

THE TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL (OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES) ORDER 2023 No.2

Statement of Reasons

In the Borough of Tonbridge & Malling

Part 1 - New Parking Charges

Introduction of charges in Larkfield - Martin Square car park

The Martin Square car park in Larkfield currently has no parking charges but is well used. Whilst it is intended to serve the shops, the car park suffers from low turnover long-stay parking which reduces the availability of spaces for all users. It is proposed that the car park should have charges introduced to reduce long-stay parking and help ensure the car park is managed in a balanced manner.

Season tickets would be available to those with a need to park in the car park for longer periods.

Aylesford – Bailey Bridge (East) and Bailey Bridge (West) car parks

The Bailey Bridge (East) and (West) car parks in Aylesford currently have no parking charges but are well used. The car park suffers from a low turnover long-stay parking which reduces the availability of spaces for all users. It is proposed that the car park should have charges introduced to reduce unwarranted long-stay parking and help ensure the car park is managed in a balanced manner.

Season tickets would be available to those with a need to park in the car park for longer periods.

The Council also has a proposal to extend the Bailey Bridge East car park, to provide an additional 15-30 parking spaces towards the river in the “overflow” area, though this is an initial proposal and would be subject to further investigation and design.

Part 2 - Extended parking areas

More Pay & Display bays in Tonbridge – Castle Grounds car park

It is proposed that the 9 “Gateway Visitor” parking spaces at the Castle be changed to Pay and Display parking similar to the other parking spaces in the Castle Grounds. The Gateway is leaving the Castle next year, and through the Castle Study Group the use of the Castle is changing. There is also confusion by some drivers as to why there are different restrictions in place, and the existing Gateway parking arrangements are regularly abused.

This proposal would make a further 9 parking spaces available for public parking.

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Extension to Tonbridge – Upper Castle Field car park

The Upper Castle Field Car Park is the most successful car park run by the Council in terms of income generation and occupancy. It is often full and has become increasingly popular with the growth of events at the Castle. It is also well used on weekdays due to its proximity to Slade Primary school, and at weekends due to its proximity to Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground, Tonbridge Swimming Pool and Tonbridge Juddians Rugby Club.

The Council is proposing an extension to the Upper Castle Field, with the intention to create an additional 28 parking spaces (depending on design) to better meet the demand in the area.

Part 3 – Revised tariff of existing charges

Increase in parking charges in our car parks

As part of the Borough Council's review of fees and charges for its services, the Council is proposing to increase off-street parking charges, to reflect the increasing costs of the provision of services.

Full details of the changes and the associated reasons are stated in the reports and minutes of the 8th November 2023 meeting of the Council's Cabinet, and can be viewed on the Borough Council's website via the Committee pages.

Part 4 – Changes to car park charging periods

The Council's current parking charges are in place Monday – Saturday, 8am – 6pm, with free parking from 6pm, overnight, Sundays and Bank Holidays (though there are exceptions to this such as Haysden Country Park and West Malling High street car park).

The basis for this has been historic, based on traditional "office hours" and the opening times of local shops. However, retail opening times have changed significantly – many shops are open later and some (large retail supermarkets) are open 24 hours. There is also significant demand for parking on Sundays – not driven by free parking, but by the opportunity to carry out tasks, participate in leisure activities and attend events on what is for most a non-working day. This is particularly an issue in the car parks serving the castle, the swimming pool and sportsground in Tonbridge where it can be extremely difficult to find a parking space on a Sunday for leisure activities.

To this end, the Council is proposing the extension of its off-street car parking periods, to apply until 8pm (save in the West Malling High Street car park and

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Hayden Country Park, which remain unchanged) and to apply on Sundays and Bank Holidays.