

Motorhome Pilot Phase Report

Between 26th April and 1st October 2012 Fylde Borough Council operated a pilot scheme to see how well overnight parking of motorhomes on one car park would operate. This report assesses this pilot phase and sets out opportunities for the future.

Background

Motorhome users had been petitioning the Council for many years to provide space on its car parks to enable overnight stays. In addition there has been an issue on residential roads in certain parts of the Borough, often by the sea and in particular by Fairhaven Lake, where motorhomes frequently park overnight to the dissatisfaction of local residents. Lancashire County Council had previously advised that no change would be made to on-street parking orders unless alternative provision was provided.

As a result the rear section of the Swimming Pool car park was identified for the pilot phase of a motorhome overnight parking scheme. This was primarily identified due to the fact the location is shielded from the view of local residents whilst being a sea-front location. Additional benefits were the amenities by this location (cinema, swimming pool, Toby Carvery) and relative proximity to the centre of St Annes.

Conditions set for the scheme were established by a member Task and Finish Group during a meeting on 24/02/2012. These included:

- a. the tariff be set at £5 per night for parking between 6pm and 10 am.
- b. A limit of 3 consecutive nights stay would be set
- c. That the maximum length of vehicle would be the length of the double bays in the centre of the car park which is 10 metres.
- d. caravans would not be permitted
- e. overnight stays by motorhomes would be restricted to the central bank of public parking spaces in the lower car park, and would not be permitted in the upper car park, in spaces which have been reserved for particular uses such as swimming pool staff spaces and Island Complex own spaces, any access aisles and in spaces on the seaward side of the lower section. The information signs will outline where overnight parking is permitted.
- f. motorhomes be allowed to stay in the car park during the day in any public spaces in the lower car park so long as they obtain tickets for the duration they stay and for any bays or part bays they take up.
- g. additional signage be provided to promote and outline the scheme be erected.
- h. no changes to ground markings are made as part of the pilot scheme.

Set-up Costs

The costs for running the pilot scheme included:

Advertising the changes to the legal Order to allow motorhomes to park overnight - £2,000

New Signage - £265

Tariff Change - £85

Operation of Pilot Phase

As shown in appendix 1 a total of 271 p&d tickets were sold for £5 or more during the pilot phase. In some cases these tickets were purchased during normal operating hours possibly indicating that some users did not realise that a separate ticket was required after 6pm. Some of them were valued over £5 which would support this theory as they may have thought a single ticket would cover them during the day and over night. As such at least £1,355 was achieved from this scheme though more could be attributed as motorhome users may have bought tickets during the day which the figures do not account for.

When reviewing usage during the pilot phase consideration needs to be made of the fact that it will take time for the facility to become known among the motorhoming community. As such user numbers should increase plus 2012 has been recorded as the wettest in England since records began (a strong contributing factor for poor usage during June). Appendix 1 shows use increased with the Open Golf Championship (July 16th to 22nd) whilst August and the first week of September show consistent use.

Responses to Consultation

As requested by the task and finish group when the pilot phase was set up a notice was added to the main tariff sign for the motorhomes stating that it was a pilot phase and requesting feedback on possible improvements. The responses are outlined in Appendix 2. The most requested improvements were those anticipated at the start of the pilot phase. These include:

- Altering the bay sizes for motorhomes to enable them to open doors and exit the spaces when vehicles are parked either side. Associated to this were requests for separate areas for motorhomes to park that cars are not allowed in and/or a separate area away from where cinema users park, possibly by the sea wall.
- Providing facilities for the disposal of waste grey/black water and the provision of clean water refilling. Associated with this was a request for motorhome service points. Only one request was received for a rubbish waste disposal service.
- Electrical hook-up points have been suggested.
- The current levels of tariffs are commonly queried with the daytime payment for the number of bays taken being a common issue. Users would prefer a single 24hr tariff though a night tariff could still be retained.
- The current machines only take coins. If we expect motorhome users to pay more then alternative payment methods may need to be offered.
- Safety concerns have been raised regarding 'boy racers' who have apparently been using this car park late in the evenings.

Moving Forward

Options to be considered include:

- Does the scheme in principle continue permanently or revert to no overnight motorhome provision? There is broad support from motorhomers and no negative comments from locals. This suggests the scheme should continue. However investment may be needed to make improvements.
 - Task and Finish response – Unanimous approval to continue
- Bay sizes. One of the key criticisms from users was that the bays were too narrow. How do we increase bay sizes for motorhomers whilst not impacting on the core business of supply parking spaces for visitors?
 - Task and Finish response – Requested option appraisal. Of three ideas put forward the preferred was to create 7 dedicated 'oversize' bays at the Carvery-end of the car park. This will require work costing about £5,000 to remove existing slope up to the sea wall whilst retaining sloped footway to enable disabled access and restore retaining wall. When more than 7 larger vehicles are using these dedicated bays then as an over-flow option they will still be able to park in the main section of the car park over more than one bay but they will be required to obtain a ticket for each bay that is used. A request for extra funding to implement this will be considered during the next few months.
- Grey/black water waste disposal plus fresh water supply. Another key criticism was the lack of facilities to dispose waste water and refill clean water. A proposal has been submitted by Danfo to supply this service but where would it be located without impacting on the car park?
 - Task and Finish response – the group supported the idea but more work required to identify suitable site and costs. Further work highlighted that if waste water/clean water facilities are located on the car park this would require a change of use planning application and caravan licensing application. Members of the task and finish group considered this point in some detail and noted that this could disadvantage current users of the car park and put the site in competition with local caravan sites. Two potential locations have been identified, one nearer the roadside near to existing utility connections where facilities would benefit tourists but would be a short walk from motorhome parking; the other on the sea wall which would benefit the beach huts but would be some distance from utility connections. Initial quotes have revealed significant costs to either option. This would be considered further.
- Rubbish disposal. Although not a major concern for users it is a facility that is provided by many locations. However this would come at a cost to the Council.
 - Task and Finish response – with little demand at the moment propose to monitor the situation.
- Implication of changes. Apart from financial implications, if any additional facilities are added then under planning it could be deemed a change of use. As such planning permission for change of use may be required and there may be a requirement to obtain a license. If this is the case further restrictions may be put in place. It may be better suited if the facilities were located nearby but on a distinctly separate site?

- As such this facility is not a motorhome park but does allow overnight parking. The proposed changes to parking bay sizes will be available for any type of vehicle to use as 'oversize vehicles' and will not specifically be for motorhomes. If a waste water disposal/clean water is provided then this will need to be attached to a public toilet as an additional service.
- Upgrading pay & display machine. Currently £5 is charged per night. The machines only accept coins for payment which inconveniences users. To upgrade the existing machine, which is not new, to accept other formats of payment (notes, chip and pin cards and swipe cards) would be costly (approximately £1,000 to £2,500 depending on upgrades required). A new machine with added features would be about £3,500.
 - Task and Finish response – As the machines across the Borough will need replacing over the coming years, a programme of annual replacements should be introduced. This will allow us to gradually bring in alternative payment methods to all car parks.
- Tariffs. A major concern from many users was the current tariff structure. Most stated they would prefer a single 24 hour charge. Depending on whether the car park is re-lined we will need to establish a fair system that does not adversely affect other vehicles during the day.
 - Task and Finish response – due to the high cost of amending charges (at least £2,000) any changes will be brought in when changes to other car parks occur. It is proposed that a 24 hour rate be introduced whilst retaining the options of paying for an overnight stay or just paying the standard day rates. Issues of paying for several bays for larger vehicles should be alleviated with the introduction of over-sized bays.
- Safety concerns. A few users made complaints that boy racers caused a nuisance during their stay. The Police have been advised and stated they will increase observation. Would the installation of night-time CCTV be advisable?
 - Task and Finish response – As the facility is more frequently used then it becomes less of an attractive option to 'boy racers'. The Council will monitor the situation and take account of issues raised by users.
- Extension of the scheme. The Council may wish to consider whether it is worth extending the scheme to some other car parks. From feedback it would appear that there are two types of visitors; those who like to be close to amenities and those who like the area to be more quiet. Taking into consideration less well used car parks which have some form of shading from local residents other potential locations would be North Beach, St Paul's Avenue or Lytham Station car parks (first two being quieter with access to the sea, Lytham Station being located close to Lytham town centre).
 - Task and Finish response – These options to be considered in the future.

Appendix 1 – Table of Purchase of p&d Tickets for Overnight
Motorhome Parking During Pilot Phase

Date	April	May	June	July	August	September
1		1	1	1	3	2
2					2	2
3		1			3	3
4		2		1	5	5
5		3	1	1	1	1
6		3		2		1
7		2		4	1	4
8			1		1	7
9			2	1	4	1
10					6	
11		3			5	2
12		3		1	1	
13		3		2		
14		2		10	1	
15						1
16		1	2	3	2	
17		1		4	4	
18		2		4	3	
19			1	6	1	
20			2	7		
21		1		12		3
22		1		7		6
23		2		2		3
24		2	1	1	5	
25		2	1	4		
26		6		2	6	2
27	2			5	3	4
28	2			5	1	2
29			1	3	1	3
30			3	2	3	1
31		1		1	3	
Total	4	42	16	91	65	53

Appendix 2 – Responses From Motorhome Users

response	bay size	grey/black water disposal/clean water supply	Electric hook-up	Tariffs too expensive	General Support	Comments
1	/	/	/			As a result of conflict with cinema users could site motorhomes by sea wall
2					/	
3	/	/		/		Daytime tariff for two bays too expensive. Prefer single 24hr rate. Conflict with cinema users.
4				/		Costly for no facilities. How do the disabled bays affect blue badge holders?
5					/	
6				/		Daytime charges bit expensive. Location by cinema lead to noise in the evening.
7		/	/			Need lot of change for meter
8		/				Add map of parking locations to sign
9	/					
10					/	
11					/	
12						Safety concern due to reports of boy racers on forums
13					/	
14		/				Safety concern due to boy racers, conflict with cinema users, waste collection provision
15						Safety concern due to boy racers
16		/				Provision of 'service points'
17					/	
18					/	
19	/			/		Need extra width to swing out of spaces. Lack of cleansing of general tourist waste
20	/					
21	/					
Total	6	6	2	4	7	