

Mr N Sim-Duff Statement for Petition

The 3 tier carpark policy is unfair, unreasonable and no longer fit for purpose. It discriminates against all the beach towns, but especially Weymouth and is impacting badly on residents, businesses and tourists.

Firstly, it is unfair because the main carparks in beach towns are treble the prices of other towns in Dorset.

Secondly, it is unreasonable that prices have gone up 50% in a year in Weymouth whilst remaining the same in tier 2 towns. The period of high prices lasts nearly 30 weeks yet tourists mainly visit for just 6-8 of those weeks.

Thirdly, the whole system is flawed. The pricing structure actively discourages people from spending time in Weymouth because the cost of spending 4 hrs is £7.50 and 5 hours or more is a brutal £15 in your. Think about it, someone meeting a friend to shop and have lunch in Weymouth on a Saturday will each have to pay £15. Its totally unacceptable and understandably, people are staying away and the Council gets nothing! The 2 hr permit is a quick hit and run exercise and is not suitable for most people going about their daily business and should be scrapped.

Free parking after 6pm is also no longer relevant. The day time economy of shops and cafe's in Dorset is subsidising the lucrative nighttime economy of bars and restaurants. It is time to end this practice as well.

In weymouth, the high parking charges have caused anger and frustration amongst residents, businesses and visitors. I have personally presented a petition of over 6000 names from these groups to clearly demonstrate the strength of feeling on this issue. You may have reject hundreds of names from visitors, but they are vital to our prosperity and their voice should be heard. The reputational damage to this Council and the tourist industry will not recover unless changes are made fast.

The petition simply asks for a fair deal for Weymouth and other beach towns. Simply put, carpark rates in other towns need to rise slightly and those in the

main car parks in beach towns should be reduced to the same level. This will create a fair, reasonable and equitable system across the whole county.

I respectfully suggest that £1 an hour across all car parks, running from 8am to 9pm would create more revenue for the Council across a longer period with more footfall in Weymouth and more disposable income for users. Surely it is better to have 3 cars paying £1/hr than one grumpy car owner paying £3/hr.

I believe Dorset towns can and should accept a small rise in their parking to benefit the whole community of residents, businesses and our visitors across the whole county.