

## **2023/24 Proposed Parking Tariff Changes – Summary of Key Stakeholder Comments:**

The Following Key Stakeholders/Organisations were consulted between 22 June and 1 August 2023:

- Southern Rural Area Forum
- Hitchin Area Forum
- Letchworth Area Forum
- Royston and district Area Forum
- Baldock & District Area Forum
- Hitchin BID
- Letchworth BID
- RoystonFirst BID
- Royston Town Council
- Knebworth Parish Council

### **Southern Rural Area Forum 22 June 2023 – Notes from Meeting**

- Don't move entirely to pay by phone
- Hitchin flat rate after 3pm should not cost more than 1 hour rate
- Knebworth PC wish to pay for first half hour and are extremely frustrated at lack of progress on this
- Include data on car park usage in MIS

### **Hitchin Area Forum 4 July 2023 – Notes from Meeting**

- Cllr Ian Albert – Proposed the idea of freezing prices post 3pm. Rather than put prices up. This would apply to all car parks across North Herts.
- Cllr Val Bryant – Spoke about how notorious Hitchin car parking is. That car parks across the town were varied and it is not always easy to pay. One example given was that a user was given too short a window to be able to purchase the parking ticket. A fine was given because they weren't quick enough when trying to purchase their ticket.
- Cllr Ian Albert – Also proposed that season tickets should not increase. This would apply to all car parks across North Herts.
- Cllr Keith Hoskins - When would this all be proposed to start? (Answer - November 2023). Cllr Keith Hoskins also said that there needs to be easier ways for people to pay. A tap in, tap out scheme works well in other areas.
- Cllr Nigel Mason – Would increase parking fees by 10p make a huge difference? What would be the impact?

### **Letchworth Area Forum 5 July 2023 – Notes from Meeting**

- DL: I have a business in the town centre – this narrows the gap between the 1- and 2-hour parking which could encourage to dwell in the town centre.

- Cllr Mantle – NHC is looking at alternative systems for ANPR and Pay on exit. Private companies can look up numberplates, but local authorities can't
- Cllr Levett: Letchworth is unique within the district with 3 free hours at Morrisons Not in favour of increase in charges at this time of recession we should freeze the charges.
- Cllr Plater: everyone is affected by inflation – councils need to be able to raise funds for services.
- Toby Franklin: put the charges up more apart from blue badge holders to stop people driving into the Town Centre improved impact on the environment. Increase the charges by 50p
- TP balance between people being able to park and public transport. Comments will go back to Cabinet. NHC Councillor can lobby HCC re bus services.
- Joan: complained that she can't access online services, such as paying by phone, looking up bus timetables, other services. (Digital exclusion)
- IM people will still be able to pay by cash for parking.

### **Royston & District Area Forum – 14 July 2023 – Notes from Meeting**

- Rural residents won't be able to cycle into the centre of Royston
- Price rises/eliminating free parking/losing spaces makes it harder for residents.
- Concerns about the area that the planters are currently blocking.
- What about people who are unable to get disabled badges and have issues walking from the nearest car park?
- Issues with car parking machines taking 50ps
- Interest in more on information about Sustainable Transport Town

### **Baldock Area Forum – 17 July 2023 – Notes from Meeting**

- There were no comments from the members or public on the proposals.
- It only effects one car park in Baldock and the members seemed to think the increase of 5p was fine.

### **RoystonFirst BID – 1 Aug 2023**

- Feedback from our board of directors.
  - “We are pleased to see the free after 3pm parking continue as this is critical to supporting our town centre businesses”
- No further comments received.

### **Royston Town Council – 31 July 2023**

The Council met on 31 July where they discussed the proposals and agreed to respond as follows:

- Royston Town Council opposes the 10p increase to the one hour tariff band in

Royston. It is concerned about the effect on town centre businesses and the owners and workers who have no choice but to come by car, especially from the villages.

### **Separate Comments From County Cllr Fiona Hill – 4 Sept 2023**

I would like to fully endorse the objection by Royston Town Council, in respect of another proposal to increase car parking charges in Royston. This will have a detrimental impact on businesses in the town centre plus owners, workers and residents that have no choice but to travel by car, especially those that live in the surrounding villages. Any increase also adds a further burden to residents currently struggling. I strongly object to any increases in parking, which I do not feel are appropriate, at this very difficult time, in the current climate of hardship for many residents.

### **Letchworth BID -1 August 2023**

The BID Manger circulated the proposal for comment to all the businesses in the Letchworth BID where mixed views were received:

- A couple of businesses basically said that 10p was not a great deal of money and they didn't mind the increase.
- More asked why we are considering an increase when business is not exactly fantastic right now.
- A few suggested that we consider a different way of doing this with times when parking is free to drive up business in the town. It is believed that the outdoor pool car park in Letchworth does this already. Also note that the swimming pool car park in Hitchin people get the fee back with the entry ticket.
- Are there any plans to consider other options for parking. We could use the umbrella of the Town Centre Recovery plan to do so, if you think fit.

### **Knebworth Parish Council – 25 July 2023**

- The Council notes the rationale for the proposed tariffs for 2023/24 are to support the economic viability of the town centres, by encouraging people to stay longer by increasing the one hour tariff band by a nominal 10p and to adopt a consistent approach across all car parks and harmonize tariffs.
- However, the four towns of Hitchin Letchworth, Baldock and Royston not only have larger retail centres but also have more car parks. Knebworth has a very small retail centre in comparison, therefore aligning the charges for St Martins Road Car Park with the four town car parks would appear unfair.
- The one hour charge at £0.70 for Knebworth is not the lowest across the district as two car parks in Hitchin are free for two hours. The two hour rate at £1.50 for Knebworth is more than double the one hour rate, which does not seem logical. It is also more than the Baldock charge for three hours at £1.30.
- NHC has suggested that the one hour and two hour rates should be closer in value to encourage shoppers to stay longer.

- Royston Civic centre's proposed rates have a £0.10 difference between one and two hours, one hour - £0.80, two hours - £0.90. Knebworth would benefit from a similar differential, which would reduce the two hour charge to £0.80.
- Finally I can confirm that Knebworth Parish Council would support 30 minutes free parking in St Martins Road Car Park and is prepared to contribute circa £2,700 towards the annual cost of the provision. It will also contribute £300 to amending the TRO. Please would you confirm the next steps and timescales to introduce this as the Parish Council confirmed its willingness to support this in 2018.