 2021/22 have been calculated against the agreed 2020/21 tariff increases taking the 2019/20 income as our baseline ticket sales given the unpredictable income figures during this financial year associated with the pandemic. These proposed tariff increases relate to an average increase of 2.2% compared to the 2020/21 projected income and an average increase of 4.6% compared to 2019/20 income figures. This is because not all tariffs are proposed to be increased as can be seen below and in the attached spreadsheet at Appendix 1.

**For background** in order to achieve the overall inflationary budget estimate of £37,500 for 2020/21, the Cabinet agreed the following in March 2020:

- (i) To apply an increase to the 2 hour tariff band and rounding this up to the nearest 10p in all car parks across the four towns and Knebworth; and
- (ii) To apply an increase to the after 3:00pm tariff in all Hitchin Car Parks rounded up to the nearest 10p, except the Lairage Multistorey Car Park. It was agreed to make this increase a flat rate, with the exception of Bancroft which will retain the 1 hour tariff and proposes an increase of the 2 to 3 hour tariff after 3pm to accord with the other car parks in Hitchin. It was also agreed to retain the 2019/20 after 3pm tariffs in the Lairage MSCP to encourage continued usage of this car park.
- (iii) To apply an increase to the 3 hour tariff band at the Twitchell Car park in Baldock and rounding this up to the nearest 10p given this is along stay car park; and
- (iv) To apply a 4% increase to the cost of season tickets across all the Council's long stay car parks and to the cost of business permits in the car park at Knebworth.
- (v) It was also agreed at the request of Knebworth Parish Council to consider subsidised free parking for up to an hour in St. Martin's Road Car Park in Knebworth. This is similar to the subsidised full 'free after 3pm' policy in Royston.

All these agreed tariffs are shown in Appendix 1 for 2020/21.

Due to the Pandemic and the uncertainty of the first lockdown these tariffs were not introduced.

**In order to achieve the £38,300 inflationary budget for 2021/22 and based on 2019/20 usage figures we are proposing to:**

- Achieve most of the inflationary target through applying a 3.5% increase rounded to the nearest 5p across all tariff bands based on the 2020/21 tariff increases except for the 1 hour tariff. This will be applied across all car parks in our four towns and Knebworth;
- Retain the one hour tariff bands across all car parks in all four towns and Knebworth, which will remain at the 2019/20 prices;
- Retain the off-peak incentives after 3pm in Hitchin and Royston, where the after 3pm tariff bands in the Hitchin Car parks from the 2020/21 price increases will remain unchanged, and the subsidised full 'free after 3pm' policy in all Royston car parks will be retained.
- Apply a further 2% increase to the cost of season tickets over the agreed 2020/21 prices, this would equate to a £5 increase on a 1 month Season Ticket and a £33 increase on a 12 month Season ticket over the current 2019/20 prices.

These proposals would be applied to all NHDC car parks in Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston and Knebworth and are shown in the attached spreadsheet at Appendix 1.

These proposals would be in accordance with the Council's policy in terms of:

- Supporting the economic vitality of the town centres by retaining the original 2018/19 1 hour charge across the District;
- Adopting a consistent approach across all car parks within each town whilst respecting their separate identities; and
- Seeking to protect the economic vitality of the town centres, particularly as the lockdown eases and town centres start to recover, with a proposed increase to the nearest 5p as having a minimal impact as possible across all car parks. Returning to a 5p payment option is considered possible with the contactless payment option now available across the majority of the Council Car Parks. Currently our contactless technology accounts for 50% of payment methods in our car parks. The parking machines will also accept 5p coins for cash payments.

Your views Tom representing the Hitchin BID and Cllr Albert as chair of the Hitchin Committee on these proposals or any other suggestions would be welcomed.

Your views by 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 would be helpful so we can include your comments in our report to Cabinet, otherwise we will welcome your views by 12 March at the latest where we will verbally report your views to Cabinet at its meeting on 16 March.