

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL PEEBLES PARKING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of Meeting of the PEBBLES
PARKING WORKING GROUP held via
MICROSOFT TEAMS on Thursday, 18 May
2023 at 6.00 pm

- Present:- Councillors R. Tatler (Chair), J. Pirone and E. Small
- Apologies:- Councillor V. Thomson, G. Ramsay (Peebles Community Council)
- In Attendance:- P. Gilhooly – Team Leader (Traffic Policy and Road User Management), G. Haldane Assistant Engineer (Road Safety & Traffic Management), G. Grant, S. Watson (Peebles Community Council), J. Smith (Peebles Civic Society), P. Nicol (Tweeddale Access Panel), Kerrie Guiney (Peebles Retailers Association), D. McGrath (Peebles Retailers Association), L. Cuerden (Democratic Services Officer).

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed David McGrath from the Peebles Retailers Association to the meeting who had recently joined the working group along with Kerrie Guiney.

2. NOTE

There had been circulated copies of the Note of the Meeting held on 21 February 2023 and the Action Tracker.

DECISION

AGREED the Note and the Action Tracker.

3. CAR PARK SURVEY RESULTS

- 3.1 With reference to the Note of the meeting on 21 February 2023, Philippa Gilhooly presented the results of the Streetwise Parking Survey carried out on 24, 25 and 27 March 2023 and the Council's Citizen Space online parking survey. The face to face interviews were in the process of being collated and would follow at a later date. Gary Haldane presented results from the Citizen Space online survey. There had been 415 completed responses over the 6 week consultation period. The demographic was as follows: 36 traders; 339 residents; 41 visitors; 33 local workers; and 8 'other'. A majority of 71% reported that they parked in car parks. The length of time spent in Peebles varied from up to 2 hours to more than 6 hours, with the majority, 64% staying up to 2 hours. The most used car park was East Station/Edinburgh Road (76%). The most common reason given for choosing a particular car park was the proximity of their destination. A relatively small number of respondents reported car sharing (3%) over various days of the week. In response to the question of standardised car parking charges Monday – Saturday from 08:30-17:00, 65% were not in favour. A majority of respondents (60%) favoured keeping the main bus stance at Eastgate, with 50% of respondents who favoured keeping all bus services operational from there and 45% who favoured the X62 service being relocated to East Station/Edinburgh Road car park. A majority of respondents (55%) favoured the retention of the taxi rank in its current situation on Eastgate along with an additional taxi rank at East Station car park favoured by 59%.

A number of textual responses to the question of why there should be free car parking in Peebles were to be collated and included in an information pack to be brought back to members.

- 3.2 Philippa Gilhooly presented the results of the Streetwise car park surveys carried out on 24, 25 and 27 March 2023. Number plate data was recorded at 7am and again at hourly intervals throughout until 7pm to monitor the usage of car parking spaces at each site (East Station/Edinburgh Road, Kingsmeadows, Greenside and Neidpath car parks). In relation to East Station, peak occupancy of 97% on Friday 24 March occurred between 11am and 3pm and with the majority for up to 2 hours. Saturday 25 March recorded peak occupancy of 70.7% between 2pm and 3pm with the majority for up to 2 hours. Monday 27 March recorded peak occupancy of 94.4% between 11am to 12pm with the majority for up to 2 hours. Kingsmeadows Road car park demonstrated over capacity on Saturday with drivers parking out with bays. Greenside and Neidpath car parks demonstrated capacity all day. It was agreed to provide an information pack to members with all relevant data.

DECISION

AGREED to circulate to members an information pack which included Streetwise survey data and narrative responses from the online survey.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The Chair presented a number of proposals to members for consideration. In relation to a proposal to move buses to the East Station/Edinburgh Road car park, it was agreed that further discussion on the matter be postponed due to the survey result and the need for wider consultation to be done on the future creation of a 'gateway' into Peebles. It was confirmed that Scottish Borders Council was responsible for cost of relocating a bus stop. In relation to any proposal to alter the charging regime for car parks it was agreed that it be done on a pilot basis for either 12 or 18 months with appropriate consultation. There was agreement to the proposals to improve directional signage to car parks and to promote the annual £26 parking passes particularly to retailers, traders and those who park and ride. In relation to a proposal to retain free parking in Kingsmeadows and Neidpath car parks, there was a suggestion to consider the introduction of charges on Friday and Saturday only. Gary Haldane reported that a bay remarking plan of Kingsmeadows car park was currently underway at the request of the Peebles Common Good Fund Sub-Committee which had the potential to alleviate the overcapacity issue. There was agreement to the proposal to maintain the current charging regime in Greenside and the Swimming Pool car park. In relation to the proposal to improve signage in car parks, it was agreed to alter the branding and information to reflect the fact that all monies were directed into the Peebles Parking Fund to be spent locally. With regards to the Peebles Parking Fund, the Chair proposed that an assessment panel be convened to consider funding applications and make recommendations as to how revenue was to be spent. It was confirmed that the parking fund did not contain money that was due to the Peebles Common Good Fund. The proposal to form a panel was agreed.
- 4.2 There followed a brief discussion on the introduction of parking charges in all car parks. Concern was raised that the introduction of charges to Kingsmeadows car park would displace drivers to side streets causing issues for nearby residents. It was pointed out that paid parking was a traffic management tool rather than income generation and there was to be considerable capital outlay to install the paid parking infrastructure at Neidpath and Kingsmeadows, with many years before breaking even. The introduction of charging at Neidpath car park had the potential to be contentious as it was used by those attending the GP, Haylodge hospital and funerals at the adjoining Neidpath Cemetery.
- 4.3 With reference to East Station/Edinburgh Road car park, there was a brief discussion which highlighted that there was no 'ideal time' to charge for parking throughout the week. It was reported that the Retailers' Association considered free parking to be an asset to Peebles as it encouraged people to stay longer in the town. The need for the turnover of spaces in the car park at peak times of the year and how best to encourage

that was discussed, with the point being made that people did find other places to park in the town during busy periods and to limit the amount of time people could spend in the town would not alleviate the pressure on parking spaces. There was a suggestion that revenue from parking charges be diverted into maintaining the public toilets in town as well as other identified local needs. On the proposal to alter the paid parking regime in East Station/Edinburgh Road car park, no agreement was made and further discussion was to be had on the matter. It was suggested that the research carried out, along with a community conversation, could become part of the wider Place Making currently underway in Peebles. It was agreed to invite Crick Carleton, Chair of the Tweeddale Area Partnership Place Making Working Group to attend the next meeting.

DECISION

AGREED that the following proposals be taken forward as recommendations:

- (a) any proposal to alter the charging regime for car parks it was agreed that it be done on a pilot basis for either 12 or 18 months with appropriate consultation**
- (b) to improve directional signage to car parks**
- (c) to promote the annual £26 parking passes particularly to retailers, traders and those who park and ride**
- (d) to maintain the current charging regime in Greenside and the Swimming Pool car park**
- (e) agreed to alter the branding and information on car park signage to reflect the fact that all monies were directed into the Peebles Parking Fund to be spent locally**
- (f) a Parking Fund Assessment Panel be convened to consider funding applications and projects to then make recommendations accordingly**
- (g) to invite Crick Carleton to the next meeting of the Peebles Parking Working Group**

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was to be scheduled following consultation with Philippa Gilhooly and the circulation of the information pack.

The meeting concluded at 7.00 pm