

Harden Parish Council



**Clerk: Ken Eastwood
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Chairman: Pam Laking

11 September, 2016

Dear Sir,

PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE CAR PARKING CHARGES – ST IVES, HARDEN

Thank you for consulting the Parish Council about the above proposals.

Members considered the issues and resident views at their meeting on 8th September. Having weighed up the proposals, and the additional information provided with regard to the business case, members decided to oppose the proposals, by unanimous consent.

The Parish Council understands and appreciates the difficulties faced by the principal authority as a result of the austerity agenda and the resultant, challenging budget deficit. However, members are of the view that these proposals are misplaced and they wish to strongly oppose introduction of car parking charges at St Ives.

The Parish Council would like to make the following observations: -

1. Economic Impact

Information provided suggests the scheme could generate a surplus in the region of £10k per annum. However, evidence we have received strongly suggests that introduction of car parking charges would significantly reduce usage at St Ives, particularly regular usage by local residents. Dog walkers and others are not going to pay daily to use the estate and will find alternatives; there are plenty nearby including Harden Moor.

If visitor numbers reduce, businesses including the café and the ice cream vendor, will be adversely affected. The café depends on daily custom and passing trade. Their business could become unsustainable if visitor numbers reduce. The ice cream vendor bid for a franchise the economics of which may be changed significantly by the proposals (potentially reducing income to Bradford MDC when the franchise is next renewed).

St Ives also attracts visitors from far and wide. Many of these visitors, be they individuals or larger visitor parties, also visit other tourism venues within the Bradford district.

The introduction of parking charges, particularly given the woeful state of facilities at St Ives, including the toilets, could well result in visitors choosing other venues outside of the Bradford district. Tourism makes a significant contribution to the local economy - £567m according to a recent report - making the £10k surplus from these proposals pale into total insignificance. The risk of adverse impacts on tourism do not justify the potential miniscule surplus predicted to arise from the introduction of car parking charges at St Ives.

The Parish Council queries whether a full risk assessment of the proposals has in fact been undertaken?

2. Parking Displacement & Impacts

Harden village has extremely limited provision for car parking. The introduction of charging at St Ives would inevitably displace car parking and that would have an adverse impact on already congested roads and facilities within the village.

Parking along nearby roads could well introduce road safety issues and concerns.

Businesses within the village report strong concerns about this aspect - if the limited parking is used by visitors to St Ives they will inevitably lose passing trade and their businesses will be negatively impacted as a result.

3. Environmental Impact

The proposals would require the installation of several parking meters. St Ives is a heritage venue with a natural environment worthy of protection. The installation of numerous parking meters would detract significantly from that, adversely impacting on visual amenity and degrading the charm of the estate.

4. Equality Considerations

The introduction of parking charges at St Ives appears to have been a unilateral proposal. Unless parking charges are being introduced at all Bradford Council visitor destinations, St Ives is being treated differently to other venues. This is grossly unfair and unacceptable. Also, there is no evidence of consideration being given to the nature of St Ives users, a good proportion of whom we know to be elderly.

The Parish Council queries whether an equality impact assessment of the proposals has been undertaken?

These are the views of the Parish Council and we think are largely representative of the local community.

We very much hope that you will have due regard to our position and reconsider your proposals.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ken Eastwood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Harden Parish Council Clerk