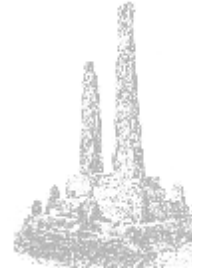




# Sandbach Town Council

## CAR PARK STRATEGY



### **Sandbach Town Council's comments and recommendations in respect of the emerging Cheshire East Councils Car Parking Strategy 2009 and Implementation Plan**

**This paper is based on the assumption that Cheshire East Council (CEC) has obtained the relevant legal approvals to charge individuals for the purpose of parking their vehicles on Scotch Common, Sandbach. Until such time as legal approvals are proved by CEC, and that the people of Sandbach have been clearly apprised of this status, then Council strongly recommends that parking on Scotch Common remains free of charge.**

#### **1. Car Parking Strategy Documents**

The economic viability of the town is regarded as the most important element of the strategy for Sandbach, therefore significant concern was expressed about the loss of the current free parking on public car parks – it was felt that there is significant risk that shoppers may choose more vibrant, attractive shopping centres over Sandbach.

**The Council however sees no reason to reject the CE Strategy document; it is regarded as being a well structured, high level document.**

In developing its recommendations, the Council has carefully reviewed the reports by external consultants RTA Associates, commissioned by and presented to Congleton Borough Council (CBC) in 2007 and a number of other reports presented to CBC Executive and Scrutiny committee, on this subject, throughout 2007 and 2008. Council has also examined the historic record with respect to Scotch Common and received formal legal advice from CBC.

#### **2. Public Car Parks**

The Public Car parks are listed in Table 1 below.

Scotch Common and the Little Common are the most central public car parks in the town. Scotch Common is the largest capacity car park in Sandbach.

The Status of Scotch Common as a registered Village Green was considered and there were two prevailing issues:

- i) Can a Village Green be used as a car park?
- ii) Can a change from free parking to pay parking be enforced?

Scotch Common has been used a car park for in excess of 30 years and therefore one could assume that custom and practice over such a lengthy period without

significant objection, could dictate rights to continuance of such use. It has a tarmac surface and is marked out as a car park. As far as is known, there have been no previous challenges to its status as a car park. The Council notes that nearby, Sandbach Park provides the public with a large green space.



Scotch Common is used for other economically important activities during the year; these include the weekly market, two fairs and The Festival of Transport.

**Therefore the Council considers that it is beneficial to the economic viability of the town, that Scotch Common primarily remains as a car park.**

The Council is however concerned about the lack of clarity of the legal position with respect to Manorial Rights associated with Scotch Common. The perception of a number of vocal members of the public, is that such “rights” imply that charging for the parking of vehicles on Scotch Common may not be legal.

The Council has carefully considered this factor and its position is that CEC must prove the legal status before charging can commence. With respect to the perceived (or real) manorial rights, the Council has set a beneficially low level of charges for Scotch Common. This approach is underpinned by the economic need for a small rural town to compete for visitors and shoppers with larger, more attractive centres.

The Council has considered the usage of all of the public car parks in the town in a holistic manner.

The proposed usage and charging regime is listed in table 1 below; charging is suggested to be between the hours of 8.00 am and 6 pm on weekdays and Saturdays. This is consistent with RTA “low tariff” recommendations.

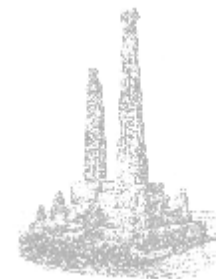
There will no charges for Sundays or Bank Holidays.

### **3. Market day**

It is recognised that there is a serious car parking problem on Market Day (Thursday), when both Scotch Common and the Little Common are not available for use as car parks. The Town loses almost 40% of its car parking capacity; this becomes highly disruptive to the car parking structure and the sustainability of the town.

The loss of these two primary car parks could be avoided, if the market was relocated. It follows that a holistic solution to this problem is to introduce car parking charges only after the Thursday market has been relocated away from Scotch Common.

**It is suggested that if this market continues to use Scotch Common, then all public car parks should be either free or have mixed usage and charging regimes on market day.**



**Table 1**  
**Recommended Charges (assuming Market Relocation)**  
 see notes

Car Park	No. of spaces	Suggested Usage	Suggested Charges Cars	Suggested Charges Motorcycles In designated spaces
Scotch Common	142 10 disabled	Short Term Charge	1hr - 20p 2hr - 50p 3 hr - £1.00	Free
Little Common	22 2 disabled	Short Term Charge	1hr - 20p 2hr - 50p 3 hr - £1.00	Free
Chapel St	75	Mix of both short & Long Term Charge	As specified for short stay and long stay.	Free
Crown Bank	11	Short Term	1hr - 20p 2hr - 50p 3 hr - £1.00	Free
Hawk Street	9 1 disabled	Short Term	1hr - 20p 2hr - 50p 3 hr - £1.00	Free
Well Bank	13 1 disabled	Short Term Charge	1hr - 20p 2hr - 50p 3 hr - £1.00	Free
Brook House Road ( Lower Waitrose)	139 2 disabled	Long Term Charge	0-2 hr - £1.00 2-4hr - £2.00 Day - £3.00	Free
Junction 17	15	Long Term	0-2 hr - £1.00 2-4hr - £2.00 Day - £3.00	Free

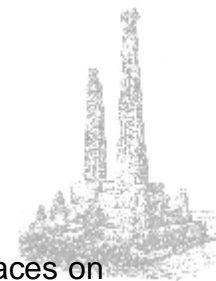
**4. Chapel Street Car Park**

The council is concerned about the current poor state of the surface of a large part of this car park. It is aware of arrangements that Congleton Borough Council had and that CEC now holds, with a developer of adjacent land which is linked with this car park and requests information on the time limits agreed to complete this work.

**If CEC wishes to include this car park in its parking strategy then we recommend that it should be made good before charging commences.**

**5. Season Tickets**

**The Council requests that Car Park Season tickets be made available at an attractive rate for those who park regularly in the Car parks which are designated as Long Term Car parks. It is suggested that £1.00 per day be charged, with a minimum buy of 30 days.**



## **6. Residents Parking on Public Car Parks**

The Council recognises that some residents who do not have car parking spaces on their homes may use the Public Car parks at present.

**The Council requests that CEC Conducts a residents survey to ascertain those residents that live in close proximity to public car parks and currently use these as their main car park.**

## **7. Disabled Car Park Spaces**

It is understood that six spaces marked for disabled use, adjacent to the library, have been added recently to Scotch Common Car Park bringing the total to 10. The Council welcomes this, but is concerned that disabled car park capacity should meet national standards.

**The Council therefore requests that a survey is undertaken in all public car parks to ensure that “disabled spaces” provided are within National guidelines, i.e. 5%.**

## **8. Spaces for Bicycles and Motorcycles**

There are a number of spaces on Scotch Common and the little common which due to their size and shape and not useable for cars. These could be designated and marked for Bicycle and Motorcycle use.

**It is recommended that these spaces are to be free of charge, to avoid ticketing complications and encourage low carbon users.**

## **9. Street Parking**

The Council recognises that a change to the current free of charge status of car parks in Sandbach will cause increased pressure on street car parking in the town.

**The council suggests that streets within a 350 metre radius of the Town Centre are included as part of this overall strategy process.**

**The Council considers that the present areas designated for limited free parking for 1 hour between 8 am and 6pm for 1 hour and with no return for 1 hour should be retained.**

**The Council also requests that CEC ensures that road markings and signage are compliant with the current legal requirements for parking controls.**

The Council suggests that the following streets/ roads are included in the survey to be undertaken by CEC before any imposition of Charges for public car parks.



- Bradwall Road
- Brookhouse Road
- Chapel St
- Church Street
- Commons Mill
- Congleton Road
- Crewe Road
- Elworth Street
- Front Street
- Green Street
- Hawk Street
- High Street
- Hightown
- Hope Street
- Newfield Street
- Sunnymill Drive
- Well Bank
- Welles Street
- Wesley Avenue

Photographs of the above streets are also included as an appendix 1 to this report.

#### **10. Residents parking Permits – On Street**

Residents without off-street parking facilities, who currently park in the street in front of their properties, may require permits in order to ensure that they have a space to park their vehicle/s.

**The Council requests that resident surveys are undertaken in the Streets that are within the 350 metre zone in order to assess the requirements for residents parking permits. The Council requests consultation regarding any plans to charge for these permits.**

#### **11. Control and Management**

The Council recognises the requirement for regular control and management of both Public Car parks and street Parking, in order to reduce vehicle driver non-compliance and thereby reduce traffic obstruction and the resulting problems of congestion and highway safety.

**The Council is disappointed about the plan of CE Council to appoint only 2 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO'S) for the whole of the former Congleton Borough, as stated in the 'Application for Civic Parking Enforcement and Bus Lane Enforcement' document; it was felt that through decriminalisation of parking that the enforcement requirement would be greater. Sandbach Town Council part funds two Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and these are currently deployed on parking enforcement as part of their duties. The Council requests that CE Council takes this**

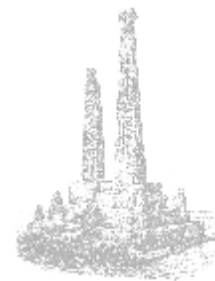
into consideration and opens a dialogue with Cheshire Police and ourselves with the objective of continuing to use this resource in Sandbach.



## 12. References

The Council has based this report on the following reference material.

1. **Meeting with Cllr David Brickhill – 16/4/09**  
Meeting Notes - On Council File
2. **STC Internal Car Parking Report – Cllr Keith Haines**  
01/05/09 – on Council file
3. **Car Parking Strategy -Cheshire East Council**  
**Approved: 21/4/2009**  
<http://onlineservices.congleton.gov.uk/ecminutes/mgConvert2PDF.asp?ID=2786>
4. **RTA Report: Congleton Borough Council – Car Parking Review**  
26/03/2007:  
<http://onlineservices.congleton.gov.uk/minutes/mgConvert2PDF.asp?ID=228>
5. **CBC Prosperity Scrutiny Committee - Agenda**  
11/04/2007  
<http://onlineservices.congleton.gov.uk/minutes/ieListDocuments.Asp?CId=103&MID=2030>
6. **CBC Prosperity Scrutiny Committee - Minutes**  
11/04/2007  
<http://onlineservices.congleton.gov.uk/minutes/mgConvert2PDF.asp?ID=349>
7. **Log of Recommendations to CBC Executive**  
10/7/2007  
<http://onlineservices.congleton.gov.uk/minutes/mgConvert2PDF.asp?ID=355>
8. **CBC Report To Executive**  
Car Park Management - Head of Safer Communities  
16th January 2008  
<http://onlineservices.congleton.gov.uk/minutes/mgConvert2PDF.asp?ID=909>
9. **CBC Executive Resolution – Reaffirming “free at point of use” Parking Policy**  
16/01/2008  
<http://onlineservices.congleton.gov.uk/minutes/ieIssueDetails.asp?Id=3906&Opt=3>
10. **CEC Application for Civic Parking Enforcement and Bus Lane Enforcement**  
Document undated, received 23 April 2009
11. **CBC Letter (P Sutton) to G Bickerton - Scotch Common – Legal Status**  
18/03/2009 - On Council file
12. **Various Letters from G Bickerton to Council - Status of Scotch Common**  
2008-2009 - On Council File
13. **Scotch Common Village Green Status - Open Spaces Society**  
<http://www.oss.org.uk/village-greens/>
14. **Copy of Conveyance of Sandbach Common - Land Registry CH138710**  
11/01/1979
15. **History of Sandbach - C Massey**  
1958 + 1967 Supplement
16. **The History of the Ancient Parish of Sandbach - Earwaker**  
1890



**Appendix 1**  
**Photographic Survey**  
**of the**  
**Status of Sandbach Car Parking**  
**Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2009**  
**14:00-15:00**



**Bold Street**



**Church Street**



**Congleton Road**



**Cross Street**



**Crown Bank**



**Dingle Drive**



**Front Street**



**Green Street**



**High Street (1)**



**High Street (2)**



**Library (1)**



**Library (2)**



**Little Common (1)**



**Little Common (2)**



**Scotch Common**



**Wellbank (1)**



**Wellbank (2)**



**Welles Street**

### **Other Observations**



**Green Street**  
*Faded Lineage*



**Green Street**  
*Non standard  
Disabled bay*



**Parking Restriction  
Signage**