

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

meeting date: TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2023
title: EDISFORD CAR PARK
submitted by: ADAM ALLEN, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Committee with an update on the parking trial at Edisford car park for users of the leisure facilities nearby and to seek approval to these arrangements permanent.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
- Community Objectives - To help make people's lives healthier and safer.
 - Corporate Priorities - To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
 - Other Considerations – The leisure facilities at Edisford are unusual in not having their own car parking facilities, which does make an additional financial demand on some users during the chargeable period.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The car park at Edisford serves all the leisure facilities located there, Roefield Sports Centre, Ribblesdale Pool, Tennis centre, RV3G, the grass pitches as well as the riverbank area. It is designated as a short-term car park with 241 spaces, including disabled bays.
- 2.2 At Community Committee in March 2023, members agreed to a trial allowing the use of the Council's long stay permit to be valid on this car park. This followed a petition in January 2023 seeking a period of free parking for Roefield users and that matter was referred to the car parking working group for consideration. The working group determined that this extension of the permit provided a cost-effective response for users of all facilities.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 Permits have been available since April 23. The long stay permit allowed access to all Council long stay car parks as well as granting permission to park on Edisford. The uptake of this option may have been affected because it was only valid for a trial period. Those people who principally park at Edisford and wished to purchase the pass part way through the year, would have been reluctant to do so, not knowing if it would be extended beyond March 2024. Notwithstanding this a year-on-year comparison shows 216 long stay permits were sold Apr to Sept 2022 and 256 for the same period in 2023. It is not possible however to attribute additional permits directly to purchases from Edisford car park users alone.
- 3.2 Income from the car park in a year-on-year comparison is shown below, though drawing conclusions from the figures is difficult given that there are large variations depending upon the weather which influences the use of the riverbank area. Plus, there

has been a change in the level of fees and charges. In the period April to September 2022 the total income was £53,000 and it was £66,520 for the same period in 2023

3.3 There were 3 elements Committee sought information on when granting the trial:

- 1) **Is parking on Edisford Road reducing?** - There is no evidence that this has occurred and parking on the road remains an issue throughout the day when charging applies. It is notable that in the evenings when the charging period ceases, parking on the road is still a factor. This latter impact is believed to be due to the poor entry and exit arrangements at the car park at busy times which can lead to delays of ten minutes plus, especially at the changeover periods for bookings which happen on the hour.
- 2) **Is there any impact on the income generated at the car park?** The income for 2023 is higher than 2022, though factors such as covid, weather and increases in parking fees will account for some of that difference.
- 3) **Is there any noticeable increase in usage at the facilities?** It is difficult to determine a definitive answer on this because of the bounce back from the immediate post covid period at the facilities, which has seen all sports facilities increase their use in 2023. Plus the weather experienced over the two years, because Edisford riverbank use is dramatically impacted by the good weather periods.

3.4 Some users have asked if the permit cost can be paid over several months, to avoid having to pay for it in a single amount. This has been considered, however this would need to be applied across all car parks and would require new systems to monitor whether payments had been made. This is not considered cost effective.

4 PROPOSAL

4.1 The current parking order on Edisford designates it as a short-term car park, therefore the parking order will need to be amended to allow the permanent use of the long stay permit on the car park. Although the intention is to retain the car park as short stay.

4.2 Therefore, it is proposed that the current trial becomes permanent, with the necessary amendment to the parking order.

4.3 This would enable any car owner who wishes to park there to purchase an annual long stay pass, the current cost of which is £99.10. This would allow them to park on the Edisford car park, as well as any other long stay car park on any day of the week without further charge. The 2 hourly charge per visit is £1.90. Assuming two visits per week, this effectively halves the cost for a long stay permit holder.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- Resources – It is budgeted that Edisford car park will generate income of approximately £90,550 this financial year 2023/24. At this point it is unknown what the annual impact of this trial will be on the Council's budget. However, given the income to date that would seem to be negligible. Income to the end of September is ahead of the profiled budget by approximately £5k. This excludes permits/passes, which are recorded centrally as they can be used on several car parks.
- Technical – Use of the Council's Car Parks is governed by its Parking Order. This currently provides that parking at the Edisford Car Park is permitted either by payment

of charges or by display of a Staff Car Park permit. To allow parking by leisure users who purchase a long stay permit, the order will need to be amended to include this new class of permit.

- Political – none in the context of the report.
- Reputation – this approach shows a positive response from the Council to the petition and those enquiries the Council has had previously about addressing the issue of parking for regular users of the leisure facilities at Edisford. It provides a cost-effective option for users of all the sites there to limit their expenditure if they are a regular visitor to the car park and makes parking less troublesome than would be the case by either paying by phone or with cash per visit.
- Equality and Diversity – the permit is open to all, blue badge holders are unaffected, as they retain the right to park in the specified bays without charge.

6. RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 6.1 Approve the use of the long-term permit for parking on Edisford Car Park on a permanent basis.
- 6.2 Authorise the Director of Community Services to take the appropriate steps to amend the Ribble Valley Car Park Order to reflect this.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

For further information please ask for Mark Beveridge 01200 425111