

**To:** Keith Ferrin, Cabinet Member, Highways, Environment and Waste

**From:** Clare Saunders, Head of Country Parks

**Subject:** Increase in Car parking charges in Country Parks

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** This report outlines the proposed increase in car parking fees and annual season tickets in country parks

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. (1) For a number of years, the country parks service has charged customers for car parking at a number of sites where key facilities are available. Charges are modest, particularly in comparison with others and the income derived is essential to maintain the parks and support a very limited revenue budget.

### **Current Charges**

2. (1) Current car park charges at country parks are as follows:

<b>Country Park</b>	<b>Weekday Rate</b>	<b>Weekend/Bank Holiday Rate</b>
Shorne Woods	£1.50	£2.00
Lullingstone	£1.00	£1.50
Trosley	£1.00	£1.50
Manor Park	£1.00	£1.50
Brockhill	£1.00	£1.50
Teston	£1.00	£1.50
White Horse Wood	£0.50	£1.00
Grove Ferry (wef 1.4.09)	£1.00	£1.00

- (2) Differentials in the charges are reflective of the facilities at each site

### **Season Ticket Charges**

2. (1) The price of an annual season ticket is currently £25 – this gives visitors access to all Kent's 22 country parks.
- (2) This offers very good value for money in comparison with others. (Tonbridge and Malling charge £25 for access just to Haysden Country Park. Essex County Council charge £60 for their annual ticket and

Hampshire also charge £60. It is fair to also say that Medway do not charge at all for parking at their country parks.

## **PROPOSALS FROM MAY 2009**

### **Car Parking Charges**

3. (1) It is proposed that a blanket increase of 20p is applied across all parks on weekday and weekend charges for this financial year. This small increase reflects the poor economic situation.

### **Season Ticket Charges**

4. (1) It is proposed that the annual season ticket is increased from £25 to £30 but that a package of benefits is introduced for season ticket holders. These will include discounts in some cafes and shops. It is hoped this approach will encourage regular users to feel more valued as loyal customers and to encourage them to use the facilities more frequently.

## **CONCLUSION**

5. (1) The option of not increasing fees has been considered. However, because our fees are still much lower than other attractions, it is important that we move towards charging market rates as the revenue is a key source of income. A larger capital programme is also being delivered over the coming years and improvements will be very visible to our customers.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

6. (1) The Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste is asked to agree
  - (i) to the charges for car parking and annual season tickets being increased as detailed in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this report
  - (ii) that a further review takes place in 2010.

Background Documents – None

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