

Report to the Leader of the Council

Subject: Car Park Permits Gedling Country Park

Date: 3 March 2025

Author: Director of Operations

Wards Affected

All

Purpose

To seek approval for revised permit arrangements for Gedling Country Park car park.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

That the Leader of the Council:

- a) Approves the revised pricing arrangements for car parking permits at Gedling Country Park car park as detailed in paragraph 2.1 of this report and confirms the remainder of the permitting scheme is unchanged.

1 Background

1.1 On 9 January 2025, Cabinet agreed to the introduction of a £2 parking charge at Gedling Country Park. Cabinet also agreed a delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to approve the fees and administration of a permitting scheme for regular users of the park. On 6 February 2025, following consultation with the Leader of the Council a permitting scheme was approved as follows:

- a. Permits for Gedling Country Park are charged at £200 annually or £55 per quarter.
- b. Free permits are given to the Trustees and Committee Members of Friends of Gedling Country Park only.
- c. 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.
- d. 6 free permits are provided to the Café staff at Gedling Country Park.

- e. Options for a third party to take over the administration of parking permits are to be considered.

- 1.2 Following publication of details of the permitting scheme, the Council received a number of comments from park users and members of the public in relation to the level of annual and quarterly permit charges. Issues were raised over the level of the fee in comparison to other permit schemes across Nottinghamshire for similar parks. Concerns were raised that the permit fee would put off regular users from accessing the park impacting on the wider health and wellbeing benefits of the park.
- 1.3 The annual permit fee of £200 is consistent with permitting schemes across the borough. Whilst the demand for permits at Gedling Country Park is not yet clear, as the scheme and £2 daily charge have not yet been introduced, the option of a permit offers significant savings on a daily charge of £2 for park users who regularly park there.
- 1.4 The purpose of levying charges at the Country Park car park was to ensure that income from parking could be used to invest in the maintenance of the park and the car park, ensuring cost recovery. Income levels to be generated from the charges are unclear and estimated at this stage. However, it is recognised that there could be an impact on budgets if the demand for permits is high and the daily charge of £2 is not therefore as regularly collected.
- 1.5 A balance has to be struck between maintaining the park and ensuring accessibility for users. Consideration has been given to the representations of park users and the current financial pressures of maintaining the park.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed, following careful consideration of the public response to the £200 permit fee, that the permit fee be reduced to £85 per annum, with no quarterly payment option provided. This will ensure that the benefit of cheaper parking is provided to incentivise regular park users whilst still ensuring that a contribution towards maintenance of the car park and park is achieved. As part of the £85 a fee will be taken by the permit administrator of £7.20. This is included in the £85 permit fee.
- 2.2 Removal of the quarterly payment option ensures that the administrative costs of a quarterly payment scheme are removed which will facilitate a cheaper annual fee overall.
- 2.3 It is recognised that until demand for daily parking or permit parking is properly established, the impacts on income will not be clear. It is proposed that the fee of £85 for an annual permit is kept under close review to ensure sufficient income is generated to maintain the park and car park going forward. A review of arrangements will be undertaken within 6 months of the scheme to establish demand and future pricing.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 Alternative options include not amending the permitting fee and retaining the quarterly options to pay. This would ensure that the permit scheme could be rolled out and would limit the risk of a significant reduction in income by making the charge cheaper. Continuing with this approach would not take into account the views expressed by regular park users who have considered the charge to be too expensive. Gedling Country Park is a well-used asset which supports the health and wellbeing of residents

of the borough and visitors; it is important that permit charges do not dissuade people from utilising the asset. It is considered, following review of park users' views, that a lower permit fee could be trialled without significantly impacting on income in the short term until proper demand is established.

- 3.2 A further option would be to not introduce a permit scheme at all and only offer the £2 daily charge. However, a permit scheme has been agreed by Cabinet as it was considered necessary to support regular park users.
- 3.3 A different level of fees could be agreed for permits. However, this level is proposed taking into account fees at other parks across Nottinghamshire. As is reflected within the report there could be impacts on budgets with the permit fee being reduced, and as such income should be kept under review.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 As identified in the report, it is difficult to establish what the demand for permits is likely to be versus daily charges of £2 per day. The permit scheme set at £85 offers a significant reduction for regular users which may see a reduction in expected income levels for 2025/26. Predicted, budgeted income levels for 2025/26 of a £2 parking daily charge, based on vehicles using the car park in previous years is £200,000. Any reduction in income will impact on budget available to maintain the park and car park going forward, including income to be set aside in a sinking fund to support park assets such as the café and viewing platforms. The demand and income from the permit scheme will need to be kept under review to ensure that sufficient income can be achieved to maintain the park.
- 4.2 Options are currently being explored to administer the permitting scheme across the borough. Indication from the administrator is that a fee for processing the permits would be £7.20 per permit. Any cost associated with administration will be included in the £85.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The permit scheme charges are discretionary and should be set to ensure cost recovery as a minimum. Whilst a level of permitting was agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Leader has authority to set fees at a lower rate if further information to support such a decision has been provided and all relevant considerations, in particular financial implications have been considered.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment was undertaken to assess the introduction of charges and is appended to the decision report from January 2025.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 A Carbon Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the original cabinet report in January 2025.

8 Appendices

8.1 None.

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 Cabinet report January 2025 - [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday 9 January 2025, 2.00 pm - Gedling Borough Council](#) – item 158
Report of Chief Executive February 2025 - [Decision - Gedling Country Park – Car Park Permit Scheme - Gedling Borough Council](#)

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 To ensure income can be generated to support the ongoing maintenance of Gedling Country Park taking into account the views of park users and the wider financial sustainability of the asset.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Monitoring Officer