

## **Hail Weston Parish September 2019. District Councillor's Report.**

### **'TIME TO CHANGE' MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN**

Huntingdonshire District Council has signed the Time to Change Employer Pledge, a growing social movement run by charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness to support people to talk about mental health.

The Time to Change Employer Pledge is a commitment to changing the way we all think and act about mental health in the workplace. For the past 12 months, the Council has implemented and continues to develop on a network of 32 Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA). As well as in a crisis, Mental Health First Aiders are valuable in providing early intervention help for someone who may be developing a mental health issue. MHFAs' are not trained to be therapists or psychiatrists but can offer support through non-judgemental listening and guidance.

In Autumn 2018, the Council developed a Mental Health action plan to demonstrate how as an authority we take mental health seriously. Signing the #timetochange pledge validates our commitment to change how we think and act about mental health in the workplace and make sure that colleagues who are facing problems feel supported.

### **HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK SCOOPS BIO-DIVERSITY AWARD**

Hinchingbrooke Country Park, one of the Districts' three Green Flag status parks is celebrating after striking gold for bio-diversity in the regions annual Anglia in Bloom awards.

Working in partnership with Huntingdon Town Council to produce this years 'in-bloom', entries consisted of projects around the town, sharing a vision to in making Huntingdonshire a better place to live by prioritising accessible, high quality and well-maintained open spaces.

### **ST NEOTS HIGH STREET FUNDING**

On 26th August 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced that St Neots has been selected as one of 50 towns that will benefit from share of the £1 billion Future High Streets Fund. The scheme was launched in December 2018 and is a key part of the Government's plan to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that drives economic growth and sustainably improves how people use them.

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) submitted an application to the fund, in collaboration with the local partners of the St Neots Masterplan Steering Group. The bid outlined the challenges facing St Neots' High Street and Town Centre and seeks to set out the opportunities that could be explored and captured to drive future success of the Town in response to national trends on the changing role of High Streets. This has resulted in St Neots being shortlisted and selected as one of the 50 towns for the Future High Streets funding for reimagining town centre use and revitalisation.

## **CHANGES TO CAR PARKING**

The District Council is committed to ensuring our car parking strategy supports and encourages retail in our town centres.

The 'Off-Street Car Parking Strategy 2018 - 2023' adopted on 18th October 2018, was formed by listening to customers. The investment proposed is a response to customer demand for the convenience they expect from the high street and digital providers; greater convenience, including cashless payment.

The Council agreed to new investment and charge structures in February 2019 to deliver a parking service that is sustainable, supportive of local residents, business and visitors and promotes further economic growth of our towns.

- customer convenience and ease of use through an investment of £900,000 in car parking technology offering a choice of payment options (contactless card and cash)
- value for customers through 'Pay for What You Use', on exit, based on 15 minute periods between a 1 hour and 4 hour stay
- retail in our towns through lower long stay charges compared to short stay, a minimum dwell of one hour, a longer dwell through pay for what you use on exit.

### **The Changes**

Customers want to pay for what they use, this requires a move to 15 minute charged intervals between a parking stay of 1 hour and 4 hours and a change new charge structure. The benefit to the customer being that they pay only for what they use means they will no longer overpay for time they do not.

The investment will benefit customers who will have the convenience of card payment, payment on exit and the ability to pay for the time of parking used.

The Financial Principles of the Off Street Car Parking Strategy limit the Council's charges to be below the index of comparator car parks.

The car park charge structure:

- remains below the cost of other comparator long and short stay car parks
- meets the Council's budget requirements
- delivers the convenience and simplicity of 'Pay for What You Use' in 15 minute periods

### **Charge Structure**

This consists of two simplified tariff structures, one for short stay and one for long stay car parks:

- A minimum period of 1 hour in short stay car parks to encourage customers to staff longer in the towns.
- 15 minute charged intervals to enable 'Pay for What You Use', encouraging longer dwell time and value for money.
- Equal charges for timed intervals to ensure simplicity and ease of use.
- Long stay rates less than short stay to encourage turnover of car parking spaces closer to benefit retail whilst supporting reduced rates for long stay users including workers further away from the town centres.

- The starting time period for long stay car parks to be 2 hours to encourage short stay closer to our town centres and free up access to cheaper long stay parking, supporting workers and longer visits to our towns.

Here is a table of the new charges:

Short Stay (£)		Long Stay (£)	
1 hour	1.00	2 hour	1.60
Each 15 minutes	.20	Each 15 minutes	.10
2 hr	1.80	Equivalent 3 hr	2.00
Each 15 minutes	.20	Each 15 minutes	.10
3 hr	2.60	Equivalent 4 hr	2.40
Each 15 minutes*	.20	Up to 10 hr*	3.00
4 hr*	3.40	Up to 23 hr	4.00

Best wishes

Darren

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