Statement from Portland Ward Councillors

Dorset Council Parking Review - Proposed Changes to Portland Car Parks

As Portland Councillors, we welcome Dorset Council's commitment to a more localised approach to parking policy and its recognition that individual car parks serve different purposes within their communities. We therefore ask that the Council carefully considers the specific circumstances of Portland before introducing parking charges at any currently free car park.

Many of Portland's car parks do not function primarily as visitor or tourist facilities. Instead, they provide essential parking for residents, local workers and businesses in areas characterised by narrow roads, terraced housing and limited off-street parking provision. Introducing charges at these locations would be unlikely to achieve the stated objectives of reducing congestion or improving parking turnover and could instead create significant parking displacement into surrounding residential streets.

Masonic Car Park

Masonic Car Park is a large facility but its location means that it experiences relatively low levels of demand compared with other town centre and visitor car parks across Dorset.

Importantly, this site was previously operated as a charged car park. Charging infrastructure was subsequently removed because revenue generated from the site was insufficient to justify its continued operation. This historic experience demonstrates the limited demand for paid parking at this location.

Reintroducing charges would therefore risk repeating a model that has already proven unsuccessful, while potentially reducing use of an otherwise valuable parking asset.

Lord Clyde Car Park

Lord Clyde Car Park is a small facility situated close to Masonic Car Park and is relied upon by nearby businesses, employees and residents.

The site would benefit from improvement and investment, including general maintenance and environmental enhancements. Councillors believe that improving the quality and appearance of the site should take priority over introducing parking charges.

Any charging regime is likely to displace vehicles into nearby residential streets and could have a disproportionate impact on local businesses and workers who depend upon the facility.

Hambro Car Park

Hambro Car Park serves primarily as a residential parking resource.

The surrounding area consists largely of terraced housing with limited private parking availability and narrow streets that are already under significant parking pressure. Consequently, the car park is used predominantly by residents rather than shoppers or visitors.

Introducing charges would place an additional financial burden on local households while doing little to influence visitor parking behaviour or improve turnover of spaces.

Fortuneswell Car Park

Fortuneswell Car Park performs a similar role and is principally used by residents rather than tourists or short-stay visitors.

The surrounding housing stock generates significant residential parking demand because many properties do not benefit from off-street parking. The importance of this facility is further highlighted by ongoing housing development in the immediate area.

Any proposal to introduce charges should be preceded by a full assessment of the impact that new residential development will have on parking demand. Dorset Council should also consider the availability of alternative parking provision for any vehicles displaced by future policy changes.

Wider Portland Considerations

Portland faces unique parking challenges that differ significantly from many locations elsewhere in Dorset. Historic housing patterns, constrained road layouts and limited opportunities for off-street parking mean that public car parks frequently perform an essential residential function.

The four car parks identified above are not comparable to high-demand visitor destinations or principal town centre car parks. They provide important support to local communities and help prevent additional on-street parking pressures in already constrained residential areas.

As Portland Councillors, we are concerned that introducing charges at these locations would:

- Increase pressure on surrounding residential streets.
- Transfer costs directly to residents who have limited alternative parking options.
- Impact local workers and businesses.
- Displace vehicles rather than resolve parking challenges.
- Reduce utilisation of off-street parking assets that currently help alleviate pressure on the highway network.

Conclusion

We therefore urge Dorset Council to retain **Masonic Car Park, Lord Clyde Car Park, Hambro Car Park and Fortuneswell Car Park as free-to-use facilities** and to recognise the important residential and community function they perform.

A one-size-fits-all approach would not reflect the realities of parking on Portland. Decisions should be based on the demonstrated local purpose of each car park, historical usage patterns and the likely impact on residents, businesses and surrounding streets.

This response is submitted jointly by the Dorset Councillors for Portland Ward in order to represent the concerns and experiences of residents, businesses and community organisations across the island.

Portland Councillors would welcome continued engagement with Dorset Council to ensure that any future parking strategy for the island is evidence-based, locally informed and supports the needs of our communities.

Signed

Councillor Rob Hughes
Dorset Councillor for Portland Ward

Councillor Pete Roper
Dorset Councillor for Portland Ward

Councillor Paul Kimber
Dorset Councillor for Portland Ward