



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of an **INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION** will be held in LGF4 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **TUESDAY 31 OCTOBER 2023 AT 12.30 PM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 23 October 2023

Note: Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in accordance with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams, please contact Democratic Services: Democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk

The meeting can also be watched live using the following link:
<https://youtube.com/live/jzWidIrlogs?feature=share>

This meeting will be filmed for inclusion on the Council's website. Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of these images or recordings is not under the Council's control.



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business

Enriching Lives

- Champion outstanding education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.
- Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to complement an active lifestyle.
- Engage and involve our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

Safe, Strong, Communities

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to prevent the need for long term care.
- Nurture communities and help them to thrive.
- Ensure our borough and communities remain safe for all.

A Clean and Green Borough

- Do all we can to become carbon neutral and sustainable for the future.
- Protect our borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas.
- Reduce our waste, improve biodiversity and increase recycling.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

Right Homes, Right Places

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Build our fair share of housing with the right infrastructure to support and enable our borough to grow.
- Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.
- Help with your housing needs and support people to live independently in their own homes.

Keeping the Borough Moving

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion, minimise delays and disruptions.
- Enable safe and sustainable travel around the borough with good transport infrastructure.
- Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners to offer affordable, accessible public transport with good network links.

Changing the Way We Work for You

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around you.
- Communicate better with you, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.
- Drive innovative digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.

**For consideration by the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport & Highways
and the Executive Member for Business and Economic Development:**

Councillor Paul Fishwick
Councillor Clive Jones

Officers Present:
Matt Gould

| IMD NO. | WARD | SUBJECT | |
|-------------|--|--|--------------|
| IMD 2023/21 | Bulmershe and Whitegates; Emmbrook; Wescott | SUSPENSION OF PARKING FEES FOR THE CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA EVENT HELD IN WOODLEY PRECINCT AND WOKINGHAM WINTER CARNIVAL. | 5 - 8 |

CONTACT OFFICER

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Agenda Item IMD21

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION REFERENCE IMD: 2023/21

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|--|--|
| TITLE | Suspension of parking fees for the Christmas Extravaganza event held in Woodley Precinct and Wokingham Winter Carnival. |
| DECISION TO BE MADE BY | Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways - Paul Fishwick, Executive Member for Business and Economic Development - Clive Jones |
| DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME | 31 October 2023 LGF4, Shute End, 12.30pm |
| WARD | Bulmershe and Whitegates; Emmbrook; Wescott; |
| DIRECTOR / KEY OFFICER | Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framalicco |

PURPOSE OF REPORT (Inc Strategic Outcomes)

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to suspend off-street parking charges for these Christmas one day events being held in Wokingham Town Centre and Woodley Precinct.

The decision is being treated as urgent due to the pending request for this year's events being run on Sunday 26th November in Wokingham and Sunday 3rd December 2023 in Woodley.

RECOMMENDATION

That the **Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways – approves** to suspend parking charges across all car parks within the respective event areas in Wokingham and Woodley for these annual events this year only.

That the **Executive Member for Business and Economic Development – approves** with the use of funds provided to offset the parking fees from the economic development grant funding.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

In past years the council has suspended parking fees for up to three Saturdays in December to support traders. There is a wish to continue to support traders in our towns at Christmas, despite the council's financial situation, particularly with the two Christmas events, to be held on Sunday 26th November in Wokingham and Sunday 3rd December 2023 in Woodley.

It has been agreed that only these two specific events will be supported this year, having gained funding from the economic development grant. To ensure parity, consistency, and equality in parking management across the Borough, all other requests for support for other events should be subject to the same criteria.

This, then does not prevent the Council from providing economic development grant support to town centres to assist with the cost of delivering specific events where justified.

Background

In past years the council has suspended parking fees for up to three Saturdays in December to support traders. There is a wish to continue to support traders in our towns at Christmas, despite the council's financial situation, particularly with the two Christmas events, to be held on Sunday 26th November in Wokingham and Sunday 3rd December 2023 in Woodley.

It has been agreed that only these two specific events will be supported this year, having gained funding from the economic development grant. To ensure parity, consistency, and equality in parking management across the Borough, all other requests for support for other events should be subject to the same criteria.

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Business Case (including Analysis of Issues)

- Both of these events would likely generate income for local businesses and for the stall holders attending and the event organisers in the pitch fees they charge.
- While the event could still operate without suspending parking fees, free off-street parking on these specific Sundays would provide a boost to the local events at a vital time of the year for businesses and traders. Given the limited economic grant available this is seen as a special and unique case and should not be seen as a precedent for further free off-street parking events.
- Footfall at large events over the Christmas period would benefit local businesses as well as event organisers.
- Whilst economic development grant funding will cover the loss of revenue estimated at £12,000 for both events. The council will incur additional costs to instigate free parking across its off-street car parks.
- Reconfiguration of the ticket machines to cover these events are in the region of £5,000-£7,000 per event. Providing appropriate machine covers for all machines would be in the region of £10,000 - £18,000.
- We therefore recommend that we leave the machines operational with signs informing customers that parking will be free, and **no refunds** will be provided if they use the machines or RINGO.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

| | How much will it Cost/ (Save) | Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall | Revenue or Capital? |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Current Financial Year (Year 1) | £12,000 | Yes, from economic development grant funding. 1 year only. | Revenue |
| Next Financial Year (Year 2) | To be considered annually. | There is no budget in place for this. | Revenue |
| Following Financial Year (Year 3) | | | |

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The parking budget was set based on the assumption car parking income would be received for the dates that this report proposes to now not charge. This will leave a gap in the council's income for 2023/24, however, one-off Economic Development grant funding has been identified to cover the loss of parking income resulting from this proposal. The funding solution is however one-off and should a similar decision be made in future years suitable funding would need to be identified before any proposal to provide free parking is agreed.

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including property and priorities?)

The council could provide economic development grant funding support to the town centres to assist with the costs of delivering specific events where justified.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

This request supported by funding does meet with the council's equality duties and responsibilities to ensure social inclusion of vulnerable members of the community

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Director – Resources and Assets | No further comments |
| Monitoring Officer | No further comments |
| Leader / Deputy of the Council | Happy with the report |
| | |

For Highways use only

If your item is not about a highways matter you do not need to complete the Town and Parish Council information or the Local Ward Member information

Town and Parish Councils

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Woodley Town Council. | No further comments |
| Wokingham Town Council | Empathised the need to make sure appropriate promotion in run-up to the event; not to rely on social media as not all residents use this medium |
| | |

Local Ward Members

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|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Bulmershe and Whitegates | |
| Andy Croy | No further comments |

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Tony Skuse | No further comments |
| Shahid Younis | No further comments |
| Emmbrook | |
| Rachel Bishop-Firth | No further comments |
| Morag Malvern | No further comments |
| Imogen Shepherd-Dubey | No further comments |
| Westcott | |
| Jane Ainslie | No further comments |
| Peter Dennis | Happy with the proposal, expressed that we should ensure that there is appropriate communication via social media, town councils to ensure that people are aware there is no need to pay for parking on those days. |

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

N/A

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| Contact Chris Easton Telephone No Tel: 0118 908 8305 | Service Place Email chris.easton@wokingham.gov.uk |
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