

Car Park Working Party Report

Review of The Ham and Level car parking permit system and recommendations for a new system to include ‘virtual permits’.

Introduction.

From the inception of P&D car parking by Dittisham Parish Council (DPC) at The Ham Dittisham in 2004 a 2/1 parishioners paper permit display system has operated to date (permanent resident property owners entitled to 2 free parking permits and second home owners/holiday lets entitled to 1 free parking permit).

This system was also carried over to The Level car park when this commenced operation in March 2017.

The split system, whilst working reasonably well in both car parks has been questioned by several parishioners recently and this report has been drawn up to respond to these concerns and to take the opportunity to review the permit system in general and also to introduce a new ‘virtual permit’ user application and operating system that would be operated by SHDC on behalf of DPC.

Purpose/Objective of DPC car park provision.

- a) The car parks are operated primarily to the benefit of Parishioners.
- b) The car parks need to operate on business principles and generate a profit to ensure sustainability.
- c) To limit vehicle congestion of the village.
- d) To provide a service to visitors and tourists.

Considerations/Discussion.

Permanent residents may have different needs from second home owners/holiday lets or visitors. Permanent residents often require a car to live in the country in order to access shops, workplace etc.

The two car parks are perceived to have different types of user.

The Ham car park tends to have more day visitors, fewer overnight stays and less resident use when compared to the Level car park. It is also used by Dittisham Sailing Club members.

The Level car park is mainly an off street car park for parishioners who have limited or no parking facilities at their property including holiday lets, and hence has more overnight stays and longer term parking.

Both car parks are busier in the tourist/visitor high seasons with the Ham car park sometimes being full at week ends during August.

It must be recognised that visitors/ tourists are important to the local economy.

The permit system must operate in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.

Car Park Operation and Permit Systems

Parking in both car parks is now enforced by SHDC officers who make regular visits. This enforcement is carried out using vehicle number plate recognition with a direct readout from a hand held device operated by the enforcement officer, or currently by paper permits fixed to vehicle windscreens.

All SHDC owned car parks have recently moved to a computerised permit application and validation system using ‘virtual permits’. This interacts with the above number plate recognition system. It is being offered to DPC and it is the intention that DPC would sign up to this for its own car parks. The current issue of paper permits by DPC would become redundant.

Any change to permit issue must take into account a possibility that it may be detrimental and encourage current users to move their vehicles to on street parking, which could create more traffic congestion in the village.

The current 2/1 vehicle permit system, as described above, is available for the sole use of the property's resident household or the property owner(s) only and permits are not transferable. No free permits are offered for the use of people renting holiday lets.

It is, however currently perceived, as unfair and discriminatory by several parishioners primarily because of recent changes to the application of property Council Tax to second home owners.

A New Permit System.

Reviewing the current car park operations and permit system has been complex.

The above review is a snapshot of the issues involved. However, the Working Party has considered what it believes to be all the relevant issues including property locations and ownership, and lack of parking facilities associated with some properties.

Various permit options have been considered in some detail with respective advantages and disadvantages.

It is agreed that the current permit system is not fit for purpose and the Working Party is proposing a new system.

Recommendation

All property owners who pay SHDC council tax in Dittisham Parish will be entitled to vehicle parking permits as detailed below.

The permits are specific to the named person(s) who is shown on the SHDC Annual Council Tax advice letter and the vehicle(s) ownership must also match that name(s).

All vehicle permit applications will be made via the SHDC vehicle parking permit web site and must satisfy the application requirements detailed by SHDC.

Permit provision is available for a **maximum of two vehicles only** per property at all times.

Vehicle 1	Ham c/p – 1 free parking permit	Level c/p – 1 free parking permit
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Vehicle 2	Ham c/p – 1 free parking permit	Option to purchase 1 parking permit
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Suggested purchase charge for a Level c/p permit - £100 per annum.

Up to four vehicle registration changes may be made per annum, however the application/validation permit process detailed above remains the same.

Note. Prior to any new recommendation being implemented parishioners will be given the opportunity to offer feedback on the proposals.

Working Party. Cllrs. Faulkner, Bond, Green.

29/03/2018