

Emails between Councillor Cox, responsible for Highways and Parking and Ron Woodley, Chairman of the Burges Estate Residents Association

Hi Tony

Thank you for your e-mail of 13 October 2016, and the attempt to explain the car-parking charges that it seems your officers do not understand. As I write this e-mail, I have the fees and charges budget book in front of me.

I refer you to page 31 under parking operation notes, it clearly states that current charges will remain in car parks with an * on page 32 under Zone C* which means that current charges will remain the same, the signs situated in all these car parks clearly state Monday to Saturday therefore when your officers introduced Sunday charging they are introducing an additional charge which is contrary to the current signage and therefore conflicts with the budget book. I'm afraid your officers seemed not to have picked up this small but vital statement in the book.

As to the sea-front seasonal permit charges, the budget book clearly states an annual sea-front permit for residents is £200 up from £175. The sea front permit for non-residents is £900, (a new charge). I see no problem with the charges for non Southend residents which are a fair price for parking in any area of the sea-front including the central sea-front area. By reducing these to £200 you have made it possible for commuters to park at a cost of £4 per week, well done to that. There are no increases of charges in the book as you state at a jaw dropping 80.5% increase. I suggest you may have done the figures the wrong way around. By the way I refer to the figures on page 34.

I agree that you and Andrew have delegated powers to make changes, but only if the 151 officer agrees that there is no impact to the budget. I have spoken to the 151 officer who has checked with his staff and you did not ask whether there was a financial impact on the finances to the budget. It appears that you and Andrew have broken protocol/procedures.

Again the town centre car parks in Zone A clearly have a * therefore the signage that was in place before still applies for Sundays and is the same scenario as the out of town car parks (therefore the current signage takes precedent). I would also point out that on page 35 there is an opportunity for the Salvation Army to apply for Discretionary Permits which would allow for 5 permits to be free and a further 5 with a 50% discount. These permits for on-street parking would cost on average for each permit £5 per year or if they took up the 2 year offer £4.50 per year Now I call that cheap town centre on-street parking.

Tony, I believe your officers have either deliberately mis-informed you or they do not understand the budget book. I will leave that to you to sort out.

Your comments about BERA members being concerned about reprisals are not worth any comment (BERA is not the conservative party). What I will do is send you a copy of our e-mail dispatches in future so that at least there will be someone keeping you informed of the real situation in Southend, not some form of fiction.

Maybe you should face up to folk and say, hey, I/the Officers got it wrong.

Regards Ron

From: CllrCox
Sent: 13 October 2016 15:42
To: CllrWoodley
Cc: Andrew Lewis
Subject: Re: Thorpe Bay Broadway Sunday Car Parking Charges

Hi Ron,

Following discussions that I have had with Andy Lewis, I thought I would write with regards to parking charges which were implemented on Sunday's at Thorpe Bay Broadway. I have attached the Fees & Charges report from Cabinet of the 11 February 2016 and have also attached a jpeg of page 32. Highlighted in red where the Monday to Sunday charges apply. Essentially, the the charge period is in the first box Zone A with an asterix by the side of it. under the Zone C box there is the asterix which applies to the charge period. This was the final set of parking charges agreed by your Administration which was then approved in the budget Full Council later that month.

I have also attached a couple of the 50+ letters that I have received from the Salvation Army, which highlight the Sunday charges your Administration also put in at Clarence Road for the first time. In addition, in May and June this year, there were some seafront season ticket holders who faced a jaw dropping 80.5% increase as can be found by your budget season ticket pricing on page 34. These were having a disproportionate impact on groups like beach Hut Owners, Kite Surfers and some local businesses.

As I am sure you are aware, directors have the delegated authority to reverse these charges in conjunction with the portfolio holder as long as new charging bands are not created which then have to go through the Council process. As I am sure you are pleased that I have asked Andy under these powers to reverse your ill thought through Sunday charges at Thorpe Bay Broadway, this has also done this for the seafront season ticket prices and the other car parks which previously did not have Sunday charges.

I have also been sent a copy of your email sent to your BERA members on the 30th September. To block the identity of the sender I have blanked out their email address as they were in fear of reprisals from yourself by doing so. Tell me, from reading this, are not campaigning against the charges that your own Administration brought in?

I get from time to time that we all get things wrong on occasions, but sometimes, it can really enhance your credibility to face up to folk and say, hey, I/we got it wrong.

Kind Regards

Tony

Cllr Tony Cox | Conservative Councillor West Shoebury Ward