



1 GENERAL COMMENTS

We will be making comments on individual car parks below but there are some general issues that cause concern.

- a. We feel the attempt to corral towns into inflexible bandings, while it may be more administratively convenient, does not reflect the actual situation that all towns are different – and within each town, particularly in Newquay, many car parks just do not match any standard pattern. The Harbour car park is very different to Pentire Headland and yet both are allocated at Zone A, an allocation which is unsuitable for both of them.
- b. We have concerns generally at the use of multi-use tickets that are only accessible by smart phone – indeed at some parks the only means of paying a charge is by phone. A particular problem in Newquay where some car parks have little or no service and, in the summer season, where excessive use by visitors makes reception unreliable or non-existent across the Town. We feel this is discriminatory for the less able and the vulnerable. Car parking should always remain affordable for vulnerable local residents who may always be unable to reliably travel safely by public transport.
- c. We do welcome the reduction in cost of weekly tickets, still expensive at £5 a day for the working week but this will be welcomed by our accommodation providers. While there is a slight decrease in the 6 month season ticket on the non-central car parks, workers coming into town for the three month high season will not appreciate the 17% increase. The higher rates suggested for the coastal car parks are laughable with weekly tickets costing less than any of the available offers.

2 THE HARBOUR CAR PARK

We do not speak for the Harbour but it would appear that imposing the Zone A charging structure cuts across the operational needs of the Harbour users. For example, they have an unusual charging period of 3 to 5 hours. That is to allow for the 4-hour boat trips plus arrival/departure/looking around time. Can we have an assurance that discussions have taken place with the Newquay Harbour Master, the Harbour users etc.

3 THE TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS (The Manor, Mount Wise, St George's, Tregunnel)

a. The Newquay Economy

- In the proposals, there does not seem to be an appreciation of Newquay's demographic and the effect of seasonal changes. Supermarkets on the outskirts of the town or with their own parking, pull people away from using the town centre for their shopping needs because these offer free parking and retail opportunity under one roof. We ask Cornwall Council to ensure that when visitors leave, the town centre businesses are protected by making sure it is still a feasible option for the local population to use. Car Parking charges are fundamental to achieving this. We are disappointed that the proposed charges, with the exception of Tregunnel, significantly fail to recognise the changes in use both from season to season and for different periods of the day.
- Whilst in the summer it can be argued that the car parks will be at capacity, irrespective of the charges, due to the number of visitors but this is for an eight to ten week period maximum and only up to mid-afternoon. And even high season charges eventually must hit a price ceiling where further increases will be counterproductive. The effect on usage of these increases on usage must be carefully monitored even in peak season.
- In the off periods (late afternoon) and the off season (September to May) the town centre is wholly reliant on the local population for its survival. And we know from past experience that with prices at the proposed level, footfall will drop due to our local residents finding the town too expensive to park, either for basic shopping and service needs or to enjoy the hospitality offers. We understand that even with proper winter charging and the 4pm free period that Newquay is achieving its highest ever summer contribution to car park income

b. Late Afternoon Parking

- It is grossly unfair and unjust that to the residents of Newquay and the other resort towns, that they alone in the Duchy be charged for visiting their own town after 4pm when there is little other demand for parking. And not only unfair but disastrous for businesses that depend upon the local trade to keep them going in these difficult times.
- The post 4pm free parking period was introduced in 2019 mainly to support town centre businesses by increasing the quieter late afternoon/evening footfall – with the secondary aim of allowing residents to visit their own town without contributing to their cost of living crisis. And it achieved this while overall increasing the car park income generated by Newquay car parks.
- The GDP and personal income levels are not higher in Newquay than elsewhere, indeed the town includes areas of high deprivation. We strongly urge Cornwall Council to rethink this discriminatory policy that penalises both the residents of Newquay and its locality and its businesses.

c. Winter Charging

- Newquay and its beaches provides the third highest level of car park income for Cornwall Council close to that of St Ives but it is notable that there is a huge drop in car park income in winter months, far below that of other market towns. When winter charges were formerly at the level currently proposed, footfall was measured as low as 170 in the winter months.
- We make no apology for raising precisely the same arguments that we made for the introduction of proper Winter Charging in 2012/3 when we set a £1 a visit rate for St George's Road and Mount Wise car parks (and made other unused car parks free). Despite the dire projections of the parking service, usage was increased five-fold and income was maintained and even increased. We have the figures if the Council no longer retains them.
- Now it is proposed to increase the daily charge by over 66% for two hours, by 400% for a day in those car parks, even via a multiuse ticket. We cannot emphasise enough that the town is financially sensitive to these proposed charges. "Turning off the tap" as described by one of our white goods retailers when winter charging swapped to summer. Did the recent apparently minor increase of 20p to the £1 charge (a 20% increase) result in a 20% increase in income? – or did the usage decrease?

- Clearly there will be some residents who will seek out already congested streets for on-street parking thus making that congestion worse and increasing air pollution. But the major threat is that more independent businesses close over the winter and the resultant costs of managing vacant town centres will be carried by Cornwall Council and other public bodies
- It is to be hoped that Cornwall Council will monitor the effect of these proposals if they are implemented against our advice and will take corrective action at the likely outcome at the earliest opportunity.

4 OUTLYING CAR PARKS

It seems an odd solution to reduce charges in the season and then charge in the winter but that is the inevitable problem when a rigid system like this one is grafted on car parks for which it is not suitable. There is a reason that our outlying car parks have traditionally not charged in the winter; it was felt the trickle of income generated was not worth the cost of collection and damaging the good will of our residents. It will be worth reviewing the results to charge all these car parks at B/C after a year of operation

5 THE HEADLANDS (Pentire, Towan, Dane Road)

- a. We note an alternative approach is to be used for Towan Headland but the same arguments will apply as those for Pentire Headland.
- b. It is outrageous and ludicrous that Pentire Headland has been isolated out for A zone rates. What on earth is the logic here? When other headland sites remain at B or C?
- c. There is no way that this carpark meets any of the criteria for an A zone town carpark – the public transport service is minimal with an infrequent, inconvenient and time consuming route. It is not so much the day charge that is objectionable – though a 30% increase is unlikely to generate 30% more income – but the post 4pm charge is clearly aimed directly at residents who use this much-loved area for dog walking, fishing or just to watch the sunsets.
- d. This headland is not a target for tourists as is, say, Tintagel– but we note Tintagel Visitor Centre with far higher usage rates are Zone C rate summer and winter. We strongly urge that this rating is reviewed and a fair and reasonable rate reinstated.

6 NEWQUAY BEACHES

a. Porth Beach

We note that most, if not all, beaches across the Duchy have been allocated as Zone A parks but it is clear that Porth Beach does not remotely meet the stated criteria for an A rate car park. Not least there is no public transport and an unreliable signal for Just Park. Closed since mid-summer, this is a car park affected by the elements, it is extremely unlikely to be open during winter (so why the B rates?) and indeed we understand its future is in question. If the park is to continue in the ownership of Cornwall Council, then we propose that it should be B for the season (and closed for the winter).

b. Watergate Beach

In principle, we have no problem with introducing charging in the winter at this car park – but we doubt the financial wisdom of making the summer charging higher than the better positioned and better maintained car park between it and the coast. A B/C rate (or even B/B) could provide better income.

7 BALANCING OF CHARGES

As discussed above, there are certain car parks which we believe have been misbanded, specifically Pentire Headland, Porth Beach and Watergate. We believe there is a good case all of these should be reduced from the A/B summer/winter rates. Should our arguments fail to convince, then we put forward the following solution.

- reduce the grading of Pentire Headland and Porth Beach to B/C (though a zero charge would be better in winter); as should similarly be adopted for Towan Headland.
- increase the summer grading of Tregunnel Car Park to Zone A while remaining at C for the winter months,

Tregunnel, acts as the overflow car park for the central town car parks, mainly for the summer school holidays and was the 4th highest income generator in Newquay. With the recent removal of 120 spaces, it is clear that the 289 remaining spaces will be at a premium and their use will more than compensate for a lower rate for the 230 spaces of Pentire Headland and Porth combined. None of the three car parks are much used out of season.

8 SUMMARY

Our Town Plan has the vision that the future will see reduced car traffic through our town, and more use of public transport, walking, and cycling. But unless and until bus and train frequency, reliability (and for that matter, staffing), and hence timetable accuracy displayed and published improve, and prices decrease further, we cannot support increase in car parking charges for our local residents, in winter in particular, and especially not in a cost of living crisis. Not only affecting our residents, these proposals could cripple the independent local economy of our Town Centre.