



CAR PARKS

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 67/18

11 JUNE 2018

The purpose of this paper is to provide Members with the background to the Town Council's management of four of the town's eight car parks, a summary of the receipts and payments in 2017/18 for them and to recommend an approach to the Isle of Wight Council to extend the model for local car park management to the other four.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The Town Council first became interested in managing the town's car parks during its preparation in 2012 for the refurbishment of Salisbury Gardens with the obvious significance of control of the Dudley Street car park.
- b) The Localism Act 2011's *Community Right to Challenge* gave community organisations, including Town & Parish Councils, the right to challenge their local authority for the delivery of any of its locally delivered services.
- c) To test the viability of the Town Council taking control of all eight of the town's long stay car parks, a successful funding application to Social Investment Business for £9,020 in November 2012 provided the basis to commission a parking consultant to assess the implications.
- d) Andy Stafford of Parkspace Consulting started work on the project in January 2013 and presented his completed and detailed Report to an informal meeting of Town Councillors on 14 March 2013; it concluded:
After a comprehensive review of the existing car parking facilities, and subsequent discussion with local users, traders and council members we feel that under the "Right to Challenge" process it is more than viable for Ventnor Town Council to propose taking over the operational management of the town's car parks from the Isle of Wight Council.
- e) The Town Council meeting of 18 March 2013 authorised the Clerk to proceed to draft a submission to the Isle of Wight Council under its local Community Right to Challenge scheme; the draft was presented to and approved by the Town Council Meeting of 9 September in Minute 136/13 on the basis of Report 75/13 and was submitted to the Isle of Wight Council on 24 September 2013.
- f) The Town Council learned that the Challenge had been refused in a letter from the Isle of Wight Council dated 13 January 2014, giving as the grounds for the refusal the 10th of the 10 grounds provided by the Localism Act for doing so:
the relevant authority considers that acceptance of the expression of interest is likely to lead to contravention of an enactment or other rule of law or a breach of statutory duty".
- g) The Town Council doubted that those grounds – and the evidence given in support of them – were within either the letter or the spirit of the Localism Act 2011 and its associated Statutory Regulations so, as the Act provided no right of appeal, after further consultation with residents and consideration of the consequences, it was decided to take legal advice from Anthony Collins Solicitors.
- h) Their assessment – supported by a Barrister's Opinion - was that the grounds for refusal were not adequate but that the only route to challenge them was a Judicial Review that inevitably carried the risk of high cost implications for the Town Council and its constituents.
- i) In that situation, the Town Council commissioned a Solicitor's letter to the Isle of Wight Council on 10 April 2014 to which the then Managing Director of the Isle of Wight responded by email the following day directly to Anthony Collins Solicitors informing them that a meeting had been arranged with representatives of the Town Council for the following Tuesday.
- j) Jason Mack and I attended that 15 April 2014 meeting with the Isle of Wight Council's Managing Director Dave Burbage, Deputy Director, Economy and Environment John Metcalfe and Strategic Manager Recreation, Leisure and Public Spaces Alex Minns following discussion of the matter on the Private Agenda for the 14 April meeting of the Town Council (Minute 56/14(b)).

- k) The meeting agreed to express a joint commitment to partnership working through a compromise involving direct Town Council management of four the town's car parks =Dudley Road, Market Street, Pound Lane and Shore Road – on a rental basis reflecting the average income from them over the previous three years and a term coinciding with the length of the Island Roads Contract due to conclude on 31 March 2038.
- l) That agreement was legally reflected in individual leases for each of the four car parks with a start date of 1 August 2015.

2) CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

- a) It was agreed at an early stage that the Isle of Wight Council would retain the enforcement function as they were well equipped to do so and the work would be at least self-financing.
- b) Maintenance of the car parks, including the Pay & Display machines, is the responsibility of Island Roads within the PFI contract.
- c) The annual rent for the four car parks in total is £24,900.
- d) The agreement allows for the Town Council to set the pricing structure for the car parks and to issue its own residents' parking permits for their use provided the Isle of Wight Council's rules of permits only being available on a one-per-household basis for households within 200 metres of the car park for which a permit is issued are complied with.
- e) The permits are issued from the Town Council's office and are provided for either six months at £60 (net of VAT £50) or 12 months at £120 (net of VAT £100).
- f) During 2017 permits were issued as shown in the following table:

DUDLEY ROAD		MARKET STREET		POUND LANE		TOTAL	
6 MONTHS	YEAR	6 MONTHS	YEAR	6 MONTHS	YEAR	6 MONTHS	YEAR
8	21	3	9	11	19	22	49

- g) The Isle of Wight Council also continues to manage the Pay by Phone arrangements and including the income as an offset to the chargeable rent.
- h) There is an excellent working arrangement for dealing with queries or challenges to parking fines with the Isle of Wight Council's Parking Operations Manager Mark Downer.

3) FINANCES 2017/18

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- a) The finances of the Town Council's management of the four car parks during the financial year are as shown in the following table:

CAR PARK	P&D	P&D NET	RENT NET	BALANCE	RATES	PERMITS	BALANCE
POUND LANE	6,144	5,120	3,917	1,203	1,164	1,058	1,097
MARKET ST.	4,838	4,032	4,750	718	744	2,506	1,043
DUDLEY RD.	8,301	6,918	6,417	816	816	2,632	2,317
SHORE RD.	4,395	3,663	5,667	-2004	1,392		-3,396
PAY BY PHONE	2,087	1,739		1,739			1,739
TOTALS	25,767	21,471	20,750	721	4,116	6,196	2,800

- b) The charges for the four car parks were set at the rates before the Isle of Wight Council's increase in 2015 and have remained at that level.
- c) Car parking in all four has been free for both Ventnorville and Ventnor Day and the Shore Road car park has been free for the Bonchurch Village Festival.

4) CAR PARKING & THE TOWN CENTRE

- a) The current consultation on the challenges facing the town's High Street has once again focused discussion on the vital importance of car parking.
- b) There are eight car parks serving the town with the numbers of vehicles that can be accommodated in them as shown in the following table.

CAR PARK	SPACES	CAR PARK	SPACES
DUDLEY ROAD	42	CENTRAL	81
MARKET STREET	31	THE GROVE	62
POUND LANE	25	LA FALAISE	94
SHORE ROAD	90	EASTERN ESPLANADE	71
TOTAL	188	TOTAL	308

- c) The four currently managed by the Town Council include just 38% of the 496 total availability and even that figure is inflated by the almost half of its 188 total consisting of the 90 allocated by the Isle of Wight Council to Shore Road, a facility of negligible relevance to the town's central areas.
- d) Using the statistics supplied by the Isle of Wight Council for Andy Stafford's work the following table shows the total number of vehicles using each car park and the generated tariff income during 2012.

CAR PARK	No.	£	CAR PARK	No.	£
DUDLEY ROAD	4,059	7,786	CENTRAL	34,934	47,130
MARKET STREET	4,349	5,876	THE GROVE	14,074	21,120
POUND LANE	3,230	4,512	LA FALAISE	23,429	45,114
SHORE ROAD	4,064	6,566	EASTERN ESPLANADE	26,814	43,692
TOTAL	15,702	24,740	TOTAL	99,251	157,056

- e) So although the Town Council manages 38% of the total off-street car park spaces, those only represent 16% of both the total vehicle usage of the eight car parks and the income from them.
- f) Yet as both the Parkspace Consulting Report and the Business Analysis by the Town Council's Economic Development Officer based on it and its background data are clear: it is the major car parks that are key to bringing more visitors to the town. [Both documents are available on the Town Council's web site by clicking [here](#).]
- g) Andy Stafford opens the Executive Summary of his Report with the statement: *Taking over control of the town's car parking facilities from the Isle of Wight Council offers Ventnor an excellent opportunity to help stimulate the local, and wider, economy.*
- h) Nick Cox's conclusion in his Business Analysis is that: *the study has found that local Ventnor off-street car parks are an essential and integrated part of the local commercial economy and local hospitality and leisure economies; and their existence, operation and management can greatly influence the success or failure of the overall local economy of Ventnor.*
- i) And it is the highest priority to have emerged from the current consultation on the development of the town centre, at all the meetings and throughout the almost 100 emails.
- j) The Parkspace Consulting Report is still a useful guide to the challenges and opportunities of Town Council management of all the town's car parks, and its key proposals, set out in its Executive Summary (attached to this Report), give a flavour of the options it would open up for the town to attract more visitors and improve the experience of its residents.

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- k) The experience of managing the four car parks since 1 August 2015 is that this model of local control works well for all: the management – and partnership – structures work well, the Isle of Wight Council retains the level in income it has already established and the town council operates them on a break-even basis at no cost to local taxpayers through the Precept.
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5) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to ask its Clerk, assisted by its Economic Development Officer and Assets & Services Working Group, to prepare a Business Case for the Town Council's local management of all the town's car parks for submission to the Isle of Wight Council.



1. Executive Summary

Taking over control of the town's car parking facilities from the Isle of Wight Council offers Ventnor an excellent opportunity to help stimulate the local, and wider, economy in conjunction with the ability to access sustainable funds for community investment outside of the control of the Isle of Wight Council.

However it is essential that all members of Ventnor Town Council and the wider community recognise that taking over the operational and commercial management of the car parks is not as straightforward as would at first appear, particularly in regard of how the car parks will be operated, maintained and managed.

After a comprehensive review of the existing car parking facilities, and subsequent discussion with local users, traders and council members we feel that under the "Right to Challenge" process it is more than viable for Ventnor Town Council to propose taking over the operational management of the town's car parks from the Isle of Wight Council.

The following document outlines the current arrangements for parking within the town and proposes a number of initiatives intended to be of benefit to the town both in terms of bringing local people in to the town centre and developing a sustainable source of income for future projects that will be of benefit for all residents of Ventnor.

Our key proposals, as detailed within this document are as follows:

- The implementation of a VTC run car park operation, managed within Ventnor on behalf of Ventnor residents and visitors
- Introduction of a Ventnor Residents Discount Parking Scheme (to include people working within Ventnor)
- A revised approach to the current car parking tariffs to ensure a fairer approach to short term parking
- The introduction of Peak and Off-Peak Season parking tariffs
- The introduction of a Residents "park for free" day on a Wednesday
- Improved information provision within the car parks including a comprehensive re-signing of all car parks
- A review of all roadside directional signage to improve visitor awareness of car park locations (and access to attractions / facilities)
- Introduction of a Ventnor Resident Parking Permit at a significantly reduced rate compared to the IoWC permit
- Introduction of a Hotel Guest / Tourist discounted parking scheme
- Sustainable revenue generation from parking invested back into the town