



Stansted Mountfitchet  
Economic Development Group

Stansted Mountfitchet EDC  
Stansted Business Forum  
Mountfitchet  
Essex  
30<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Cc; Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council  
Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch  
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To: [Business@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:Business@uttlesford.gov.uk)

### Car parking in Uttlesford - consultation on management of UDC car parks and charges

Dear Sirs

In reference to Uttlesford District Council have sending out a “consultation on management of car parks and charges” with the period closing on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024. To that end we would like to object to the proposal and in affect will be challenge on economic grounds the justification of Uttlesford to “enforce” increases in parking charges by circa 221 % above the rate of inflation as stated by the ONS on the date of their email.

As our District Councillors and Local MP who are accountable to the residents of Mountfitchet, we write to you with distaste on the proposed increase in carparking charges within Stansted Mountfitchet Carparks. Please refer to the table below with your proposed increase as of April 2024.

	<1/2 hr	<1hr	<2hr	<3hr	<4hr	<5hr	<9 hrs (all day)	Max stay
Crafton Green								
Existing	£0.40	£0.60	-	£1.20	-	-	£3.00	All day
Proposed	£0.80	£1.20	£1.70	£2.20	-	-	-	3 hours
Increase (£)	£0.40	£0.60	£1.70	£1.00				
% Increase	100%	100%	100%	83%				

#### Lower Street

Existing	£0.40	£0.60	£1.00	£1.20	£2.00	£2.40	£4.70	All day
Proposed	£0.80	£1.20	£1.70	£2.20	£2.70	£3.20	£5.20	All day
Increase (£)	£0.40	£0.60	£0.70	£1.00	£0.70	£0.80	£0.50	
% Increase	100%	100%	70%	83%	35%	33%	11%	

The small businesses within our geographical reach, have been casualties of not only covid trading restrictions leading to an ongoing significant fall in footfall, increase costs owing to Brexit, higher mortgage costs owing to the Government Crashing the economy in October 2023, in action on fuel (note Government confirmed in March 2022 that the UK only relies on 4% of its



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fossil fuel from Ukraine and Russia), but more recently, suspension of car parking on the high-street whilst road works were being undertaken which has been compounded by the costs and locations of parking within Stansted Mountfitchet. The proposal will undoubtedly sustain further demise of footfall to our high street, putting immediate strain and in some cases, foreclosure on local businesses.

Uttlesford Council rely on business rates to help maintain services they are obliged to offer and without these, Uttlesford Council will have a larger than current budget deficit. Why have you and the other councillors allowed such financial incompetency to go on for so long? The argument of continued cuts from Central Government are invalid. If you choose to use this argument, then you are complicate on previous actions of pillaging the local community for your own failings!!! Is this another reason for the "Stealth Tax" proposal?

To get full transparency of the revenue and costs to operate and maintain, these car parks, we ask for full visibility of these for the last 8 years. (you refer to 2015 as the bench mark year). Anything else suggests that you are picking a fictious figure for inflation without justification supported by evidence.

We also ask for communication from the Council, both County and District, for the initial review and evidence to support that you have re-tendered this service and when was this communicated to the Local Parish Councils? We also ask for the workings of the proposed increases for which you have set your proposals. They too are significant stakeholders and under own regulations, stakeholders must be consulted first, before any consultation period is communicated to the residents. We also note that this proposal has been sent out three months after NEPP were given the tender for carpark monitoring for the next five years!! Is this a case of let them do as they wish as they know have the contract for five years??

We would like to know when the process of re-tendering is starting and finishing and the number of replies you get and how these will be adjudicated and awarded. However, this appears to be academic given the NEPP have been given the rights for the next five years.

Anything else is a renege on corporate responsibility and discharging yourselves of being accountable to the residents of Uttlesford and not meeting your terms of office as voted in by the electorate! (similar to the current Refuse issue throughout the Ward)

Key facts which Uttlesford communication fail to communicate to any resident let alone the local Parish Council.

#### **Key points**

**U.K. inflation** rate for 2022 was 7.92%, a 5.4% increase from 2021. U.K. inflation rate for 2021 was 2.52%, a 1.53% increase from 2020. U.K. inflation rate for 2020 was 0.99%, a 0.75% decline from 2019. U.K. inflation rate for 2019 was 1.74%, a 0.55% decline from 2018. Even on a compound inflation calculation this does not achieve a "100%" increase in reported costs. (ONS)

#### **Foot fall in towns and villages**

Over 2023, the reported footfall on highstreets in towns and villages has dropped on average by 5.5% YoY, (Retail Insight Network). Stansted Mountfitchet has seen higher than this.

#### **Business Rates**

The trend for 2023/2024 is that they will increase. (GOV.UK). This will put further financial stress onto a current sector already on "Life support" high street businesses. Would you prefer less business rates as businesses close as a result of an increase in car parking fees?



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We ask for any “conflict of interest” or projects each councillor is awaiting funding for which may be supported by these increases? Naturally we trust our councillors to be open and transparent and to communicate with our parishioners but as this is a public consultation process, such projects and activities are in the “Public Interest” and must be declared in this process.

As the Mountfitchet Economic Development Group, and in conjunction with Stansted Business Forum, we would welcome you to our meeting to answer these points and questions from those businesses who will be affected from your proposed, increases.

Whilst Mountfitchet has a population of circa 8,621, you must consider the ageing population of over 65 years of age, circa 981 individuals. We have asked them if their pension or winter fuel allowances have increased by 100% based on your arguments. No surprise the answer is NO.

Can they afford to pay 100% increase in parking, NO!!!

We look forward to a full and detailed reply to all the questions asked above and for you to provide all the information requested in good time.

Any statement which pass the ownership on to Essex County Council will be frowned upon and merely as “Teflon”. Should you choose this “expected line” we will expose that the Uttlesford District Council and its councillors have no teeth or back bone to push back and in affect would bring into question the value you offer those who voted you in.

On behalf of Mountfitchet Economic Development Group and Stansted Business Forum

D. W Arora  
Chair SMEDG

P James  
Chair SBF

All replies to  
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