

North York Moors National Park Authority

14 December 2015

Review of Car Park Charges

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 For Members to agree a revised scale of NPA Car Park Charges to commence on 1 March 2016

2. Background

- 2.1 The guiding principles in the setting of car park charges by the National Park Authority are that they should be set at a reasonable level, that they should compare well with the charges levied at other similar facilities and that they should reflect the level of services on offer at the car park.
- 2.2 The current level of fees charged for parking in the National Park Authority's Car Parks was set on 1 April 2012 following an extensive review of the operation which included not only a review of charges, but also significant changes to staffing, the introduction of pay and display machines and year round charging.
- 2.3 Car Park tariffs fall within an over-arching Operational Principle of income generation adopted in the Authority's Business Plan 2012-15. This Plan recognises the fundamental purpose for the provision of car parking being enabling public access. The Plan assumed that income from car park fees would increase to approximately £400,000 by 2014/15.
- 2.4 Subsequent to the setting of the Business Plan target and despite shrinking budgets and reduced staffing, the Authority has made significant investments which might have been expected to increase use of and income associated with car parks, including:
- Development of cycle centre at Sutton Bank
 - Improvement of walking routes from Saltergate
 - Refurbishment of the Compass Room at Moors National Park Centre
 - Extension of the events and exhibitions programme.
 - Work to raise the profile of the North York Moors in general and the visitor centres in particular.

These works were in addition to the extensive annual programme of maintenance and improvement of car parks and toilets and it is assumed that they would act to increase use of car parks and result in a higher level of income. The major investment and developments at Sutton Bank for example were made on the agreed basis that the costs would be partly recouped by a £15,000 increases in income through car park charges each year. On this basis the adjusted amount that should be being raised to match Business Plan expectations is still not being reached.

- 2.5 Income generation forecasts previously presented to members included provision for a rise in parking fees in 2015/16 following a period of fixed fees in light of the difficult economic climate. If the proposed growth in income as set out in the scenarios presented to Members is to be realised, the review of fees now needs to be carried out, as set out below.

- 2.6 In addition, the Retail Price Index has increased by approximately 10% over the last four years (ie since the last adjustment of car park charges) and is likely to have increased by a further 2 % prior to any fee changes being implemented. Given these factors a modest increase in car park tariffs now seems both necessary and justifiable.
- 2.7 Inevitably, some adverse comments were received soon after the introduction of revised charges in 2012, but since then the level of car park fees appears to have been generally well accepted. Fees have not been increased since, as it was considered that this could lead to a fall in visitor numbers when people were coping with the harsh economic climate.
- 2.8 It is also relevant to note that, unlike many other authorities (including some National Park Authorities), it is not proposed that we introduce charges for public toilets at any locations.
- 2.9 The changes to staffing and car park management generally have proved to be successful and so no further changes are proposed at this time.

3. Current Performance

- 3.1 Note that income figures used throughout this report are all **gross**. 20% VAT is payable on all ticket and permit sales, so the corresponding net income for budgetary purposes will be 20% less.
- 3.2 The numbers of tickets sold in 2014 to the end of October demonstrates the proportions of long (2 hrs and over) vs short stay (up to 2 hours) visits as shown in **table 1**. The proportion of short to long stay visits varies from 81% at Thornton-le Dale to only 48% at Saltersgate.
- 3.3 **Table 1** also shows the level of activity at each site, with Thornton-le Dale being the busiest. Note particular circumstances at Goathland, where the rent payable to the landowner, Duchy of Lancaster Estate is a fixed sum, plus a proportion of ticket sales and where a high proportion of visitors are drawn to "Aidensfield". The single flat rate fee has worked well here.
- 3.4 **Table 2** gives approximate numbers of ticket sales with corresponding income for the 2014/15 financial year. Our large car parks with pay and display machines dispensing tickets at the standard two tier rate account for 75% of all ticket sales.
- 3.5 Chop Gate car park in Bilsdale receives a reasonable number of visitors, though numbers fall short of what would be economically viable for the installation of pay and display machines, so a self-dispensing manual ticket machine, as found at supermarket deli counters, was introduced on a trial basis last year. Income figures reveal 1564 £1.00 tickets were sold in 2014/15.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 No change to:
- the selection of car parks at which charging is by electric pay and display machine
 - time periods for duration of parking,
 - self-dispensing £1.00 ticket sales at Chop Gate
 - provisions for horse-box and motorhome parking.
 - coach parking charges or facilities
 - free use of public toilets

- 4.2 Modest increases in tariffs proposed in **Table 3** take the short stay rate up from £2.20 to £2.50 and the long stay rate from £4.00 to £4.50. This is an annual increase of approximately 3%, giving an increase over the period from 1 April 2012 of 13.6% and 12.5% respectively. If ticket sales remain at the same level as 2014/15 this could generate an increase in income from ticket sales of 14.5%.
- 4.3 National Park tariffs would still compare favourably with those of other NPAs and other heritage attractions in the region, though some neighbouring Councils charge less as shown in **Table 4**. Recent enquiries have revealed that several of these expect to make modest increases to their tariffs for 2016.
- 4.4 Goathland and Saltersgate charges rise by 20%, but remain competitive when compared with other Authorities' charges. Note the neighbouring private car park in Goathland charged £2.50, the same as the NPA, in 2015; helpfully opening on request when the NPA car park was full. The owner may follow the Authority's lead and increase her charges to match.
- 4.5 Figures relating to motorbike and coach ticket sales and permits appear in **Table 5**.
- 4.6 The motorbike option in the ticket machine displays have been a regular cause of confusion for members of the public, resulting in additional engagement with our busy car park wardens. The modest income generated (£571.50 in 2014/15) is not considered to be worth this extra work and so motorbike parking will be **free** from 2016. On site signage will however encourage motorcyclists to make a donation to the work of the NPA.
- 4.7 73% of all tickets issued for coach parking come from Goathland. The modest £5.00 fee is considered to be about right, as increases could divert coach tours away from national park destinations with corresponding loss of visitor income. No change to this tariff is proposed.
- 4.8 Permit sales generated approximately £20,500 in 2014/15, striking a reasonable balance between offering regular visitors and residents cost effective parking and maximising income from daily sales. Permit prices are suggested to rise by 12.5% - a similar amount to the large car park charges, although annual residents permits have been hugely under-priced when compared with those offered by others and so a higher rate of increase is proposed. 50% increase would bring the tariff up to £15.00, but even a 100% increase to £20 would still be very good value, offering a saving from only the fifth long stay visit in the year. The resident permit should be limited to residents and their nearest car park since this was the original purpose. Some tightening of availability will be needed here, but the all car park annual permit would still offer dramatic savings for the most regular users.
- 4.9 Raising parking tariffs may reduce the number of sales, at the start of the new regime, as drivers choose to go elsewhere and so an assumed temporary reduction of 5% might be reasonable. We have however been experiencing steady growth in ticket sales in recent years, so following this trend, the likely increase in ticket sales would also be approximately 5%. The net result is zero and so the tables make no adjustment for either factor.
5. **Conclusion**
- 5.1 The proposal is a light touch, review of tariffs which have remained unaltered since 2012 and so is considered reasonable given the Authority's continuing re-investment in access facilities despite facing increasing costs.

6. Public Reaction

- 6.1 Any increase in parking tariffs can be expected to generate negative reaction from both visitors and residents, so any announcement will require careful attention to not only explain the reasons for increasing tariffs, but also illustrate the essential work being delivered by the National Park Authority.

7. Financial and Staffing Implications

- 7.1 If implemented, the proposed tariff changes would generate an estimated increase in earned car park income of:

- 15% from large car parks
- 19% from permit sales

- 7.2 Total gross income prediction for 2016/17 is estimated [round figures] to be:

	£
Pay and Display car ticket sales	446,000
Coach ticket sales	6,800
Permits	26,300
Chop Gate	1,600
Total	<u>480,700</u>

- 7.3 Additional costs of the changes would be approximately £1000 for the software to implement the tariff changes, and 5 days additional staff time on design and print of new permits, notices etc, website changes, and any other necessary updates.

8. Contribution to National Park Management Plan

- 8.1 The proposal will have a positive relative impact on the delivery of the National Park Management Plan since no long term impact on visitor numbers is expected, but without the funds to maintain the Car Parks and associated infrastructure of the National Park these will inevitably deteriorate.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 That NPA car park tariffs be revised with effect from 1 March 2016 by:

- maintaining free use of toilets
- removing the motorcycle tariff and increasing the:-
- short stay (up to two hours) rate from £2.20 to £2.50
- long stay (over two hours) rate from £4.00 to £4.50
- single Goathland tariff from £2.50 to £3.00
- Saltergate long stay from £2.00 to £2.50
- all car parks annual permit from £40.00 to £45.00
- all car parks weekly permit from £20.00 to £22.50
- frequent user pass for our Centres from £20.00 to £22.50
- residents permit pass from £10.00 to £15.00 or £20.00.

Contact Officer:
Karl Gerhardsen
Head of Recreation & Park Management
Tel No: 01439 772700

Table 1

Number of tickets sold in 2014 to end Oct

	short stay	long stay	TOTAL TICKETS	% SHORT	% LONG
Rate (£)	£2.20	£4.00			
Hutton le Hole	10,836	4,086	14,922	72	28
Thornton le Dale	16,232	3,667	19,899	81	19
Newton U Roseberry	8,289	4,216	12,505	66	34
Grosmont	6,614	7,402	14,016	47	53
Sutton Bank	10,721	6,181	16,902	63	37
Moors Centre	<u>10,753</u>	<u>3,430</u>	14,183	76	22
total number	63,445	28,982	92,427	68	32
total value	£139,579.00	£115,928.00			
Rate (£)	£2.50				
Goathland	21779				
total value	£54,447.50				
Rate (£)	£1.00	£2.00			
Saltergate	4611	5072	9683	48	52
total value	£4,611.00	£10,144.00			
TOTAL INCOME			£324,709.50		

Actual total income for 2014/15 year = £389098 ie 19.82% over ticket number calculation
75% of all ticket sales are at the std two-tier rate applicable at the majority of car parks

Table 2

approx number of tickets sold in 2014 /15 financial year

	short stay	long stay	TOTAL TICKETS
Rate (£)	£2.20	£4.00	
Hutton le Hole	13,003	4,903	17,906
Thornton le Dale	19,478	4,400	23,878
Newton U Roseberry	9,946	5,059	15,005
Grosmont	7,936	8,882	16,818
Sutton Bank	12,865	7,417	20,282
Moors Centre	<u>12,903</u>	<u>4,116</u>	17,019
total number	76,131	34,777	110,908
total value	£167,488.20	£139,108.00	
Rate (£)	£2.50		
Goathland	26134		
total value	£65,335.00		
Rate (£)	£1.00	£2.00	
Saltergate	4932	6206	11138
total value	£4,932.00	£12,412.00	
TOTAL INCOME			£389,275.20

Actual total income for 2014/15 year = £389098

so the tabular calculation above gives an over-estimation of only 0.045%

Table 3

Estimated ticket sales 2016/17 with
proposed low increase in charges from 1 March 2016

	short stay	long stay	TOTAL TICKETS	
Rate (£)	£2.50	£4.50		
Hutton le Hole	13,003	4,903		17,906
Thornton le Dale	19,478	4,400		23,878
Newton U Roseberry	9,946	5,059		15,005
Grosmont	7,936	8,882		16,818
Sutton Bank	12,865	7,417		20,282
Moors Centre	<u>12,903</u>	<u>4,116</u>		17,019
total number	76,131	34,777		110,908
total value	£190,327.50	£156,496.50		
Rate (£)	£3.00			
Goathland	26134			
total value	£78,402.00			
Rate (£)	£1.00	£2.50		
Saltersgate	4932	6206	11138	
total value	£4,932.00	£15,515.00		
TOTAL Ticket Sales income prediction			£445,673.00	(14.5% INCREASE)

Table 4**Car Park Charges levied by other Authorities****tariff 2015**

Authority		1hr	2hrs	4hrs	6hrs	day	residents 12 month permit for 1 car park
Yorkshire Dales NPA**			£2.50			£4.50	£40.00 pro rata
Lake District NPA	Ullswater-Pooley Bridge	£2.00	£3.20	£5.60		£7.00	£175.00
Lake District NPA	Brockhole Centre	£2.00	£3.20	£4.40		£8.00	"
Lake District NPA	Ravenglass		£2.00	£3.50		£5.00	"
Peak District NPA *		£1.50		£3.50		£4.50	£25.00
Ryedale D C **	Helmsley	£1.50	£2.50			£5.80	£200.00
Hambleton D C **	Thirsk-Millgate	£0.60	£1.20			£2.40	£40.00
Scarborough B C	Robin Hood's Bay (free in winter)	£1.50	£2.00	£3.50	£4.50	£5.50	n/a
Scarborough B C	Marine Drive (free in winter)	£2.00	£3.00			£6.50	n/a
Redcar & Cleveland B C*	Fountain St Guisborough	£1.00	£1.50			£3.00	n/a
English Heritage	(Rievaulx) [refund if visit]					£4.00	n/a
National Trust	Nunnington Hall					£7.50	n/a
City of York Council	Marygate	£2.10	£4.20	£8.40		£12.00	£20.00 for discounted fees
Forestry Commission **	Dalby (£4.00 Nov-Feb)					£7.00	£42.00
North York Moors NPA current							
			up to 2hrs over 2 hours				
			£2.20	£4.00			£10.00
North York Moors NPA proposed			£2.50	£4.50			£15 or £20

* no change expected for 2016

** under review

Table 5

**North York Moors NPA parking permits
and car park tickets for coaches and motorbikes**

2014/15

total sales	tariff	number	income	% rise	proposed tariff	predicted income	Notes
motorbikes	£1.50	381	£571.50	n/a	free	nil	generates many user errors
coaches	£5.00	1357	£6,785.00	0	£5.00	£6,785.00	encourages visitor spend
							No. of visits for savings to apply
all car parks annual permit	£40.00	173	£6,920.00	12.5	£45.00	£7,785.00	10
all car parks weekly permit 7 days	£20.00	106	£2,120.00	12.5	£22.50	£2,385.00	5
frequent user Sutton Bank, Moors Centre	£20.00	90*, 60*	£3,000.00	12.5	£22.50	£3,375.00	5
residents permit for a named car park	£10.00	852	£8,520.00	50	£15.00	£12,780.00	3
total			<u>£27,916.50</u>			<u>£33,110.00</u>	
						18.6% rise	
<i>OR: effect of doubling residents permit fee</i>				<i>100</i>	<i>£20.00</i>	<i>£17,040</i>	<i>5</i>
						<u>£37,370</u>	
						33.9% rise	

* : estimated sales on numbers issued to centres