



Councillor Mohammed Rafique, Lead Councillor for Climate, Energy & Green Spaces
Mohammed.Rafique@leeds.gov.uk
Polly Cook, Chief Officer, CEG Polly.Cook@leeds.gov.uk

Comments relating to proposed Car Parking charges at Green Flag parks

Whilst the Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum (LP&GSF) has not conducted an opinion survey among its members, the committee has encouraged them to respond to the consultations. The Committee plans to invite members to share their opinions, so that we could help to negotiate compromises where viable.

We are hugely sympathetic to LCC's financial situation and constraints – and we appreciate that the topic of applying charges to car parks has been discussed and resisted for many years.

In discussing it, we've found it difficult to answer 'yes' or 'no' to parking charges when there are many implications either way.

Naturally, LP&GSF encourages residents and visitors to visit and enjoy any of these 'destination' parks, - they are assets to be proud of. While entry to the parks remains free, the introduction of charges to park a car may well have the opposite effect. 'Now and again' visitors may be inclined to pay as part of their day out, with the possible exception of Middleton Park, which is more like a community park. However, we may lose 'Everyday' users such as dog-walkers or parents visiting for a short time with children after school. **Have donations or a 'Pay as you Feel' scheme been considered?**

The Forum supports the Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Strategy, recognising that is concerned with what happens inside the parks, and not covered by this consultation. We also support LCC's Active Travel initiative as part of the Active Leeds/health agenda, and whilst we acknowledge that driving to the parks is inevitable for many people, less maintenance may be needed were there incentives for walkers, cyclists and bus users.

For example, some of the **public footpaths around the Chevin** are in poor condition, not encouraging anyone to walk from the surrounding area. **Where are the bike parks – will cyclists have to pay? Public transport** must be addressed

to continue to attract park users, especially to the Chevin, Temple Newsam and Golden Acre.

It seems there's no measurement currently for the number of cars parked at Green Flag parks,

- **how is the projected income determined?** It would be interesting to know whether 'a modest charge' will actually cover the cost of car park maintenance, and presumably any income will be off-set against costs to install ticket machines, staff to monitor that motorists have paid and enforcement if they haven't. **What is the evidence from the cities cited in the consultation?**

We have a number of concerns – in summary:

- Residents and visitors will be put off visiting – contra to the aspirations of the LP&GS Strategy and the wider Health and Wellbeing aspiration to be the Best City.
- **Volunteers will be lost** if they have to pay, and groups will find it harder to recruit, just at the time more voluntary help is needed, as has been acknowledged by LCC. Groups can't afford to, and shouldn't have to, reimburse volunteers for parking expenses. Some volunteers walk to their park, but many drive as they carry tools, plants, refreshments etc.
- Similarly, this applies to teams and supporters as they gather to play/watch in the park, - bowlers, footballers, cricketers, basketball players, Park-runners, as well as people running play-group, Military Fitness and Forest School sessions.
- The safety of pedestrians and motorists as cars are parked on nearby streets/roads to avoid charges. Double-yellow lines will inevitably be needed, much to the detriment of the aesthetics of the areas, particularly on the countryside roads around the Chevin and Roundhay's conservation area.
- Displacement parking not only in nearby streets, but also cemeteries, woodlands and community parks unable to cope with the extra wear and tear/potential littering, especially with dog-bags/mess. It's likely that this will impact on residents without driveways who will lose access to parking spaces.

Yours sincerely,

Lynda Kitching

Chair, Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum

www.leedsparksforum.org

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