

Response: Ludlow – Changes to on-street pay and display and loading bays

From Andy Boddington, Shropshire Councillor for Ludlow North

1. Summary

All the proposed changes are within my division. I have consulted extensively over the last year with residents, traders and visitors. I oppose the extension of on-street parking restrictions until 8pm in the Red Zone and increase the charge to £1.80 an hour.

It is disappointing that Shropshire Council has decided to progress with the scheme without any analysis of economic impact. Neither has it conducted an analysis of the effectiveness of linear parking charges in other towns. The views of local councillors and the town council have been ignored. The assumption is that Shropshire Council, based in Shirehall, understands how Ludlow works. Everything we have seen during this consultation shows that it doesn't.

2. Our proposals have been ignored

The proposals for on-street parking are part of a package of proposals for Ludlow. All the council's schemes ignore the submission made by Ludlow unitary councillors in October 2017. Our proposals would expand daytime capacity by improving the park and ride, weekend capacity by expanding the Smithfield car park, and 24-hour capacity in the Upper Galdeford car park and on-street (see page 3). They would create at least 60 extra spaces in the town.

All our proposals are low cost. All will promote resident, trader, shopper and visitor parking. All have been ignored by Shropshire Council. Yet if the council had examined and implemented these, parking issues in Ludlow would be considerably eased, in turn reducing the need to increase charges and extend charging times.

3. Pop and shop

We are strongly opposed to ending the 15 minute free parking period. Under the council's proposals, people could be forced pay £1.80 for picking up a loaf of bread and a newspaper in central Ludlow. This conflicts with the way that market towns like ours work. It will drive people to supermarkets with free car parks, threatening the survival of our independent shops.

We need to encourage people to come into town for their daily shop. The 15 minute drop and shop is a distinctive feature of Shropshire's parking policies and must be maintained for the benefit of retailers and services in Ludlow.

4. Increased charges

It is proposed that on-street charges in our town centre will rise to £1.80 an hour. This will discourage shoppers and drive from the town people using banking, medical, ecclesiastical and other services. A rise to £1 an hour is reasonable.

Ludlow is open for business on Sundays but, as with our night time economy, trade is not strong except in peak season. Currently parking charges are half the weekday rate. A full rate charge would damage trade, undermine local businesses and penalise churchgoers. The current arrangements of a

50% discount on parking on Sundays should be maintained to help keep our town centre attractive to shoppers and visitors.

5. Evening parking

I oppose extension of parking charges from after 6pm to after 8pm.

The town is lively during the day but footfall drops rapidly after 5pm as shops close. Compared to many towns, we have a quiet night time economy based around the pubs and restaurants, Ludlow Assembly Rooms and concerts at locations such as St Laurence's and the Methodist Church. There are no buses after 5.30pm and the prospect of introducing night time services is vanishingly remote.

The proposal will discourage any potential visitors. I also fear that charges will deter the volunteers upon which the Ludlow Assembly Rooms depend.

I am not alone in fearing an extension of parking charges will damage the night time economy.

[Gloucester](#) and [Newcastle](#) are among many towns and cities that have launched free evening parking initiatives aimed at boosting the night time economy.

6. Conclusion

I am concerned that Ludlow is being used as an experiment in linear charging policy. The performance management scrutiny committee was told by an officer that the scheme would be monitored in real time and if it was found not to be working, it could quickly be changed. We know that not to be the case, as any changes would require consultations and TROs.

If trade is damaged, and I believe it will be by the package of changes, by the time the trend is confirmed, it will be too late. A thriving town centre can be killed off quickly. We have seen that in other towns. But it is much harder to revive trade once it slows, especially in a town like Ludlow where independent shops predominate.

Ludlow is one of the most successful small market towns in England. It has achieved that level of success by balancing the needs of residents, traders and tourists. These proposals will damage that balance.

Proposals for improving sustainable parking in Ludlow

7. Promoting sustainable transport

Transport and parking strategy in Ludlow should be built around the park and ride service. Facilities at the Eco Park should be improved, including a weatherproof bus shelter and toilets. The car park surface and signage should be repaired or replaced.



Eco Park bus shelter

Charges should be introduced with discounted or free transport on the park and ride bus service. Upwards of a third of the park and ride car park is taken up by staff from Eco Park businesses during the week. Parking should not be free for those who work at the Eco Park. Charges will encourage those workers that live in Ludlow to use buses and the companies at the Eco Park to create more parking spaces.



Most cars in the park and ride are for Eco Park staff

The park and ride buses should run at a 20-minute frequency, Monday to Saturday, and half hourly on Sundays. An improved and extended town bus service would reduce pressure on town centre parking.

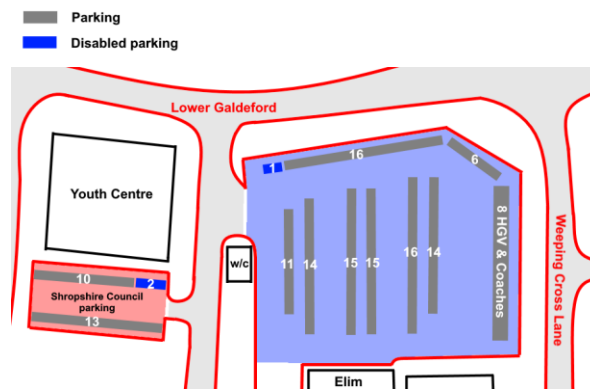
8. Upper Galdeford car park

There is an urgent need to renew lining in the car park to identify spaces, including disable bays, and improve safety. This has been discussed with Shropshire Council officers. During those discussions we identified that 16-20 extra car parking spaces could be introduced on the upper deck through better use of available space and introducing a one-way flow around the car park. A one way flow will also promote safety. We also need short-term spaces to serve the GP practices.



9. Smithfield car park

Smithfield car park



The current layout at Smithfield and the Youth Centre

The adjacent Youth Centre car park could be brought into use for public parking at weekends and public holidays. This would add 25 car parking spaces, including 2 disabled spaces.

10. On-street parking

There is scope for changing some stretches of street with double yellow lines to single lines to allow parking between 6pm and 8am.

Parking bays should be marked to encourage tighter parking. This would create around 20 extra spaces in the Red Zone and more in the Blue Zone.



Marked bays would increase on-street parking spaces