

UDC (OFF STREET PARKING PLACES) ORDER 2024

COMMENT FROM STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL

It is the opinion of this council that the proposals highlighted within the consultation are geared solely for debt reduction, being detrimental to local businesses and community adhesion, at a time when the latter is of greatest importance.

1 INFLATIONARY COST INCREASES

The UDC 'Statement of Reasons', says that inflation has been taken into account. According to the Bank of England calculator, the overall cumulative inflation rate since 2015 until the end of 2023 is 32%. i.e, £10 in 2015, would be equivalent to £13.22 now. The proposed changes are well in excess of this amount and in many cases 100% greater. This seems excessive and unjustifiable.

**2 CRAFTON GREEN
REMOVAL OF LONG STAY PROVISION**

- There is no reason given for this. Where will people working full time along the Cambridge Road park? They are unlikely to park in Lower Street and walk up Chapel Hill. More likely they will park in local streets. Access to local employment will be affected by removing this discretionary benefit for employees.
- We have been contacted by a Parishioner who volunteers at Touchpoint, she is very concerned that volunteers not only will have their parking time restricted but will have to pay an additional amount over and above what they are already paying to do voluntary work. This seems unfair to volunteers who are performing outstanding work for the vulnerable in our community.
- Will vulnerable people using Touchpoint be put off due to high parking costs? Those with mobility problems will be particularly impacted.

3 SEASON TICKETS/PARKING PERMITS – CRAFTON GREEN

We would like to see reduced price season tickets still being available to local employees in the Crafton Green car park. This would support local employment. Resident parking permits should also be considered for local residents who live in terraced type accommodation with no parking in the North of Stansted, particularly in Silver Street.

4 CHARGING FOR SUNDAYS AND BANK HOLIDAYS

This is an appreciated benefit which is being removed, whilst the cost is low, no doubt it will be increased in line with the daily charges at some point once the charging precedent has been established.

5 SHOPPERS

Doubling the costs of the 30 minutes stay for shoppers, or users of the library and Touchpoint etc, is excessive. Again, people will just park elsewhere, further burdening already congested roads. A better proposal would be to offer free parking for the first 30 minutes, thereby encouraging people to park off-roads. Crafton Green car park is Parish Council owned and operated under licence by UDC. The proposal that the 30-minute period charge should be doubled fails to take into consideration the change in status of this area, thanks to the activities brought about by Touchpoint, which has transformed it into a true community hub for the village and the surrounding communities. The Parish Council has in the past requested a free 30-minute parking period which has been turned down.

The proposed increased charges would drive people onto Cambridge Road and surrounding streets, creating more congestion and do no favours for the local businesses around here. We believe that a free period is necessary to facilitate those taking advantage of the services offered by Touchpoint, the library and local businesses, thus increasing the footfall locally.

6 LOWER STREET CAR PARK

To function properly, Lower Street car park urgently requires reconfiguration. The fact there is a private car park occupying the same area, already creates confusion. People are regularly seen parking in the Castle zone and not paying or purchasing a ticket from the council machine. The fact that there are different tariffs for these two parking zones, adds to the chaos.

The Stansted surgery needs more parking spaces, especially with their plans for merging with the Elsenham practice. This development, and with Stansted's only pharmacy located here, has established an important Health facility, for Stansted and the surrounding area, which was not in place when the survey was conducted in 2022. We therefore urge, in the strongest terms, the District Council to reassess the situation here.

7 SUMMARY

None of this will alleviate the parking issues in Stansted and are likely to make it worse, there seem to be no positives on offer here at all. Just a substantial hike in costs for everyone using the parking facilities. Increasing by the cumulative inflation rate could be justified but this is greatly in excess of that. We cannot see how these these increases and other proposals can be justified.

These proposals does not consider the difference in amenities available in Stansted Mountfitchet compared to Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow.

The Lower Street car park is primarily a long-stay facility, catering mainly for commuters and social amenities. The increasing importance of the Health Services and Co-Op store cries out for short-term parking with pricing to reflect their importance to the community.

The Crafton Green car park is a short stay facility and has become a true community asset, ideally placed to complement the facilities offered by Touchpoint, the library and local businesses. The proposed increases in parking fees would do nothing to enhance community adhesion.