

Parking – In Fenland – Policing & Decriminalized Parking Enforcement

DPE is becoming increasingly common as more authorities take on this role. The local traffic authority assumes responsibility for enforcing many parking contraventions in place of the police.

Fenland is a part of Cambridgeshire where the enforcement of 'Parking' still comes under the authority of the Police. The rest of Cambridgeshire including Peterborough comes under the local authority responsibility.

In Fenland the 'issue' of enforcing parking has been discussed on many occasions by various organisations, Town & District Councils.

At many of these meetings, the emotive arguments about parking has always been very vocal, both for keeping a status quo or for bringing in DPE, along with charges and the possibility of residents paying to park on the roadside (As in Peterborough)

For every argument for bringing in DPE there is an argument against and this has been the case for many years.

So further explanation is given below.

It is my understanding having spoken on several occasions with them, that the Police along with the Police & Crime Commissioner would be very positive in relinquishing their responsibility for the enforcement of parking in Fenland. They can then free up time, resource and the time given to administration work.

When 'parking tickets' are issued by the police, the proceeds do not go back to the Police or Local Authority, it disappears into Government coffers.

When Local Authorities and or their agents give out 'parking tickets' the proceeds go to running costs and anything left over is seen as an income to the authority. Many use this income for safety initiatives.

As example have a look at Peterborough City Council website:

<https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/parking/parking-tickets-and-policies/>

Parking services raised £3.1 million in revenue for Peterborough City Council in 2017-18, according to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The majority of the income came from council-run car parks, which made £2 million over the past year. Drivers paid the local authority a further £1.1 million in on-street parking charges, such as pay-and-display parking, residents' permits and parking tickets. More than 40% of the income from on-street parking was raised through penalty charges for illegal parking.

So lets now look at Fenland/Whittlesey, more housing, increase in population, more vehicles, more on street parking, car parks full up, inconsiderate parking and illegal parking are all part of the arguments we are hearing.

Those who have no driveway or garage have no choice other than park on the road. Quite often, residents go into our town at 9am and find the car parks nearly full.

Private car parks for instance at The New Queen Street Surgery patients find that there are vehicles parked all day – (Survey carried out by myself June 2014) 12 spaces on average used up out of 40 available – by what can only be none patients (We checked staff and Boots vehicles).

No one likes getting a parking ticket, it causes all sorts of issues and as I have said becomes very 'emotive', but unless 'something' is done the situation will only become worse, the police will only address 'parking' issues/problems when they have nothing else on their priorities.

Businesses within Whittlesey and Fenland have always advocated the 'Free Parking' brings trade to the town and by introducing charges will discourage people from shopping in the town (there are answers to this). Whenever, I have approached councillors from March and Wisbech they have told me – that there is No appetite to bring in charges – the issue has been brought up on several occasions at meetings of Fenland District Council.

That said, if DPE was to be brought in, it is my understanding that the set up costs would be in the region of £250,000 – which could be shared between the 4 main Town Councils, I am also informed that these costs would be recovered in a relatively short period.

To bring in DPE, the Town Councils would have to all agree to bring this in and then take it to Fenland and then onto Cambridgeshire County Council -

Many people have suggested to me a way forward but maybe not to everyone's agreement.

1/ Bring in DPE, allow all vehicles 3 hours on road and in Council owned car parks. After 3 hours there would be charging imposed. Enforce through Parking Attendants that would be mobile throughout Fenland.

2/ Bring in a Residents Parking Scheme

Peterborough – A Resident Parking Zone (RPZ) is an area where parking is controlled to the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors. RPZ's are defined as streets, area or bays where parking is controlled or restricted to 'permit holders only' RPZ's are designed to regulate parking, reduce highway obstruction and give residents priority over available spaces, enabling residents to park close to where they live.

The council can provide various types of permits including: residential, visitor and business. The distribution of all types of parking permits are under the discretion of the council – it should be noted that permits do not provide a dedicated parking space.

Parking permits in Peterborough presently cost £25:00/Year.

The villages outside of the Fenland towns could be excluded from the regulations if the authority so wished.

I hope this brings everyone at the Forum up to date – there are probably a number of options I have not looked at – and hope you as Businesses can perhaps come up with something of an acceptable alternative for the fairness of all.