

Good morning Dr Wollaston

Thank you for your reply to my email. Yes, I would be grateful if you could please raise the matter of the charges with Torbay's chief executive and express to him our concerns.

I have received another email from Nigel Makin, which I quote from below:

'I had a meeting back in July with Richard Haddock and Kevin Mowat, Jackie Stockman, Tracey Hallett at Brixham Town Hall re the night time tariff which had moved from commencing at 1800hrs in 2016 to 2200hrs in 2017 and the detrimental impact on the "evening Economy" in Brixham. We had people leaving restaurants without having time to have a coffee or a dessert and people even leaving the theatre early so they could move their cars before they got a fine (maximum stay in Brixham Central car park is three hours. Richard and Kevin agreed that a mistake had been made and they would recommend to full council that it should go back to 1800hrs and cost £2.50 (up from £2.20 the year before). This was gratefully accepted, but unfortunately nothing has happened at the time this email has been written. At the same meeting it was "agreed" that the 7 x lamps which were no longer working would be replaced, that has still not been done (that's a third of the car park illumination) and that new tariff boards would be installed through out the bay within a few weeks, this also is still outstanding.

As I've said many times before, car parks are often the first "touch points" that people experience when they visit our towns. Give them a good experience with fair tariffs (that generate the required income for the council), clear signage, line markings, easy to use pay machine that accept all forms of payment (coins, card, swipe) to ensure that no one is turned away because they haven't got the correct change, shelters over the pay machines to protect people from the weather while they pay, "weed free", tell people they need their registration number to pay as they enter the car park (Brixham Central)

To summarise, I think we still lack a viable, long term, consistent, fair parking strategy that maximizes revenue for the council. It also lacks "joined up thinking" in terms of **strategic revenue generation** in that there seems to be no "joined up thinking" in terms of the more "traffic" you generate in the car park, the more footfall you generate in the high street, the more businesses survive and the more businesses will be attracted to fill our many empty retail units.....which means more business rate revenue for the council. Our town centres should be seen as whole revenue generation pots that all dovetail together which we can maximise revenue out of. Come 2020 Torbay Council will need that revenue from business rates and at the moment the revenue from Brixham is on a downward slope.

One last point, when the decision was made to turn off the illuminated car park signs which directed visitors to the car parks which had spaces available, was there any consultation with the car parking team to understand the impact on revenue, or was it another decision made in isolation?'

The last point has been answered by Torbay Council. They have turned off all illuminated signs telling visitors how many spaces remain in each car park so as to conserve money, which is pathetic considering the meagre savings that could be made in this respect and appalling that they should even be in this penny-pinching situation.

Frankly, Dr Wollaston, the car parking 'strategy' is a shambles, being used as a 'cash cow' to generate income for an income-strapped council that is failing to consider, and meet, the needs of its businesses. It may be devolved but it should still be accountable. If you are unable to help further – apart from raising our concerns, which we are grateful for - then who should I write to? Which government department or minister does have the necessary clout to get something done? The decisions being made in regard to Brixham have not been sensible or considerate of our businesses. In the evening, for example, we have even had multiple reports of both staff and business owners having to leave the premises in their breaks to 'feed the meter' because of the restrictions and charging structure imposed upon the central car park. This is a ridiculous state of affairs which could be avoided by the evening tariff starting at 6.00 pm instead of 10 pm.

The overall effect has been highly deleterious upon Brixham businesses but we now face even more uncertainty over the futures of the Oxon Cove car park, which is where our visiting coaches come in to park. With the expansion of the harbour facilities, what infrastructure is going to be put in place to manage the effects of closing off large sections, if not all, of the nearest long stay car park to the town centre and the ONLY coach parking area? Retail businesses desperately need the income generated by coach visitors and, if the situation is not managed adroitly, Brixham businesses might not only face difficulties caused by a reducing number of coach visitors but also further traffic congestion and chaos than they already suffer as a result of the poor road infrastructure that is the first thing encountered by visitors to our town.

We desperately need clear, joined-up thinking in relation to our car parks that recognizes their importance and impact upon local businesses so as to ensure both their long term viability and attractiveness to would be investors. We would be grateful for any assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Green
Chairman, Brixham Chamber of Commerce