

Chepstow Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
Special Consultation Meeting with MCC re Car Park Management
6th January 2011
6.00pm at The Beaufort Hotel, Chepstow

Melanie welcomed Kellie Beirne and Roger Hoggins from MCC and all those who had come along to the meeting; over forty people attended plus a representative from Monmouth and Caldicot towns. She explained that at previous Chamber meetings concerns had been raised about the present car park arrangements in Chepstow and she had arranged for Kellie to attend a January meeting with the Chamber to discuss these concerns. Subsequent to this arrangement, a consultation document had been made available by MCC regarding the management of car parks in the whole of Monmouthshire.

Melanie asked that Kellie and Roger outline their recommended proposals to the meeting. Kellie informed the meeting that MCC commissioned a study to form a public car park management strategy, to help manage parking demand and address some of the off street parking issues raised by the 2008 Parking Strategy Scoping Study and take the opportunity to manage parking demand more effectively. She explained that the aim of this review was to ensure that the management of car parks was fit for purpose at this challenging time. She assured the meeting that at present the recommendations were only proposals. Roger explained that before going to Cabinet for a decision, a select committee was entering into consultation with interested parties. This meeting was part of this exercise. There had been a reducing income from car parks over the past few years and this needed to be redressed.

Melanie circulated a document giving the present car park charges, MCC recommended new charges and the Chamber suggested future charges (attached). She then asked for comments and suggestions to these proposals.

The comments were:

1. Commuter Parking

- a. Chepstow was in unique position compared with other towns in Monmouthshire as many residents commuted to Bristol/Cardiff and with fuel costs and or increased bridge charges more commuters were using the car parks and car sharing to Bristol.
- b. The present free parking by the station was filled up by train commuters early in the day. There were concerns raised by businesses that had chosen to relocate their Head Offices to Chepstow because of good parking and commuting connections that any increase in cost of parking to their staff might make them consider moving their businesses elsewhere.
- c. A suggestion was put forward that an out of town car park should be made available for those wishing to commute and car share thereby making more space in central car parks for shoppers.

2. Retail Businesses

- a. Retailers appreciated the free parking allowed by MCC on the three Saturdays before Christmas. This had had a significant beneficial impact on trade on these days.

- b. Retail businesses were struggling in the present economic climate and it was asked that MCC consider free parking for a period of 2 hours to encourage shoppers into town. It was feared that the town would die without the attraction of a free parking period.
- c. It was felt that an unfair advantage was given to retailers in some Monmouthshire towns that had free parking all day at MCC car parks. Furthermore, it was observed that Monmouth had considerably more short-term-on-street parking outside the shops than Chepstow. Roger explained that the free car parks were an historical situation and that the council was seeking to rectify with this review.
- d. Revenue from car parks was declining but retail revenue was also decreasing, by putting up charges both sets of revenue would decline further.
- e. It was apparent from the comments expressed that retail outlets needed MCC help to encourage shoppers into the town. A suggestion was made that MCC gave free parking on Saturdays through February so data could be gathered to demonstrate if this increased trade in Chepstow (Free for February). MCC felt that it was too short a notice to organise this but would discuss this further for perhaps another month later in the year.
- f. A suggestion was also made that perhaps parking ticket could be validated in store when purchases were made and parkers recompensed in some way. This would be a system investigated by MCC for feasibility.
- g. Charging until 6.00pm would be a deterrent to workers who visit shops after work. This charge would encourage more of them to park and shop in Tesco, thereby taking more trade from central Chepstow
- h. Tesco has a valid reason for not charging for 3hrs. Pay and display in public car parks only helps their business.

3. Sunday Parking

- a. Many of the cars parked on Sunday mornings were from people who had been celebrating on Saturday night and had left their cars in the car park rather than drink and drive. There were fears that having a charge on Sundays might tempt people to drive home on Saturday rather than leave their car in the car park until Sunday afternoon. Sunday charging would be a disincentive to shopper and retailers who open on Sundays.

4. Season Tickets

- a. The reduction of the season ticket per vehicle was welcomed, however it was felt that this should be per family, transferable to other family cars. Some businesses wanted one ticket that could be handed round the office ie for job share or to cover staff who come in for holiday cover

5. Blue Badge Holders

- a. Roger asked what the meeting's views were on proposals to introduce charging for Blue badge holders. This contentious item the Chamber was unaware of and would require further consideration.

6. Revenue from Car Parks

- a. Businesses wanted to know if revenue from Chepstow was re invested in Chepstow. This was not the case.

7. Monmouth Chamber

- a. David Cummings of MDCTC informed the meeting that MCC were charged £70 per year for every parking space and that business rates went straight to the Welsh Assembly not to MCC.
- b. In Monmouth, businesses were reporting that the lack of free parking was affecting the ability of businesses to recruit staff.

- c. He asked that more up to date details of income from the car parks (both short and long term) be supplied for analysis.

Businesses thanked MCC for the excellent effort in keeping the roads clear in Chepstow over the snowy weather

It was agreed to arrange for a working party as soon as possible, as the time scale was short, to work along with MCC. Revenues should put on the table as with Transparency comes Trust. The suggestions and comments should be considered carefully and a joint agreement should be sought.

Melanie thanked everyone who attended the meeting and for the numerous constructive ideas that had come forward. She would keep everyone informed of the progress.

Meeting closed 19.30.

Chepstow Chamber of Commerce revision to Car Park charges

It has become apparent over the last few months that Chepstow businesses have become concerned about the charging structure of the Car Parks in Chepstow. Retailers felt that they were at an unfair disadvantage with adjacent towns, shopping malls and retail parks offering free parking. It is felt that appropriate charges would encourage short term visitors such as shoppers into the town, thus maintaining the economic vitality and wellbeing of Chepstow.

At a recent meeting and after consultation with members, retailers and businesses; the Chamber considered several options.

Option 1 No change to present charging structure in Chepstow

Option 2 Accept MCC proposals. It was considered that the suggested charging structure would discourage shoppers more than the existing structure.

Option 3 Chamber suggested Charging Structure. To encourage shoppers into the town it was considered that a low charge for the first 2 hrs. would be appropriate, increasing the longer stay charges accordingly. However the proposed adoption by MCC of a lower rate for season ticket holders in long stay car parks was considered to be of possible advantage to workers in Chepstow particularly if they could be purchased quarterly or via the internet.

Car Park Type / Name	Existing Charging Structure	MCC New Charging Structure	CCC&T suggested Charging Structure
Short Stay Car Parks Nelson St Car Park	2 hrs = 80p 3 hrs = £1.30 4hrs = £1.80 (overstays in short stay are allowed for first hr and cost £2)	1hr =70p 2hr = £1.00 3hr = £1.40 4hr = £1.80 24hr = £4.00	2hr = 50p 3hr = £1.50
Long Stay Car Parks Welsh Street Car Park Castle Car Park	2 hrs = 80p 3 hrs = £1.30 4hrs = £1.80 (overstays in short stay are allowed for first hr and cost £2) (Welsh St Car Park free ½ hr parking in designated area)	2hr = £1.00 3hr = £1.30 4hr = £1.80 24hr = £3.00 Overstay Charge £5.00	2hr = 50p 3hr = £1.50 4hr = £2.00 24hrs = £4.00 Overstay Charge £5.00
'All day' Car Parks Drill Hall & Station Car Parks	(Drill Hall as above) Station Car Park Free	24hr = £1.00	24hr = £1.00
Season Ticket Holders		Long Stay Car Parks only = £250 Both Short stay + Long stay Car Parks = £400	Long Stay Car Parks only = £250 Both Short stay + Long stay Car Parks = £400

If you have any further suggestions please email Nikki Colley-Priest
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