

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL - RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY Keith Ferrin
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DECISION NO. 08/01121

If decision is likely to disclose exempt information please specify the relevant paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

Subject: Changes to car park charges in Country Parks, from 1 st April 2008.

Decision: That car park charges are amended in line with the report recommendations.
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Any Interest Declared when the Decision was Taken
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Reason(s) for decision, including alternatives considered and any additional information
Background Documents: CarParkPrices08Report.doc CarParkPrices08formB.doc

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signed

18 February 2008
date

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Decision Referred to Cabinet Scrutiny			
YES		NO	

Cabinet Scrutiny Decision to Refer Back for Reconsideration			
YES		NO	

Reconsideration Record Sheet Issued			
YES		NO	

Reconsideration of Decision Published			

To: Mr K Ferrin , Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste

By: Linda Davies, Director, Environment & Waste

INCREASE IN CAR PARKING CHARGES AT KCC COUNTRY PARKS 2008/09

Background

Car Park charges are increasingly becoming a main source of income for Country Parks. Prior to January 2007, 3 sites (Shorne, Brockhill and White Horse Wood) operated a Pay and Display system and other key sites (Trosley, Lullingstone, Manor Park, Teston, Grove Ferry) relied on honesty boxes supplemented by a car park attendant on peak weekends. Pay and Display machines were introduced across all these sites in January 2007, with a flat rate of £1. There has, of course, been some public reaction, but this has not been substantial. The price of an Annual Permit was charged at £20 p.a. in 2005. This rose from £12.50 3 years ago. This rise did incite quite a strong public reaction.

With the principle of Pay and Display now established, a charging structure needs to be introduced which provides good value, but reflects the facilities on offer at each park. Some major parks are at peak capacity at weekends, and the charging system could be a mechanism for helping encourage more midweek visits.

The Annual Permit represents particularly good value and should be kept. Thought was given to raising the charge to £30, to include a system of £10 worth of “money off vouchers” which could be redeemed in park cafes and shops. However, this is considered too complicated to introduce at the moment when, particularly, catering is being reviewed and may go out to tender, possibly to several franchises. Some sites also provide no catering or shop facilities at present (although these are planned for the medium term) and hence no facility for redemption is possible to regular users of these sites. This scheme should be revisited in 2009/10. It is recommended that a raised charge of £25 be introduced for the Annual Permit from April 2008, and that permits run for a full year from date of issue, rather than for a year or part of paid pro rata.

Similarly, a method of “green charging” was investigated. This could be possible to introduce, but is probably to controversial and complex for a public group of mostly regular users, so soon after the introduction of other charges in the last year.

Proposal

It is proposed that the following charges are applied from April 2008, which include a premium rate for weekends and Bank Holidays(NB 2007/08 figures shown for comparison)

	2007/08	2008/09
Shorne Wood Country Park	£ 1.00	£ 1.50/2.00
Lullingstone Country Park	£ 1.00	£1.00/1.50
Brockhill Country Park	£ 1.00	£1.00/1.50
Trosley Country Park	£ 1.00	£1.00/1.50
Manor Park Country Park	£ 1.00	£1.00/1.50
Teston Bridge Picnic Site	£ 1.00	£1.00/1.50
White Horse Wood Country Park	£0.20/£0.50*	£0.50/1.00

Recommendation for decision

That the above charges are implemented from April 2008 and are reviewed annually.

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