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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 9 JUNE 2022 AT 6.00 pm

Attendance:

The Mayor (Hutchison) (in the Chair)

Councillors Ms Ballard, Beavis, Bradley, Burgess, Casey, Chegwyn, Mrs Cully, Earle, Hammond, Herridge, Mrs Huggins, Hylands, Jessop, Johnston, Miss Kelly, Mrs Morgan, Pepper, Philpott, Raffaelli, Scard, Westerby, Durrant, Gledhill and Cox

APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Apologies for non attendance were received from Councillors Bradley, Marshall, Maynard.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor advised that he had received a large number of compliments about the Falklands Commemoration and would like to place on record thanks to staff for the event. He advised that he had attended a large number of jubilee events all of which had been successful.

TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO 3.4 AND TO ANSWER PUBLIC QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER NO 3.5, SUCH QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED ORALLY DURING A TIME NOT EXCEEDING 15 MINUTES

A Deputation was received from Stephanie Suter.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak here today, to voice the concerns that many of us have with the proposed changes to car parking in Gosport and Lee On The Solent. Whilst we welcome the proposed introduction of an hours free parking in Town Centre, we do not feel this should come at the cost of a 10% increase in fees elsewhere and the loss of 3 hours free parking along the sea fronts and Alver Valley Country Park.

Increasing car parking charges by 10% may only be a few extra pence an hour, but this has a huge impact on those already facing financial hardship. Until you have found yourself having to choose between paying the electricity bill or putting fuel in the car, or having to put back a tin of smart price beans because you are 10 pence short on your food shop you will never truly understand the cost of living crisis and the impact a few pence price increase will have on your constituents who find themselves in this situation.

The impact assessment regarding the car parking changes states the benefits that an hours free parking in town centre will provide various demographics, but it does not cover the negative consequences an additional 10% on parking charges and the loss of three hours of parking will have on these same demographics There are many groups and individuals that currently utilise the free parking along the sea front and Alver Valley, especially in the mornings; local photographers, run clubs, park run, junior park run, open water swimmers, dog walkers, walkers, new parents and many more early morning users will lose their access or face having to pay. Buying a permit isn't always an option as it requires £85 up front and is linked to a single car, removing the ability to car pool and lift share to share the fuel burden. The elderly population highlighted in the impact assessment as benefitting from an hours free parking in town are frequent visitors to the seafront, enjoying a morning walk for both physical and mental wellbeing before the prom gets busy

Lee on Solent parkrun is set up and run by a large number of volunteers who currently only have to pay for one hour parking as they arrive at 8am for set up and leave around 11 after clear down. The event averages 400 participants each week who currently park for free which is a major drawing factor. This could drive them away and would put the event at risk.

Junior park run, held at Stokes Bay each week has over 50 participants aged 4 and up. This instils a healthy way of life from school age onwards, introducing parking charges could drive away volunteers and deter parents from paying for their children to take part - at a time when childhood obesity rates are increasing, do we really want to discourage a free weekly fitness event?

The Breakfast Run Club is held at 8am each Sunday, this allows for an hour of running and an hour at a local business for breakfast after, paying for parking will encourage members to leave early to reduce parking costs and having a detrimental impact on local businesses.

Local community groups like Friends of Stanley Park, Friends of Stoke Bay and Gosport and Fareham Wombles will arrange litter picks along Stokes Bay and surrounding areas at a time when parking is free, this encourages high attendance and ensures our local beauty spots are kept safe and clean for all. Speaking from personal experience, when I was on maternity leave and therefore no income, with a sleepless young baby and facing incredibly lonely days whilst my husband was at work, I would often head down to Stokes Bay for a long walk with the baby, chat to other new parents, dog walkers, OPs and other early morning users, if I had to buy a permit or pay for parking I wouldn't have bothered - mental health concerns are at an all time high, the link between physical exercise and mental health benefits is so clear, shouldn't we be doing all we can to encourage people outside and not drive them away?

Physical and mental health should not be taxed. Mindfulness should be free. Local businesses should be supported. Removing the free local parking as proposed will remove all of the above.

It can be dressed up in different shades and palates but there is no getting away from the facts that this will cause more harm than good.

A petition against the increase in car parking charges was submitted.

QUESTIONS (IF ANY) PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER NO 3.3

A question was received in the name of Councillor Chegwyn

What is the reason for discriminatory parking charges that adversely impact those parking in Gosport Town Centre for more than 2 hours?

It was answered as follows.

The question should be directed at the Conservative Party as they brought in the car parking charges, which Liberal Democrats have always been against. The proposals were not discriminatory, but would address the unbalance of the previous decision to make charges equal.

CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BOARDS OF THE COUNCIL

Consideration was given to reports of the Policy and Organisation Board recommended for consideration and approval by the Full Council.

Free Short Term Car Parking

In line with Standing Order 4.12.1 it was requested that the vote be recorded.

For the recommendation: Councillor Ballard, Mervin Bradley, Chegwyn, Cox, Cully, Durrant, Earle, Hammond, Herridge, Hylands, Johnston, Kelly, Pepper, Westerby, The Mayor

Against the recommendation Councillor Beavis, Burgess, Casey, Gledhill, Huggins, Jessop, Morgan, Philpott, Raffaelli and Scard.

RESOLVED: That the recommendation be carried.

FULL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION CHANGES

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer detailing amendment to the Constitution so as to remove standing order 5.11 "Reference to Council (Service Boards only)" also known as the minority order.

In accordance with Standing Order 4.12.4 a recorded vote was requested and taken as follows

FOR the recommendation: Councillors Ballard, Mervin Bradley, Chegwyn, Cox, Earle, Hammond, Herridge, Hylands, Johnston, Kelly, Pepper, Westerby, The Mayor.

AGAINST the recommendation: Councillors Beavis, Burgess, Casey, Cully, Durrant, Gledhill, Huggins, Jessop, Morgan, Philpott, Raffaelli, Scard.

RESOLVED: That the Council approves the amendment to the Constitution to remove standing order 5.11 "Reference to Council (Service Boards only)" appearing at Part 4 Schedule 11 to take place with immediate effect.

OUTSIDE BODIES APPOINTMENTS.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Hammond be elected as the outside body representative on the Coastal Partnership and that Councillor Kelly replace Councillor K Bradley on the Food Partnership.

ANY OTHER ITEMS

There were none.

The Meeting concluded at 8.20 pm

The Mayor.