

# Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

2pm, Wednesday, 20 January 2021

## Introduction of mandatory parking charges at the Pentland Hills Regional Park principal car parks

<b>Executive/routine</b>	Routine
<b>Wards</b>	Pentland Hills
<b>Council Commitments</b>	

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 That Committee supports the introduction of charging for the use of the Regional Park's principal car parks.
- 1.2 That Committee refers this report to the relevant Transport/Roads Committee in each of those local authorities where car park charging is proposed.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

Contact: David Jamieson, Parks & Greenspace Manager

E-mail: [David.Jamieson@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:David.Jamieson@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 07825 552 288

## Introduction of mandatory parking charges at the Pentland Hills Regional Park principal car parks

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 Recent years have witnessed a range of growing traffic management pressures on the Pentland Hills Regional Park, exacerbated during the current Coronavirus pandemic. This report considers the opportunity of charging for car parking at the principal car parks, making recommendations based in part on an engagement exercise carried out with the public in late November / early December 2020.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The PHRP has been growing in popularity over the years, with significantly more visitors accessing its principal beauty spots during the current Covid-19 pandemic. The last survey conducted in 2005/06 estimated 600,000+ annual visitors to the Park.
- 3.2 The PHRP team provides visitor and land management services that enable people to enjoy the landscape and wildlife of the Pentland Hills without damaging its environment. This allows them to engage with nature, take physical exercise and participate in outdoor recreational activities. Protection of the upland environment that people come to enjoy is therefore a key role for the regional park.
- 3.3 Many of the 18 car parks in the Regional Park (Appendix 1) were originally created to alleviate local problems which occurred when inconsiderate parking blocked farm and residential access. However, ever-increasing access to the hills by motor-vehicles means that they are regularly reaching full capacity, resulting in significant vehicle displacement at the most popular sites, which is detrimental to relationships with adjacent farmers and land managers, and undermines the effectiveness of parking provision.
- 3.4 Inconsiderate parking outside of the designated car parks cannot be controlled directly by the PHRP service. Rather, the relevant Roads Authority needs to introduce and enforce appropriate measures, such as parking restrictions through double-yellow-lining and/or Road Traffic Regulation Orders. Where parking is dangerous or is causing a road obstruction, Police Scotland is the enforcing authority.

- 3.5 At its meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2012, the Joint Committee determined not to introduce mandatory parking fees at Regional Park car parks following concerns raised by Midlothian Council Transportation Policy Officers, who felt that this would displace parking at Flotterstone onto the adjacent A702 trunk road. Instead, a voluntary contributions scheme was introduced at the Flotterstone, Threipmuir, Bonaly, Swanston and Harlaw car parks, initially for cash contributions, and latterly via the online/phone RingGo facility. A suggested donation of £2 is advertised (and more options via RingGo), with all funds raised used only for new 'added value' projects within the Regional Park.
- 3.6 While a private landowner can (subject to planning permission) create parking facilities and levy a charge, a local authority requires to follow a statutory process under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This requirement applies even if a charge is not enforced. The legal process follows several stages:
- Formal Consultation - the Roads Authority writes to statutory bodies and other interested parties. This initial consultation is intended to establish whether there are any fundamental issues that would stop the proposal going any further. There is no right of objection at this stage.
  - Public Consultation - the proposal is advertised in the press and representations are invited. There is the right to object at this stage and all sustained objections are addressed at Committee where the decision is made whether or not to proceed.
  - If the decision is made to proceed, a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will be made. Further press notice is required at this stage stating the date when the Order will come into effect.
  - The scheme can then be implemented. The TRO process from beginning to end can take between nine and twelve months; but may take longer.

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 Between 06/11/2020 to 04/12/2020 the Pentland Hills Regional Park held an online public engagement exercise. The engagement centred around anti-social behaviour and traffic management problems, which had been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. From 1864 responses, 66.35% supported charging; 20.78% favoured no charge introduction; and 12.88% were unsure / did not answer.
- 4.2 It has been possible to extrapolate data from respondents stating that they live in the Regional Park. Of these 203 respondents, only 19 provided a postcode which confirms that they live within the PHRP (Appendix 4). The remainder live close to the Regional Park in areas such as Balerno, Currie or Bonaly. Of this group, 116 agreed or strongly agreed with charging for parking, as opposed to 54 who disagreed or strongly disagreed with charging.
- 4.3 Community groups that responded included 4<sup>th</sup> Currie Brownies and the 42<sup>nd</sup> Pentland Scout Group. They supported the introduction of parking charges.

- 4.4 28 other organisations responded, including the British Horse Society, Scottish Campaign for National Parks, Mallyen Angling Ltd, The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society, Rosebery Estate Partnership and Friends of the Pentlands. Of these, 23 (82%) agreed or strongly agreed with the introduction of parking charges. However, Mallyen Angling Ltd, probably the biggest organisational user of Harlaw car park, was strongly against charging because of concerns about its potential impact on their angling business.
- 4.5 Regarding the introduction of an annual permit scheme, 52% were in favour of such a scheme, with 25% against.
- 4.6 An overwhelming majority (90%, 1574 respondents) felt that money raised from car park charges should be retained by the Regional Park for infrastructure such as car park and path improvements. It is therefore considered important that to retain the support of those visiting the Park any car park charging solution ringfences income to be spent in the PHRP.

## 5. Next Steps

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### **Option 1: Charge for car parks using City of Edinburgh Council facilities such as ticket machines and traffic wardens and Midlothian Council facilities at Flotterstone.**

- 5.1 Ensure surrounding roads are adequately covered by parking restrictions such as double-yellow lines or clearways (Mansfield Road, Rigg Road, Harlaw Road).
- 5.2 Investigate the practicalities of a discount scheme for regular users.
- 5.3 Source ticketing machines and introduce enforcement by Traffic Wardens using existing contract arrangements.
- 5.4 Any income generated would be part of the overall Council transport budget to improve roads and associated infrastructure. The charges would not be a revenue and a necessary agreement would need to be made for an annual reinvestment to PHRP maintenance of car park infrastructure and possibly footpath upgrading.

### **Option 2: Charge for car parks using a private contractor.**

- 5.5 Ensure surrounding roads are adequately covered by parking restrictions such as double-yellow lines or clearways.
- 5.6 Investigate the practicalities of a discount scheme for regular users.

Contract a private company to install ANPR (Automated Number Plate Recognition) CCTV systems which automatically penalise vehicles that have not purchased a ticket. The expected revenue would be 100% of ticket sales to the Regional Park, with the private company retaining revenue from fined vehicles. Evidence suggests that this option presents a higher likelihood of parking fee compliance. It can also incorporate a discount scheme for regular users.

### **Option 3: Continue with existing donation scheme.**

- 5.7 Ensure surrounding roads are adequately covered by parking restrictions such as double-yellow lines or clearways.
- 5.8 Improve the publicity around this scheme to increase donation rate.
- 5.9 Explore additional/improved contactless donation to supplement the cash boxes already in place.
- 5.10 Find another design for cash donation boxes to deter theft and promote donation. It should be noted that valuable staff resource is deployed to empty and process the cash donation boxes.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 Option 1 – Initial set-up costs (provision of electricity to car parks), but ongoing costs to private parking attendant company (no quote available yet).
- 6.2 Option 2 – Initial set-up costs (provision of electricity to car parks), but lower ongoing costs (no quote available yet).
- 6.3 Option 3 – Estimated budget of £6,000 for new cash box design and new signage. On-going cost with regards to PHRP staff to empty and process the donation.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 An initial meeting to explore solutions was held with Ward members and stakeholder representatives on 5 August 2020.
- 7.2 PHRP Joint Committee held on 8 September 2020.
- 7.3 PHRP Consultative Forum on 27 October 2020.
- 7.4 PHRP Public Engagement Exercise from 06/11/2020 to 04/12/2020.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 Introduction of Charges for Car Parking – Informal Consultation Report, item 6 PHRP Joint Committee, 22 July 2011
- 8.2 Car Parking Charges Update, item 7 PHRP Joint Committee, 16 March 2012
- 8.3 “2005-06 Pentland Hills Visitor Survey”

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 Parking areas in the Pentland Hills Regional Park, table and map

- 9.2 Appendix 2 2020 Public Engagement section on the introduction of mandatory car park charges
- 9.3 Appendix 3 Main themes and sample of comments from the Public Engagement comments on introduction of mandatory car park charges proposal
- 9.4 Appendix 4 2020 Public Engagement on the introduction of mandatory car park charges: Question 17 & 18

## Appendix 1

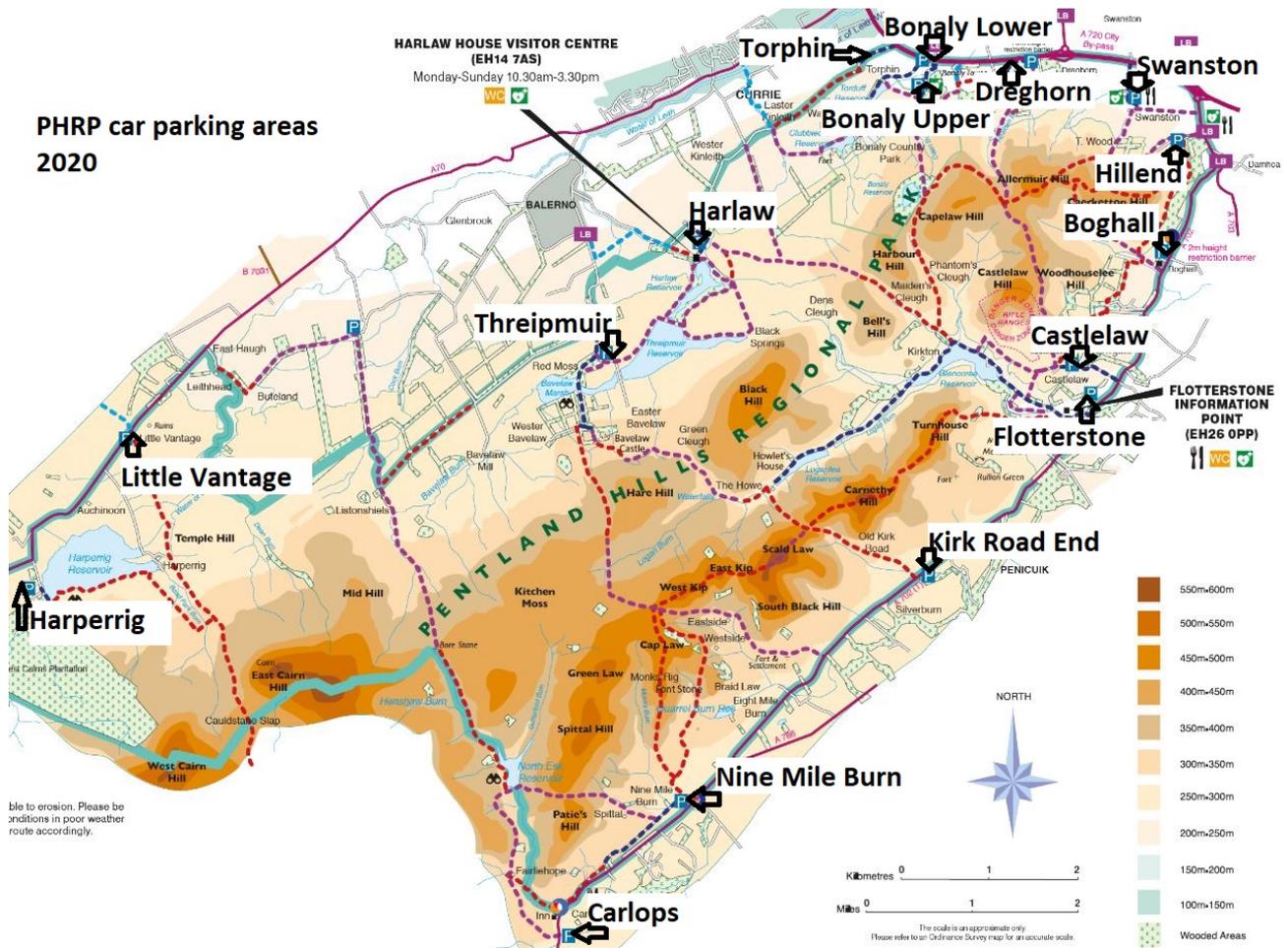
### Parking areas in the Pentland Hills Regional Park, table and map.

Entrances to the Regional Park where parking is possible	Spaces	Blue badge spaces	description	LA area	Owner / responsibility	Notes
Carlops	14		Car park	Scottish Borders Council (SBC)	SBC	Informal. Not in PHRP
Nine Mile Burn EH26 9LZ	10	0	Car park	Midlothian Council (MLC)	MLC	Some spaces used by residents
Kirk Road End	8	0	Lay-by	MLC	Bear Scotland	
Flotterstone Visitor Information Point & café EH26 0PP	68	3	Car park	MLC	MLC	Donation box in place
Castlelaw	6	0	Car park	MLC	Ministry of Defence (MoD)	Informal parking area
Boghall EH10 7DX	20	0	Car park	MLC	SRUC	Due to be reduced in size
Hillend Upper EH10 7DU	24	0	Car park	MLC	MLC	Probably due to be redeveloped by Midlothian
Hillend Lower EH10 7DU	12	0	Car park	MLC	MLC	Probably due to be redeveloped by Midlothian
Swanston EH10 7DS	30	0	Car park	The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC)	CEC	Donation box in place
Dreghorn, car park	20	0	Parking on access road	CEC	MoD	No access for some time due to works
Laverockdale EH13 0QX	N/A	N/A	Street parking	CEC	CEC	Residential area

Bonaly Country Park Upper EH13 0PB	25	0	Car park	CEC	CEC	Donation box in place. Half car park grassed and requiring upgrade
Bonaly Country Park Lower (Torphin Rd) EH13 0PB	30	0	Street parking	CEC	CEC	Not used by residents - entirety available for PHRP parking
Torphin Quarry, street parking, free, EH13 0PQ	N/A	N/A	Street parking	CEC	CEC	Used by residents at top of road
Harlaw Visitor Information Point / Reservoir EH14 7AS	31 +20 on access track	3	Car park	CEC	CEC (access track owned by Rosebery Estates)	Donation box in place
Threipmuir Reservoir EH14 7JS	50	3	Car park	CEC	CEC	Donation box in place (broken)
Little Vantage	6	0	Car park	WLC	WLC	
Harperrig Reservoir EH27 8DH	12	0	Car park	WLC	Owned privately but CEC/WLC responsibility	

From the table above, the principal car parks can be identified as **Flotterstone, Threipmuir, Harlaw and Bonaly (Upper and Lower).**

**PHRP car parking areas  
2020**



ble to erosion. Please be  
conditions in poor weather  
route accordingly.

## Appendix 2

### 2020 Public Engagement section on the introduction of mandatory car park charges

#### Current Issues

The regional park needs to be able to fund its valued conservation and recreational management programmes. PHRP car parks are currently free to park in, unlike most other similar countryside destinations. Free parking encourages visitors to use their vehicles to access the regional park rather than public transport, walking or cycling. This can lead to overfull car parks and associated issues.

#### Our proposed solution

Introduction of car parking charges. Rates to be decided.

Creation of a “regular visitor” pass which would enable regular visitors to pay an affordable annual fee.

Displacement parking to be minimised by creation of Clearway on A702 and double-yellow lines (and / or clearways) around other carparks.

Charging should be done in such a way that it does not disrupt traffic flow at entrances to car parks, and allows essential vehicles access without charging them

Funds to be used for improvement of car parks, regional park footpaths and other recreational management improvements.

#### Things to consider

Charging for car parks could impact those on low incomes already struggling to pay for fuel, tax, vehicle insurance etc – but the ten other parking areas for the regional park would remain free.

We introduced a donation scheme at these car parks in 2017-2018, with suggested £2 donation for parking. Although the scheme is used by some, it clearly does not reflect the usage of the car parks in question.

#### Question 17

**Would you support the introduction of an annual charging scheme similar to a residents’ permit? Yes/ No/ Not sure**

#### Question 18

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to car parks?**

**a/ “Car parking charges should be introduced at the four principal car parks in the regional park.”**

*Please select only one item: Strongly Agree/Agree/Neither Agree or Disagree/ Disagree / Strongly Disagree*

**b/ “Income raised through these charges should go towards regional park infrastructure (e.g. car park and path improvement).”**

*Please select only one item Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neither Agree or Disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree*

#### Question 19

**Please let us know any comments you have on proposals.**

## Appendix 3

A small selection of comments to highlight each main theme from the recent Public engagement.

<b>Comments from those supporting charges (66.35%) included the following</b>
<i>"Have no issues with parking charges that go towards the upkeep of the park and for facilities"</i>
<i>"The money collected would have to back to the Pentlands upkeep"</i>
<i>"Please also improve access &amp; parking for bikes &amp; other sustainable transport"</i>
<i>"Needs to be enforced otherwise some drivers will still park without paying"</i>
<i>"£2 a day is a reasonable charge"</i>
<i>Must include means for electronic payment. Common, say in lake District national trust carparks"</i>
<i>"If you are talking charges per hour like those in town then NO I do not agree"</i>
<i>"This has to be carefully planned as there is the risk that people will park outside the designated car park to avoid paying any charges and in doing so create chaos on the access roads."</i>
<i>"People should be discouraged from driving to the car parks on the edge of the city (Swanston, Bonaly, Hillend and Dreghorn). People should be able to get there on foot, bike or public transport...there need to be more places to lock bikes."</i>
<i>"I would be happy to pay to park in the 4 main carparks but not sure I'd want to pay an annual charge unless i was guaranteed a space. I may consider though it and look on it as a donation to help the upkeep and protect an area I love,"</i>
<i>"I make a point of always paying via ringo when I visit, but it's not that well sign posted and I'm not surprised people miss it."</i>
<i>"if someone can afford to run a car, they can afford £2 to park"</i>
<i>"Do not make it voluntary. No one will pay it"</i>

<b>Comments from those NOT supporting charges (20.78%)</b>
<i>"I strongly believe it is the government's responsibility to fund looking after the car parks. It should be encouraged to exercise and enjoy the hills for all the mental and physical benefits that come from it..."</i>
<i>"We pay council tax. Car park should be free"</i>
<i>"For many, this is a local park which they should not have to pay for by, effectively, an additional tax"</i>
<i>"I don't agree with any charging. Full car parks mean you are a victim of your own success. Larger car parks? More car parks in different places?"</i>

*“Paying to park will discourage people to visit. For someone who goes up to Harlaw about 5 days a week if I were to pay to park I would not be going. I would park further away and walk like most other people”*

*“Parking should be for blue badge holders only and should be free”*

## Appendix 4

### 2020 Public Engagement on the introduction of mandatory car park charges

#### Question 17 & 18

The questionnaire attempted to capture those who were resident within the Regional Park boundary. A boundary map was provided with this question.

- 203 respondents selected resident
- 1,669 respondents selected non – resident

On investigating the answers, it appears some respondents have selected being resident when they are outside the boundary but living in neighbouring locations.

Using postcode data provided:

- 19 were actual postcodes within the Regional Park boundary
- 24 did not leave their postcode
- 160 were in neighbouring postcodes covering areas including Balerno, Currie, Bonaly and Colinton.

Using the above info on actual resident views for question 17 and 18 we find the following results:

**Question 17: Would you support the introduction of an annual charging scheme similar to a residents' permit?**

#### Original results

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	964	51.50%
No	475	25.37%
Not sure	408	21.79%
Not Answered	25	1.34%

Using the above info **on actual resident views** we obtain the following results

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	8	42%
No	6	32%
Not sure	4	21%
Not answered	1	5%

#### Non-resident views results

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	84	53%
No	50	32%
Not sure	24	14%
Not answered	2	1%

**Question 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to car parks?**

***Car park proposals agreement - Car parking charges should be introduced at the four principal car parks in the regional park.***

**Original results**

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	590	31.52%
Agree	652	34.83%
Neither agree or disagree	233	12.45%
Disagree	164	8.76%
Strongly disagree	225	12.02%
Not Answered	8	0.43%

Using the above info **on actual resident views** we obtain the following results

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	6	32%
Agree	5	26%
Neither agree or disagree	3	16%
Disagree	1	5%
Strongly disagree	4	21%
Not answered	0	0

**Non-resident views results**

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	55	34%
Agree	39	24%
Neither agree or disagree	24	15%
Disagree	13	8%
Strongly disagree	28	18%
Not answered	1	1%

***Car park proposals agreement - Income raised through these charges should go towards regional park infrastructure (e.g. car park and path improvement).***

**Original results**

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	1194	63.78%
Agree	380	20.30%
Neither agree or disagree	141	7.53%
Disagree	34	1.82%
Strongly disagree	90	4.81%
Not Answered	33	1.76%

Using the above info **on actual resident views** we obtain the following results

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	10	53%
Agree	5	26%
Neither agree or disagree	3	16%
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	1	5%
Not answered	0	0

**Non-resident views results**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly agree	92	58%
Agree	27	17%
Neither agree or disagree	17	11%
Disagree	4	2%
Strongly disagree	14	9%
Not answered	6	3%