

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Milton Country Park Advisory
Committee

9 October 2006

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director/Head of Community Services

INTRODUCING PARKING CHARGES

Purpose

1. This report provides an update on the implementation of parking charges at the park, and seeks views on detailed issues concerning the charging.

Background

2. At the Cabinet meet on 14 September it was decided to implement a compulsory charge of £1 for parking in the Milton Country Park car park. A previous report considering parking charges, considered by Cabinet in February 2006, had been withdrawn in the light of concerns expressed at that time.

Considerations

3. A 'pay and display' machine has been ordered from Metric, who provide these machines for Cambridge City Council. It will be sited in front of the toilet block, as this is the most prominent site for the whole car park. The electrical supply will be routed from the toilet block. A board on the Fen Rivers Way, which would be obscured by the unit, will be moved; the suggested new site is under the front porch on the Visitor Centre.
4. In view of the considerable cost of 'pay and display' units, and the limited scope of the electrical supply, we are only installing one machine. It is Metric's latest model, and reliability is expected to be high; Metric provide a swift service to rectify any fault in the machine. The use of this machine provides the best security for the cash it can contain. It is compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act, with low level coin slot and buttons.
5. The order was placed during the week following the Cabinet decision. There is a 10 week delivery period, so installation should be completed in December; part of this time is connected with producing the 'chip' for the machine, with the charges and other specific details for our installation.
6. We are currently considering the wording to go on the tickets. Once this is finalised we will need to order a supply of them. Officers hope to be able to confirm at the meeting what scope there is for including a message along the lines of: "This charge helps meet the cost of maintaining the park." If such a message isn't possible, we may be able to produce stickers about helping the park.
7. We are also considering the number and positioning of signs about the charge, to ensure all users are aware of the need to pay. The procedure for pursuing anyone found without displaying a ticket has yet to be finalised.

8. An approach is being made to the Milton Community Centre Trust, via the Parish Council, to see if they would like to have a sign erected in their car park about it being restricted to users of the centre and the Parish Council sports facilities. The offer of this sign is proposed in response to their concerns about use of their car park by users of the country park.
9. The security issues concerning the car park are dealt with in that attached **confidential appendix**.

Options

10. There are a number of options concerning season tickets and any special consideration for park users with disabilities. For the former, officers consider that some form of season ticket is appropriate for regular park users; those who bring their dogs to the park each day, for example, would be likely to park on the approach road or elsewhere in Milton to avoid paying £1 every day. A reasonably priced season ticket should help reduce such parking, which would understandably lead to problems for local residents.
11. In the Cabinet report in February 2006, officers put forward a proposed charge of £14 for a 3 month season ticket. This level of charge is just over the charge, which would be incurred for using the park once per week, and this is put forward for consideration. Officers feel this is a maximum, to avoid putting off or diverting regular users. It may also be appropriate to offer a 12-month season ticket for £50.
12. A decision by the Community Development Portfolio Holder, in the light of the views of the Advisory Group, will be required in October to allow officers to order suitable season ticket badges for display in vehicles.
13. There are four parking spaces reserved for disabled users of the park, who need to display their 'blue badges' in the vehicle. In some places 'blue badge' holders are not charged for parking, and this would be an option in the park. Again, this will be a decision for the Portfolio Holder, in the light of the views of the Advisory Group.

Implications

14.	Financial	The cost of purchasing and installing the pay and display machine can be met from within park budgets. The income received during 2006/07 will clearly be much reduced from the estimated £30,000 for a full year.
	Legal	The legal implications concerning sanctions for users who do not pay will be reported orally.
	Staffing	Dealt with in the appendix
	Risk Management	Dealt with in the appendix
	Equal Opportunities	The parking charge has been set at a level which should not prevent access by any user group. Issues concerning disabled users are covered in para 13.

Consultations

15. The Advisory Group, including representation from the Friends of MCP and the Parish Council, are being consulted through this report.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

16.	Affordable Homes	None
	Customer Service	None
	Northstowe and other growth areas	Maintaining the viability of the park will be important for developments on Cambridge's Northern Fringe, including Arbury Park, as it provides the most accessible strategic open space for these areas.
	Quality, Accessible Services	The charge will provide income needed to maintain the park and keep it open for the enjoyment of visitors
	Village Life	The proposed season ticket and the level of the charges is aimed at minimising adverse effects of parking in Milton on residents.
	Sustainability	None
	Partnership	None

Conclusions/Summary

17. Officers are working to deal with all the aspects of the introduction of the parking charges, including a number of security issues. These should enable the parking charges to be introduced in December, producing some of the income originally envisaged for the year.

Recommendations

18. It is recommended that the Advisory Committee gives their views on:
- a) the level of the season ticket charge
 - b) whether 'blue badge' users are required to pay the parking charge
 - c) any other detailed matter covered in the report

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Report to Cabinet on February 2006, Improving Facilities at Milton Country Park.

Contact Officer: Simon McIntosh – Head of Community Services
Telephone: (01954) 713350