

BACKWELL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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North Somerset Council
For the attention of Councillor Bridget Petty

NAILSEA TOWN CENTRE – PROPOSALS FOR CAR PARKING CHARGES

Backwell Residents Association (BRA) has over 440 paid up member households, representing almost 800 adults, the majority of whom shop regularly in Nailsea town centre, travelling there almost exclusively by car.

We accept there is a need to improve the organization and management of the town centre car parks. However we do NOT agree that an overall charging regime is an appropriate route. The likely consequences include damage to trade, upsetting shoppers, and annoying nearby residents.

The suggestion that, on the grounds of fairness, all towns in the District should charge for parking because there is charging in Weston is illogical and impractical. There is virtually no cross –transference of shopping between Nailsea and Weston, for example.

Nailsea, unlike the other main (seaside) towns in North Somerset does not have a tourist industry. The shops rely totally on local customers. One of the only factors supporting shop owners is a plentiful supply of free parking. If this was lost it would have a serious detrimental affect. There is a danger, for instance, that charging will discourage shop customers, trade will fall way, leading to shop closures and a loss of business rates which would be greater than any revenue earned from car park charging. Nailsea, like many suburban high streets is fighting to remain viable, and any discouragement of shop customers could be a fatal blow.

Another likely consequence of charging (both in the car parks and High Street) will be to push motorists out to parking in nearby (uncontrolled) streets. Many of these are narrow, and also bus routes –with the likely consequence of traffic hazards and impeding local residents.

Nailsea relies heavily on car-borne customers. The local bus service is inadequate and its routes only serve a modest percentage of local residents. The rail station is over a mile from the centre. Walking and cycling (especially from Backwell via the Bucklands Batch hill) is not a realistic option for most users.

There are 5 town centre car parks. The North Somerset Council proposals are to only charge in the two of them which they control (together with central on-street parking). This is

impractical as it will tend to lead to motorists touring the centre seeking a space in one of the free car parks, adding to carbon emissions, traffic jams etc.

It is agreed that parking management is necessary, as the car parks are currently used by office and shop workers, who require all-day parking. Our suggestion for tackling this issue is:

- Retain the Clevedon Road car park for all day parking (with a charging regime which is reasonable for workers).
- The other 4 car parks (with the support of the relevant owners) to continue with a 2/3 hour limit- which will allow for the necessary “churn”.
- Drop the proposal to charge in central streets - which would generate little revenue and be costly to instigate and police.

In summary, we consider that the proposed revenue from car park charging is likely to be very modest, and will be counteracted by a reduction of trade and increased traffic congestion. The proposal to charge will have unintended damaging consequences and should be dropped.

Yours faithfully

M J Veal
Hon. Secretary