



NAILSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES of a MEETING of Nailsworth Town Council
 held at the Town Hall, Nailsworth
on Tuesday 10th July 2018

Present	Cllr Jonathan Duckworth (Mayor) Cllr Sue Reed Cllr Anne Elliott Cllr Sally Millett Cllr Robert Maitland Cllr Mike Kelly Cllr Angela Norman Cllr Steve Robinson
Minutes	Katherine Kearns (Clerk)
Apologies	Cllr Paul Francis, Cllr Ron Kerby

Ref. No		Action
2018/059	<p>Verbal Introductions Town Councillors and SDC Cllr Norman Kay introduced themselves. Also present were Sarah Martin (Chamber of Trade) and David Nicholls (resident and business owner). SDC officers Joanne Jordan, Mike Hammond, Mike Towson and Sinead Chambers were present</p>	
2018/060	<p>Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensations There were none.</p>	
2018/061	<p>To consider SDC proposal to introduce car park charges to Nailsworth The Mayor gave a presentation outlining NTC's position on SDC's review of car park charges.</p> <p>In summer 2017 SDC appointed Ove Arup to collect and examine car park data. This formed the basis of a report to the SDC Strategy and Resources Committee on 14th June 2018. SDC are carrying out statutory consultation with town and parish councils, and the public via an online consultation, and this consultation period ends on 29th July. The decision will go back to SDC Strategy and Resources committee on 4th October.</p> <p>In 2017 SDC's study on the Future of Town Centres said retail is contracting and town's need to diversify. It identified a need for 'churn' (parking turnover) in car parks.</p> <p>NTC feel the review's purpose, process and data is flawed. Purpose: Legally, the primary purpose of introducing car park charges cannot be to raise revenue. A letter from Ove Arup to SDC clearly states this is the purpose of the car park review. The</p>	



	<p>Council feels the report does not aim to manage car parks to help the vitality of town centres.</p> <p>Data: NTC believes SDC's data is flawed and car park congestion has not been proved. Old Market car park was recorded as full on a Saturday but this was an FGR match day. Long stay car parks are reported as full during the day This is to be expected as they're used by employees in the town.</p> <p>The data has included the NTC owned Town Hall car park. It's not clear if this has been included in the final charging proposals. It's not possible for parkers to tell the difference between the NTC and SDC owned parts of the car park.</p> <p>Fairness: SDC claim parking charges will introduce consistency and a level playing field. The previous car park review recognised there is not 'equality of amenity' between towns, with different facilities and circumstances. After the 2011 proposal, SDC's Overview and Scrutiny committee recommended that individual locations should have been looked at individually. This has not happened.</p> <p>Cost: NTC would like to know what Nailsworth car parks cost and guess that Merrywalks multi-storey car park is a significant part of SDC's costs. The Council question the amount of income generated; according to SDC figures it appears not to be £330,000 as first stated in the media, but in fact £66,000 after three years.</p> <p>Free parking period: NTC do not support any control system, such as a period of free parking. The Council don't consider there's a problem to solve as there's no evidence of parking congestion in Nailsworth. The introduction of parking charges would mean charges can be increased at any time, to the detriment of our town.</p> <p>The Council don't consider Nailsworth's particular case has been taken into account including lack of public transport; local geography, the proximity of Stroud for shopping and the impact of new supermarkets in Stroud. There has been no impact assessment and no equalities assessment to gauge the effect on vulnerable members of the community. No consideration has been given to the private car parks in Nailsworth who will need to spend more on enforcement. On street parking will increase with parking charges causing problems for town centre residents.</p>	
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	<p>NTC will ask that the decision in this matter is taken by SDC Full Council and not by committee.</p> <p>NTC has conducted its own research under market research conditions and it's clear people visit Nailsworth mainly for shopping and eating. 84% visit at least once a week and 81% said they would come less frequently if charges were introduced. 93% said they would actively search out free spaces.</p> <p>NTC state there is no proof of an issue with 'churn' and that NTC's research proves this. Video footage from three car parks was shown which shows significant 'churn' of cars over three weekdays and a Saturday.</p> <p>Lack of 'churn' and the resulting congestion and pollution is being used to propose the introduction of car park charges. The Council state that Ove Arup's report has made an assumption that cannot be made from the evidence.</p> <p>Sarah Martin representing the Chamber of Trade asked that the multiple hits to our local economy are considered by SDC; recent closure of Lloyds bank; local businesses competing against internet shopping; a nationally low economy; new Aldi and Lidl with free parking soon to open not far from Nailsworth.</p> <p>The Chamber of Trade feel the town centre is the most important part of our local economy and parking charges will be a pay cut for local employees. Evidence suggests parking charges decrease footfall leading to further damage to businesses. This is not an experiment. Once a town is damaged it's damaged forever and Nailsworth has taken 20+ years to get where it is.</p> <p>The evidence from Market Rasen in the Ove Arup report is misleading. Market Rasen's Chamber of Trade said the report is misleading and calls into question the validity of the entire Ove Arup report. Footfall in Market Rasen has reduced and businesses have lost out by c.£250k per year.</p> <p>Nailsworth Chamber of Trade have carried out a survey of local retailers and 27 of 44 retailers say they would be likely to close. The threat of charges has also put a block on local business expansion. The Chamber of Trade is concerned about the hidden effect on residents' mental health and an increase of loneliness, which is not reflected in SDC's review.</p> <p>David Nicholls, resident and business owner said that Nailsworth is currently just about weathering the low economy, but parking</p>	
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	<p>charges are very likely to effect residents of Nailsworth. Town centre residents will find parking very difficult and will need to pay for parking permits. In turn charges will lead to a failing local economy and fall in property prices. Residents are asked to pledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contribute to a 'fighting fund'• Complete the SDC online consultation• Write to SDC councillors individually by 29th July asking that the decision comes to Full Council. <p>The Mayor took questions from the floor which will be used as part of NTC's response to SDC's consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have SDC considered discrimination to the rural poor? Many people have to drive due to lack of public transport and this would discriminate.• As an employer with staff travelling into town, what has happened to the proposal to make land opposite Wyevale's into long stay parking? It was noted that SDC's report does not address improvements to long stay parking.• This is a political act and SDC politicians need to be held to account.• How many Ove Arup reports are produced in a year and how many come out with the conclusion that they shouldn't introduce car park charges?• Cllr Kate Kay, Chair of Horsley PC expressed Horsley PC's support for NTC's meeting. The Welsh Assembly report used as evidence had been misquoted and the full quote states that towns should be treated individually and that there is a relationship between parking charges and footfall• Divisive comments from SDC are trying to pit towns against each other. Cllrs were urged not to participate. It was noted Stroud TC opposed car park charges at their meeting the previous evening.• Play Circle nursery said over 80 families a week come to the Town Hall. These families are very vulnerable financially and emotionally. Car park charges will really impact on them.• Casual shoppers will be discouraged by the hassle of finding change and ticket machines	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is fundamental issue of local democracy and charges should not be imposed if the vast majority of residents don't want them• About two years ago Nailsworth was in a list of 100 best towns in the UK. One of the reason cited was free parking. This will make Nailsworth less desirable and decrease house properties and council tax• SDC Cllr Tom Skinner of the Strategy and Resources committee stated he would alter a motion he has put forward to Full Council. The motion in two parts will ask that the decision on parking charges go to Full Council and that limited free parking is offered. Having heard and seen the evidence produced by NTC he will withdraw the proposal that limited free parking is introduced• A reporter from Stroud News and Journal said the paper would continue to cover the fight against parking charges• Does SDC issue the figures for the money collected in fines compared to the cost of the wardens?• Is it true that for a petition only the actual form is taken into account and not the number of people on the petition It was noted that this is the case in some councils and that writing to SDC is what counts.• Will writing to our MP be beneficial?• Income from car parking is required to be published and net revenue is currently £355k. Information for individual wards is not published. It's suggested NTC asks for the income vs expenditure for Nailsworth specifically. <p>NTC had asked the Clerk to speak to SDC officers about innovative solutions to the car park review and was disappointed that SDC had not taken up this offer. NTC is still open to discussion with SDC to come up with an equitable solution.</p> <p>The room was asked to vote; "Are you in favour of parking charges in Nailsworth?"</p> <p>282 voted Against with none For.</p>	
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	<p>NTC will write to all SDC cllrs and submit the Council's response to the consultation. NTC will consider a legal challenge. Residents were urged to contact SDC cllrs and to complete SDC's consultation. Also to consider contributing to the Chamber of Trade 'fighting fund'.</p> <p>Residents were thanked for their attendance and the meeting was closed.</p>	
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Town Mayor
Nailsworth Town Council
Town Hall, Old Bristol Road, Nailsworth, GL6 0JF

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Date