

Delegated Decision Report of the Chief Executive

Subject: Gedling Country Park – Car Park Permit Scheme

Date: 6 February 2025

Wards Affected

Gedling

Purpose

To agree a permit scheme for Gedling Country Park.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Decision Made:

That the Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder (Leader) gave approval to:

- 1) Implement a Car Parking Permit scheme for Gedling Country Park as set out within paragraph 2.1 of this report.**
- 2) Review options for administering car parking permits by a third party.**

1 Background

- 1.1 On 9 January 2025, Cabinet approved the implementation of a £2 parking charge at Gedling Country Park.
- 1.2 Approval was also granted for a permitting system to be introduced, for a fee, for regular uses of the park. The fee and administration of the scheme is to be agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.
- 1.3 This report provides detail and recommendations on the scheme which is to be implemented on 1 April 2025 when the new Car Park Order comes into effect.

Permit Cost

- 1.4 The consultation process highlighted how many users of the park are 'regular' users who tend to visit the park several times a week, and in some instances, twice daily. To encourage this frequency of use to continue, a permit scheme was recommended. To determine a fair price for the annual permit, a benchmarking exercise was carried out. Details of permit prices across other local parks are detailed below:

Park	Permit Price per Annum
Rushcliffe Country Park	£55.00
Rufford Park	£50.00
Sherwood Pines	£72.00
Wollaton Park	£80.00
Newstead Abbey	£60.00

- 1.5 The above demonstrates a low cost for annual permits which prove good value for money at these sites, however these sites are not directly comparable to Gedling Country Park. It is therefore important to look at the cost of an annual permit in comparison to paying each visit. These can be seen below:

Permit Price per Annum	Cost per Week
£100.00	£1.92
£200.00	£3.85
£250.00	£4.81
£300.00	£5.77

- 1.6 With car parking income being wholly reinvested into the park, it is important to consider that although the permits need to be good value for money, they need to ensure they are not too cheap and hence purchased by all park users.
- 1.7 The Council already has an existing permit scheme for town centre car parks which offers two options for payment: £200 if paid annually, or £55 per quarter. The latter charge recognises the additional administration involved in renewing the permits more frequently.
- 1.8 Consistency of offer is important, and it is therefore proposed that a permit price of £200 per annum or £55 per quarter is adopted for Gedling Country Park. As shown above, this would prove good value for anyone visiting the park twice per week and is not priced too high for those who only visit once per week.

Free Permits

- 1.9 At Cabinet on 9 January 2025, approval was also granted for Friends of Gedling Country Park (FOGCP) and associated volunteers to park without a charge. However, since that

approval, concerns have been raised as to how this will be managed. This is because people could join the FOGCP group for £5 and save on the price of a parking permit.

- 1.10 To mitigate this, it is proposed that permits are only offered to FOGCP Trustees and Committee Members rather than all volunteers. This shall be made clear prior to the scheme going live on 1 April 2025.
- 1.11 The Council has also received some detailed feedback from both Gedling Park Run and Gedling Junior Park Run since the report was approved. Both groups have highlighted the importance of the weekly events and also the need for volunteers in order to be able to hold these events. Each park run needs a minimum of 23 volunteers to proceed, and both event managers have advised that it is already challenging to find volunteers, and the parking charge will make this task even more difficult, and the events would cease. Gedling would also become the only Council to charge parking for Park Run volunteers.
- 1.12 Park Run brings huge benefits to both adults and children across the borough, and it would be disappointing not to encourage this. It is therefore proposed that both Gedling Junior and Gedling Park Run are provided with 25 free permits for their volunteers. These will only be valid for Saturday and Sunday Mornings between 8:00am and 10:30am and are to be managed by the event managers. They will be responsible for handing out and collecting in the permits each week. If permits are lost, they will be charged £5 for their replacement as per the current scheme. This would mitigate the risk of volunteers requesting more permits each week and re-distributing them.
- 1.13 It is also proposed that the café at Gedling Country Park is provided with 6 free permits for staff parking.

Permit Administration

- 1.14 Property Services currently administers all parking permits for staff, residents and businesses. There are approximately 580 permits on the system and the current procedure is paper based and time consuming. For bought permits residents/businesses must send in a paper form detailing the permit which is then manually processed by the team.
- 1.15 Parking permit administration could be managed by a third party directly. This would be a move to paperless permits with potentially no cost to the Council. For staff permits Property Services would manage an 'exempt vehicle' list which would involve staff registration numbers being entered into the system. No paper permit would be required. This would assist with issues such as using two vehicles, permits being lost and permits slipping down the dashboard. It also updates in real time so if a contractor was attending for the week they could be added to the system. Again, this prevents the need for staff to print out temporary permits each day. Moving over to a third party administration would significantly reduce admin time in addition to paper, printing and postage costs.
- 1.16 The above would all link to the enforcement system currently managed by NSL so when the wardens patrol the car parks, they would be able to see if the vehicle has a permit.

2 Proposal

2.1 In summary, it is proposed that:

1. Permits for Gedling Country Park are charged at £200 annually or £55 per quarter.
2. Free permits are given to the Trustees and Committee Members of Friends of Gedling Country Park only.
3. 25 free permits are given to volunteers of both Gedling Junior and Gedling Park Run, with a £5 fee for the replacement of lost permits.
4. 6 free permits are provided to the Café staff at Gedling Country Park.
5. Options for a third party to take over the administration of parking permits are to be considered.

3 Alternative Options

3.1 Not to introduce a permit scheme and to only offer the £2 daily charge - this will be received negatively by most regular users to the park.

3.2 Charge a higher amount for the permits - this would deem them too expensive and make them unaffordable for most users.

3.3 Charge a lower amount for the permits - this may make them too popular and would reduce the amount that could be reinvested into the park.

3.4 Not to explore alternative options for permit administration and continue with the paper based system, however this would become more difficult to manage if permits became popular at Gedling Country Park and would also go against our current transformation programme.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 Introducing a permit scheme alongside the introduction of a £2 all day charge will generate additional income for the Council to enable further investment into the park.

4.2 Permit administration by a third party has the potential to be at nil cost to the Council.

5 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications identified with the permit scheme. If a third party was introduced for permit administration there would be a contract in place to cover this.

6 Equalities Implications

6.1 There are no negative or positive equality impacts identified.

7 Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications

7.1 There are no carbon reduction / sustainability implications identified in this report.

8 Appendices

8.1 None

9 Background Papers

9.1 None

10 Reasons for Recommendations

10.1 To determine a fair and measured approach to permit parking at Gedling Country Park.