

Cllr Mark Wilson
Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services

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9th January 2025

Dear Cllr Wilson

Proposed Parking Charges

I am writing to express Marie Curie's concern regarding the proposed on street parking in Bridgeman Road, Penarth.

From the Car Parking Report being considered by the Council's Cabinet today, it refers to on-street parking charges being introduced for 'sections of Bridgeman Road', although it is difficult to determine from the maps as to the extent that this will apply.

As you may be aware, we have operated a Hospice from Bridgeman Road for over 65 years and provide specialist palliative care to residents of The Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff. This is provided through our 20 bed Inpatient Unit, Outpatient appointments, complementary therapies, bereavement counselling, dementia support groups and wellbeing activities for patients, families and carers.

If parking charges were to be introduced in the vicinity of the Hospice, then this would have a significant detrimental impact on our ability to continue to provide these services as a Charity going forward. The reasons for this are as follows:

- **Staffing** – if staff were faced with the prospect of paying £10 per day to park to be able to work at the Hospice, then this would seriously impact on our ability to recruit and retain staff. Whilst we accept there is no entitlement for staff to have free parking, it is already a very difficult employment market to recruit skilled staff and to add this factor as an additional barrier would mean that staff would look for alternative employment opportunities where they did not have to pay this additional cost. Ultimately if we can't attract staff then we will be unable to safely staff our beds meaning that we will have to reduce bed capacity, resulting in people being

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To find out how we can help or to make a donation, visit mariecurie.org.uk

admitted to hospital as an alternative. If beds are reduced this would also impact on the future viability of the Hospice in the current location.

- **Visitors** – the Hospice only has a small car park of 10 spaces which means that people have to park on street when coming to visit their loved ones who are at end of life. Some visitors may need to spend a number of days visiting their loved ones which would mean having to pay a significant cost at an already very difficult time.
- **Patients** – we offer a number of services such as outpatients, counselling, complementary therapies, dementia support and carers groups. If people have to pay to attend these groups, then they may well decide not to participate which will negatively impact on their health and wellbeing.
- **Volunteers** – to be able to continue to deliver our care and charitable activities we rely on a significant number of volunteers who support the Hospice in relation to volunteering in our Café, Reception, Ward Support, Fundraising, Therapists and Counselling. If they had to pay parking, they are likely to be less inclined to volunteer for Marie Curie or expect us a Charity to cover expenses, which unfortunately we are not in a financial position to be able to do so.

As you can see from above there are some very real challenges which our Hospice would face if parking charges were brought in for Bridgeman Road, and which would make our ongoing ability to operate our services from this site increasingly difficult.

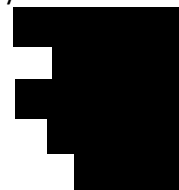
There is no mention of this potential impact in your report, or any mention of an Equality Impact Assessment regarding the implications this decision would have for the care and support of people at end of life. We ask that you would please consider the issues we have raised in order to protect these services for your residents at a time when people deserve the best possible experience at end of life.

Yours sincerely



Associate Director (Wales)

Cc All Cabinet Members.



17.01.2025

Formal Letter Objecting the Proposed Parking Charges on Barry Island

To Whom it may concern

All of us at Barry Island Traders association as well as residents of Barry are deeply saddened and concerned about the proposed parking charges plan for Barry Island. We do not understand how the proposed plan will benefit traders all year round. There are approximately 38 + businesses on Barry Island, who between us employ more than 130 people, not including extra seasonal staff and spend a significant amount within the local economy all year round.

We do not feel a wider assessment has been undertaken of the economical impact of such proposals and feel that assurances of engagement made by the Cabinet when taking over power in 2019 have been broken.

In a statement on the previous parking charges made to Wales Online (dated June 13th 2019), when taking over in power, the Labour led cabinet said the following ' We're going to be open and transparent and be prepared to work with people. If there are issues we will try to work through those issues'.

There are also further messages of intent of engaging with traders to discuss matters. These assurances have not been met.

We as a trader community also have deep concerns on why this was tried to be pushed through within 4 days from cabinet to scrutiny. Either you knew about the new proposals well in advance and failed to tell the local community of Barry Island, going back on assurances made in 2019, or these have been tried to be pushed through within 4 days to limit objections. Officers within the council who I met in 2019 in regards to the previous proposals would've known about the 2019 parking situation and how much of a contentious issue this would've been. By not contacting and raising the issues direct with us, questions the integrity and transparency of these proposals. We have asked on clarification when these were proposed internally, but have yet to receive a response. (email sent 13/01/2025 & 15/01/2025)

With the current proposals, we feel winters will be a struggle and it will have a major impact on the businesses and in turn, lead to job losses and out of season closures. Also, the current proposals do not help locals who want to visit on a daily basis after work/school and a lot of our trade comes from local residents, especially after school and during the winter months. We think you forget that Barry Island serves a lot of the local community within this town. This is not just a tourist destination for Gavin & Stacey fans, or a beach destination when the sun shines, we serve the residents of Barry as a community hub. Also, people living close to Barry Island in a walkable distance will be able to

continue to use Barry Island for free, as it is an easy commute. But if you live on the other side of Barry, local families will not come as much, after school, or during the winter as now they will have to pay. This is a time when families are tightening their spending, due to financial pressures and the cost of living crisis. You will either be adding another cost to local working families, or taking away a freedom. If local people are given a choice between paying to park for a quick coffee, or going to another establishment that has free parking, they will start choosing the free parking option to save on money and visit less. This hasn't been well thought through. Similar to how the proposals in 2019 were not well thought through.

We ask for the plan to be dropped completely, and re-engage with traders to find a solution that works in favour of all parties involved, or at a minimum, we request the following amendments to allow us traders to continue to trade all year round, encourage locals to continue to visit regularly and make Barry Island a success, which surely has to be the end goal of all involved?

- 2 hours of free parking on street all day with this guaranteed for a period of 10 years, upon expiration of the date, a meeting between council representatives and traders to discuss matters. After 2 hours of free parking, this should be charged at a reasonable rate.
- Free to park on street all day, during the winter period. (November 1st to end of February – 4 months)

These are reasonable requests and are the same requests I proposed in 2019. The 2 hours of free parking is essential for our local customer base.

Please remember, it is us traders that stay open in the winter, even when it's quiet to encourage people to come down. If we start closing or reducing our hours, it will turn people away, and in turn reduce hours of our staff who are local Vale residents. If locals have to pay to park, they will just go elsewhere, its literally as simple as that.

We also request the following questions be answered by 12pm Monday 20th January – These questions were also sent over on Monday 13th January & Wednesday 15th January and have yet to be acknowledged or answered.

1. When was it decided internally that parking charges were to be imposed on the streets on Barry Island - could you provide the exact date
2. Why weren't traders notified prior to this, considering the circumstances in the 2019 proposal, assurances were made to traders of engagement.
3. Why was there a rush to push this through in 4 days from cabinet to scrutiny?
4. Do you have any concerns for the local businesses and residents of Barry that don't want this?
5. Do you think it's acceptable to ask residents of Barry to pay to visit Barry island, even though council tax raises year up year, most recently 6.7%
6. A meeting is requested with Barry Island traders before the scrutiny meeting. An email was sent on January 9th and again on Monday 13th. This has yet to be acknowledged or arranged.
7. Parking machines on Barry island will cost £89k, where is this money coming from?
8. Why is there money for parking machines but no money for events on Barry Island?
9. Why hasn't there been an open public consultation, I thought you were trying to be the best council you can be?

10. Are you concerned for the winter trade on Barry Island? where we rely on locals to keep us going.

I would also like to link to you the petition in regards to the proposed parking charges on Barry Island that has over 2800 signatures in 7 days. This petition now has more signatures in a less time, than a similar one in 2019.

https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/scrap-proposed-on-street-parking-charges-at-barry?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZWOCMTAAAR2PP7_Ap-tbixu765XHdUHudkVA33ci2HO4i_YALsiLkMUBklvBDG1nW_Y_aem_ycY9dxhugmZS56acKoT_bw

Finally, we would like the council to engage more with traders and public on matters that affect livelihoods, but time and time again this does not happen, even after assurances are made.

We feel our requests are very reasonable and we look forward to your response.

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the person on behalf of the Barry Island Traders Association.

Signed by  – on behalf of Barry Island Traders Association

CAR PARK CHARGING CHANGES

I write in regard of the planned changes to parking charges within the Vale of Glamorgan.

Firstly, I recognise the demands currently being put upon local authorities as funding fails to keep up with costs – times are tough - for everyone, not just councils, for businesses and individuals too. I also recognise that charging for parking is something that has to be expected.

What follows I hope is a balanced review of what the changes will mean.

In order to be transparent, I formerly owned a cafe on Barry Island, and remain a business owner there.

This mean I have an informed understanding of the impacts that charging has.

COUNCIL FUNDING

In regards to funding demands I would note that individual local authorities need to ensure that when negotiating that they get the best deal possible for their residents.

A 4.3% overall increase in funding has been provided by Welsh Assembly Government, and I understand that the Vale of Glamorgan Council has achieved a 3.3% increase in funding, so there is clearly a shortfall.

The question of why such a massive shortfall has been able to happen is one for a different discussion, but cannot be ignored.

CAR PARKING CHARGES

A balanced and fair approach needs to take place.

Some of the proposals, whilst difficult for council, residents and businesses are justified.

Under used facilities should be closed – a case of ‘use it or lose it’, so the closure of the Court Road multi-story whilst regrettable, seems prudent, especially in view of the expected future expenditure. A few points around this – there has been no mention about future use for the site, future costs if it remains in-situ, demolition costs, or when disposal takes place where the funds realised will be spent. It would be fair to also ask if the car-park became charged, would revenue cover costs (maintenance and running)?

The proposal to charge for parking where previously the car-park has been free of charge is also sensible, these could be considered prime areas – this applies to Bryn Y Mor, Knap and Cliff Top car-parks and will bring them into line with Nell’s Point, Harbour Road, Ogmore by Sea and Southerndown car-parking.

Again regrettable, but this removes charging imbalances and increases revenues.

However, other proposals lack validity

This specifically applies to on street parking charging, whether Barry Island or Penarth.

Firstly, I’d note that introducing numerous ‘meters’ is expensive, and costly to maintain, in proportion to a fairly limited number of parking spaces (this is in comparison with, for example payment points in a contained car-park), so will expenditure and running costs generate much, if any revenue.

CAR PARK CHARGING CHANGES (continued)

The current free of charge two hour limit (E.g. Barry Island) contributes towards short term visits, and therefore creates a 'churn' of visitors – it is particularly useful for the following e.g. dog walking / after school / stroll and coffee etc. type visits.

The on street parking proposals will remove that 'churn' as people will remain all day, if they visit at all.

Business owners have made the point that it is inevitable that visitor numbers will reduce with the introduction of all year round, unavoidable, charging. The impact statement around street parking charges takes no account of what this will mean for local businesses.

Simply put, this will inevitably mean that reduced visitor (Customer) numbers will mean businesses will have to reduce employees.

Not only will this impact their employees directly, but will affect their local suppliers – the milkman, the butcher or the fruit and veg businesses etc..

This impact on employment is a very serious point.

Each member of this Scrutiny Committee, as does the Council Leader, the Cabinet and the Council Leadership team needs to look at themselves and ask themselves whether that is something that they can have on their conscience.

Let's be really clear about this. If people lose their jobs, it's your fault.

An equally important point is the connection between leisure time (e.g. exercise) and health. Whether it is physical health, recovery, or mental well-being, the links are well known.

Again each member of this Scrutiny Committee, as does the Council Leader and senior leadership both councillors and officers, needs to look at themselves and ask themselves whether that is something that they can have on their conscience.

Again, let's be really clear. This council must not create barriers in this respect, or any other health matters. Putting charging in place does this as it reduces accessibility.

My final point asks you to look at the council Corporate Plan - there are four well-being objectives.

- To work with and for our communities
- To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth
- To support people at home and in their community
- To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment

There is an argument to be made where by implementing the changes reduce the chances of reaching the objectives. Do you want to contribute to a 'bright future' or are you paying lip service to your plan?

In summary I'd ask the Scrutiny Committee to review the proposed changes carefully. They cannot be passed as-is.

Jobs will be put at risk, people's health will be put at risk.

Careful examination and reconsideration will allow much of the desire to generate additional income to be achieved, but also to allow people to enjoy the beauty of the coastline, without economic risk, or a risk to people's health.

Parking charges proposals: breakdown of emails submitted by members of the public.

Background.

The Democratic Services Team, since Wednesday 15th January, has received 375 emails from members of the public outlining their views and concerns around the proposed changes and charges to car parking within the Vale of Glamorgan, which will be presented at a Special Meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 28th January. Please note that 243 of the emails submitted were based on a template style format.

Methodology.

Democratic Services have collated the emails and broken these down into key issues and themes and recorded the basic totals or most common areas covered, as below (please note that each email may have a number of issues and themes, which have been separately counted, therefore the overall figures below will not tally with the overall emails received).

Categories, issues and themes mentioned in the emails received.	Total
Negative impact on businesses	337
Negative impact on local visitors/tourism	319
Negative impact on local residents/community	314
Query/concerns about raising charges and increasing council tax	254
Query/concern about change since 2019*	251
Negative impact on those with low incomes	52
Health and Well-being (including Care)	44
Any other, specific comments or questions raised?***	42

Query/concern around change in parking habits and subsequent safety in surrounding areas	17
Query/concern over lack of transparency in decision making	13
Vexatious comments	12
Query/concerns about what revenue will be used for	7
Location of where concern raised (i.e. Barry Island, Court Road, Penarth or elsewhere in the Vale).	Barry island; The Knap; Penarth Seafront; West Haven (Barry Waterfront); Cliff Tops, Penarth; Penarth Pier; Romilly Park; Court Road/Holton Road multi story car park; Cowbridge; and Other areas of the Vale (i.e. coastal areas) where these charges will potentially be introduced.

***= This refers to the concern that those persons who opposed such charges in 2019 are now felt to be advocating for them.**

**** = These included comments and questions such as:**

“Why are charges increasing and services seemingly decreasing?”;

“Can Court Rd be turned into a single storey car park?”;

“Impact on Wyndham Road car park?”;

“Querying the logic of removing the multi storey facility and adding on street charges”;

“Increased traffic congestion”;

“Quality/availability of public/other transport alternatives”;

“Savings could be made in better ways”;

“Under-use of accessible parking spaces added at Barry Island”;

“Free of charge access to the coastline”;

“The negative impact on residents’ health will add pressure to other services”;

“Differing charges should apply for residents/in winter or ‘off peak’ times”;

“Efforts/Money should be spent on other priorities”;

“Minimal net financial benefit vs. Negative impacts”;

“Query/concern of lack of enforcement”;

“Negative impact on other vulnerable groups e.g. elderly / disabled people”;

“The impact of parking measures on local swimmer/lifeguard clubs”;

“There has been no thorough consultation with traders or the public about these proposed changes and charges “; and

“Set up a think tank. Get local businesspeople involved (on car parking proposals)”.