



LEISURE AND CULTURE SUB COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)

1.15 pm THURSDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2018

COMMITTEE ROOMS 1/2 - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE

PART 1

1. To receive any declarations of interest from Members
2. To scrutinise information and monitoring issues being reported by:

Report of the Head of Streetcare

3. Gnoll Park Charges 2018/19 (*Pages 5 - 20*)

Report of the Head of the Property and Regeneration

4. Afan Forest Park Charges 2018/19 (*Pages 21 - 28*)
5. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972
6. Access to Meetings to resolve to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

PART 2

7. To scrutinise private information and monitoring issues being reported by:

Report of the Head of Head of Transformation

8. Aberavon Seafront - Beach Lifesaving Service (Exempt under Paragraph 14) (Pages 29 - 40)

S.Phillips
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Friday, 9 February 2018

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor A.L.Thomas

**Vice
Chairperson:** Councillor M.Crowley

Councillors: M.Ellis, S.Miller, S.Renkes, R.L.Taylor,
D.Whitelock, C.Williams and N.T.Hunt

Notes:

- (1) If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*
- (3) For pre scrutiny arrangements, the Chair will normally recommend forthcoming executive items for discussion/challenge. It is also open to Committee Members to request items to be raised - though Members are asked to be selective here in regard to important issues.*

- (4) *The relevant Cabinet Board Members will also be invited to be present at the meeting for Scrutiny/ Consultation purposes.*
- (5) *Would the Scrutiny Committee Members please bring the Cabinet Board papers with them to the meeting.*

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board 15th February 2018

Report of the Head of Streetcare

Matters for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Gnoll Park Charges 2018/19

Purpose of Report

- 1 To determine parking, footgolf and room hire charges at Gnoll Country Park for 2018/19.

Executive Summary

- 2 Members will be acutely aware that the Council has faced extensive savings over previous financial budget rounds and further savings are required for next year.
- 3 There has been considerable savings made over the last few years which has significantly reduced the subsidy of the Gnoll Country Park and the Council's Forward Financial Plan (ref ENV807), which has been the subject of recent consultation, included a proposal to save a further £30K through increased charging. This report contains proposals to increase income at the park accordingly.

Background

- 4 On the 8th November 2017 the Council's Cabinet resolved to commence public consultation on its budget and draft savings proposals for 2018/19. As has been publicised, it is projected that financial savings of £10.2m are required to set the balanced budget for the next financial year, and more than £60m are required over the next five financial years.

- 5 Included in the consultation was a proposal to make a £30K saving at the Gnoll through increased charging including car parking.

Parking

- 6 The current charges are £2.00 all day at the Gnoll or alternately a season permit can be purchased for £40.00.
- 7 To address any indiscriminate parking on approach to the Gnoll Country Park, an amendment is currently being made to the on-street parking order in Fairyland.
- 8 Car park income for the Gnoll Country Park was £76K in 2016/17.

Room Hire

- 9 Situated within the Visitor Centre is a conference room used for meetings, courses, and training days. There is free Wi-Fi and catering can be provided at an additional cost to suit the group's needs. Current charges are; Full day hire: £64.50, Half day hire: £32.50.

Footgolf

- 10 Footgolf is available at Gnoll Country Park. For nine holes current charges are; Adults £5, Children £3.75.

Consultation

- 11 Consultation has been carried out as part of the council's general consultation on parking, that car parking charges be increased to £2.50 for up to 4 hours and £4 for all day, and that the cost of a season ticket be increased to £52 per year. Footgolf and room hire have not been subject to consultation.

Responses

- 12 The proposed increase in the charge for parking has, perhaps unsurprisingly, received negative responses through the consultation process. Replies indicate a general reluctance towards any form of payment for parking within the park, and replies argue that such increases could be detrimental to visitor numbers.

- 13 In addition to consultation feedback from the wider community, comments were received from the franchise holder who has a 5 yr right to provide the 'Fun Days' within the park. The franchise was won by means of a competitive tender and the franchise holder pays £3000 per year to the council. These events are very popular and run from April to September with the main events held on Bank Holiday Mondays, plus every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from Mid-July to the end of August. The operator has advised, again perhaps unsurprisingly, that if proposals go ahead and they have a detrimental effect to the business they may have to relocate elsewhere. Accordingly they have requested that all day parking for £2.50 is in place for the Fun Days.

Final Car Parking Proposals

- 14 Further to consultation responses it is now proposed to increase the parking charges to £2.50 for up to 4 hours and £3.50 for all day, and increase the cost of a season ticket to £52. [The charge for over 4 hours has been reduced from the initial proposal of £4 to be in line with general all-day parking charges across the country borough].
- 15 Given the parking charges are subject to legal order it is not viable to have varying charges on Fun Days. If the franchise holder seeks a review of the franchise payment then this will have to be considered at the time based on information available and evidence submitted. However it is noted that the Fun Day activities do not start until 11.00am and so the proposed charge of £2.50 for up to 4 hours would probably suffice for most visitors to those events.

Other Charge Proposals

- 16 Room Hire: It is proposed to increase by 2%, in line with the corporate guideline, to £66.00 for a full day and £33.00 for a half day.
- 17 Footgolf: It is proposed to increase by 2%, in line with corporate guideline, to £5.10 adult and £4.00 concession/junior.
- 18 Café Charges: Charges in the Café are subject to review by the service manager as and when required, but it is noted for

information that for info, that Café charges will generally be increased from 1\4\18 by approximately 5%.

Financial Impact

- 19 Two pay and display signs would need updating reflecting the new Tariff's, this cost will be met by the operational budget for the Gnoll.
- 20 The proposed increased are expected to achieve the Forward Financial Plan savings requirement.

Equality Impact Assessment

- 21 A screening assessment has been undertaken to assist the council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this proposal does not require an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Sustainable Development

- 22 Increased income will improve the sustainability of the park and assist in the preservation of the heritage features such as the dams, the cascades and the Mackworth House ruins.
- 23 Car parking charges only affect those who arrive by means of a car, whilst those who arrive by other means such as walking or cycling will not be effected by the increase in parking charges.

Workforce Impact

- 24 There are no workforce implications.

Legal Impact

- 25 Any changes to the parking charges need a legal order to be advertised which will be done as part of the Council's general parking proposals. Any objections and observations will be reported back to Streetscene and Engineering Cabinet Board for a final decision.

Risk Management

- 26 If the Gnoll Country Park does not continue to move towards a cost neutral position then the sustainability of the park going forward will continue to be called into question in the current climate of austerity.

Consultation

- 27 The Council has consulted on increases to parking charges and the responses are included in Appendix 1.

Recommendation

- 28 It is recommended that
- a) Members confirm their agreement to Car parking charges being increased to £2.50 for up to 4 hours and £3.50 for all day, and the cost of a season ticket is increased to £52.
 - b) Footgolf and Room Hire is increased by 2% from 1st April 2018.
- 29 Members note that Café charges will be increased by approximately 5% from 1st April 2018.
- 30 The car parking charges be referred to the Streetscene and Engineering Cabinet Board for acceptance which will then be included in the final legal order to be advertised. Any objections and observations will be referred to a future Streetscene and Engineering Cabinet Board.

Reason for Proposed Decision

- 31 To deliver the required saving identified in the council's adopted forward financial plan and the public consultation.

Implementation of decision

- 32 The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

33 Appendix 1 – Responses relating to Car Parking Consultation

Background Papers

34 None

Wards Affected

35 All

Officer Contact

36 For further information on this report item, please contact:

Andrew Lewis, Waste and Neighbourhood Services Manager Tel:
01639 686021 E-mail: a.lewis@npt.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Responses relating to Car Parking Consultation

Email Responses and Formal Responses

1. Further to our telephone conversation yesterday, please could you put this letter before the board. I would like to express my worries in writing. The Gnoll Fun Days are kept to a minimum charge, with a lot of free activities to encourage a large footfall, this has led to very successful days, and the events are growing year on year. We do have concerns to the increase in car parking charges and believe it may have detrimental effects to the attendance in future. We think the council are far better off with a high car attendance at £2 rather than a low attendance at £4.50. We hope that you will take this on board and make the correct decision as we think it would be advantageous to all concerned. If you do go ahead with the increased charges and we find it has detrimental effect to our business, with great regret we would have to move the Gnoll Park Fun Days to an alternative venue. I hope that it does not come to this because the package of all the factors are why we believe these Fun Days are so successful.
2. Further to my previous email, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that so many people are outraged at the proposed increase in car parking charges at the Gnoll. The Gnoll is our park, already paid for and with provision within our council tax for its development and maintenance. This is a service for all to enjoy, whatever their means of access. Whereas paying a nominal sum seemed reasonable, to charge a huge increase in car parking fees is effectively surcharging people who need to visit by car
3. Proposed increased car parking fee at the Gnoll, I see no justification for this extortionate car parking fee.
 1. The Gnoll Estate is already paid for and a portion of our council tax provides for its further development and maintenance.
 2. This is a facility that should not necessarily have to be cost effective.
 3. The Gnoll is a country park provided for all to enjoy, the town's people and visitors, regardless of whether they access it by foot or by car.
 4. The proposed car parking fee is not feasible because one hour does not allow sufficient time to either enjoy a short walk, time in the children's play area and/or a visit to the cafe and visitor centre. Certainly, it does not allow time to walk further into the estate.
 5. The proposed charge of £2.50 or even £4.00 is a massive unjustifiable increase and should not be implemented.

As part of the consultation process for the budget proposals, please see that these points will be considered.

The Gnoll is our park, already paid for and with provision within our council tax for its development and maintenance. This is a service for all to enjoy, whatever their means of access.

Whereas paying a nominal sum seemed reasonable, to charge a huge increase in car parking fees is effectively surcharging people who need to visit by car.
4. Response from Walkthrough Neath Port Talbot: Car Parking Charges
Debates on parking charges are often contentious and emotionally charged, with business owners, workers, and customers united in displeasure. Nobody likes paying

more for something, and the fears for shop owners that this could translate to a more challenging trading environment are understandable.

However, the issue is highly complex and this is reflected in the wide variety of research undertaken on the subject and the myriad of conclusions. Parking charges are not the sole determinant of town centre viability, and the need to provide parking for the ever-increasing volume of cars on our roads comes at a cost that must be met by someone. The Council is in a difficult position of having to try to raise enough revenue to cover operating costs of maintaining parking provision and safety enforcement, whilst being sympathetic to the pressures that town centres are facing amidst growing competition from out of town or online shopping outlets that carry no parking charges.

The same is true of attractions like Gnoll Country Park, Afan Forest Park, and Aberavon Beach, where increased charges can run the risk of deterring people from visiting them or using the appropriate car parks. With regards to Gnoll Country Park, there are frequent complaints that arise from residents in Fairyland who are concerned with indiscriminate parking by people seeking to avoid parking charges. Action to mitigate this costs money, and if increased charges push more cars into streets in adjoining neighbourhoods then the likelihood grows that further costly mitigating action will be required.

At the moment we feel that the Council has adopted an approach of maximising revenue through increased charges, an approach that we feel is ultimately unsustainable. Instead, we believe that it is more practical and sustainable for the Council to shift to maximising revenue through increased sales instead.

Therefore, we suggest that the Council should not increase parking charges at the proposed locations, and would recommend the following as alternative means of raising the additional revenue.

- Using Council data on the use of its car parks, identify times of the year when revenue at each car park is below average and work with partners and stakeholders to increase usage and revenue.
- Achieving this increase could involve the careful planning of special promotions, events, or additional marketing as a means of attracting people to these locations at times when they are under-utilised.
- Make more use of national marketing campaigns (such as Love Your Local Market fortnight, Love Parks Week, or Small Business Saturday etc.) as well as improved promotion of existing events like the Aberavon Beach Festival, Heart of the Valley Show, or Neath Food and Drink Festival to get more people into these locations and increase parking revenue.
- Explore the possibility of weekly or monthly parking permits available online via the Council website.
- Improve online promotion of Afan Forest Park and Gnoll Country Park as both these parks currently have no official social media presence (unlike Margam Country Park)
- Allow for the purchase of season tickets for Afan and Gnoll Parks online via the Council website, as is currently done for Margam Park.
- Consider offering those who purchase parking tickets at Afan or Gnoll Parks £1 off any purchase at the cafes within the visitor centres at certain times of the year, as this may encourage increased sales of refreshments.

We believe the majority of the above suggestions will not require any additional spend, as the multitude of partners (such as Chambers of Trade, volunteer groups at attractions, Neath Inspired etc.) already exists and the data is already collected by the Council. Given the need for an expensive exercise in changing signs at each car park and the potential impact this may have on footfall, an almost zero-cost alternative that should result in additional revenue raised is worth a go

5. UNISON are of the opinion that the authority should have one fixed charge for parking and that this should be consistent throughout all council car parks. We are also of the opinion that a permit should be available that covers all council owned car parks and country parks.

Overarching Public Consultation – Response

305 responses were received. An analysis of this response shows 252 (82%) Online returns, 51 (16%) Paper versions, 2 (0.6%) welsh responses received. Of the 305 Online survey and paper questionnaires – 248 (83%) were from residents, 128 (43%) were from people who use services provided Neath Port Talbot Council, 76 (25%) were from people who work in Neath Port Talbot, 33 (11%) were from people who work for Neath Port Talbot Council, 26 (9%) were from people who volunteer in Neath Port Talbot, 25 (9%) were from people who volunteer in Neath Port Talbot, 25 (8%) were from people who run a business in Neath Port Talbot, 15 (5%) were from Carers in Neath Port Talbot, 13 (4%) were from others, 12 (4%) were from Third sector or voluntary organisations,

3 (1%) Of the 305 people: Agreed with the Parking proposal

3 individuals supported the Parking proposal

- a. WHY YOU AGREE The requirement for a balanced budget. The proposals about car parking. The move to online services to reduce cost

84 (27%) Of the 305 people: Disagreed with the Parking proposal

1. Proposal to increase the parking at the Gnoll Park
2. Increase in parking charges at the gnoll
3. Parking at the gnoll park
4. Gnoll increased parking charges
5. Increase of car parking in Gnoll Country Park
6. Increased parking charges at Knoll Park
7. Increase in car parking costs
8. Car parking charges for the gnoll country park
9. Parking Charges at the Gnoll estate should be stopped
10. Gnoll park parking
11. Car parking increases particularly at the Gnoll will frighten people away from Neath,thus having a negative effect
12. Increasing parking charges at gnoll park
13. Increasing the parking charges at Gnoll Country Park
14. The Gnoll car park increase, this is shocking on one hand you are employing people to generate healthy living in the area then you put a price increase on the car park at the local park. We have a park run up there that people could be encouraged to use for free to get healthy and lose weight, we are the only local authority in wales who charge people to use this car park while park runs are on.
15. parking charges at the Gnoll Country Park
16. Increasing parking charges at the Gnoll
17. Parking charge increases at the Gnoll park

18. Increase in parking charges in Gnoll Country Park - £1 was bad enough but fairly reasonable .To increase the fees by 400% is scandalous. Hitting families, dog walkers and older people who go there to walk and keep fit - as per government advice for cutting obesity. People who go there regularly will just park outside on roads in FairyInd and Cimla Crescent., thus causing traffic congestion for residents.
19. How can the council justify these increases yet only propose £2 for parking all day at Aberafan Beach.? Surely there must be other ways of raising money within the authority.
20. Car parking in gnoll country park. Increase to car parking in Neath town centre car park. Council tax increase. Changes to gwyn hall and Celtic leisure.
21. Parking price increase in gnoll
22. Increased parking charge at Gnoll Country park
23. Gnoll Park parking increase.
24. Car parking charges at again visitors centre
25. The proposal to standardise the car parking fees across the NPT area
26. Increasing parking charges in town & at the Gnoll
27. Increase in parking fees at Gnoll park

For each proposal you have listed above, please indicate why you disagree

1. The council should be encouraging people to use the park not deter them with high charges. There are few enough facilities for the public in Neath as it is. Parents with young children should be encouraged to use the park for the children to excercise, see wildlife, somewhere safe to play. The extra charges will make them think twice about visiting, especially in school holidays where a daily visit could become prohibitive.
2. Season prices far higher than Margam Park and not justified
3. In comparison with larger parks in the county (proposals are double that of Margam Park), I feel it will drive people away from using the area. It's a massive increase all at once and disproportionate to other facilities. Neath is already dying and this will be another nail in the coffin hammered in by the people who should be reviving it.
4. Gnoll car park charge is prohibitive to many families. Also as a keen park runner, the additional charge will put me off attending the gnoll. NPTCBC should he encouraging more of its constituents to attend park run and promote a healthy and active lifestyle. These car park charges will discourage many from attending. Many runners currently spend a lot of money in thr gnoll cafe after park run, but agsin may be discouraged from doing so if they have to pay these exorbitant car park fee increase.
5. It is a ridiculous step to double car parking costs at the Gnoll and unbelievable to quadruple those at Afan. The whole idea of Afan is to have a long stay to enjoy the huge area available. Why push away the visitors that this has attracted through its mountain bike trails an great walking countryside. Due to the nature of that park almost all visitors are going to end up having to pay £4 versus the £1 they would have previously.
6. The Gnoll is generally a small park, I can't see the justification of the new charges. Think it will lead to a massive decline in visitors. Such a shame to prevent everyone from being able to enjoy one of the nicest places in Neath.

7. The charge is already more than it should be , there has been no evidence to show his has benefited the park directly and the charge affects the amount of people who access the park and this will impact furthered ifi increased
8. Because I run a business from the Visitors Centre It's putting people off parking there already, this will stop people visiting or clogging up fairyland
9. This is a green space that the people of Neath need and enjoy. Increasing charges will discourage people to exercise and their children too. Park Run (senior and junior) will be affected, this is really important for health of neath residents. park run will get lower numbers and street parking in fairyland will increase significantly. If the charges are going to be made higher then charge per hour rather than proposing £2,50 for 4 hours. Rarely will a family spend 4 hours at the park.
10. There is a disconnect between the price of parking at the Gnoll and Aberavon seafront. I would increase Aberavon by a larger amount and not increase the Gnoll amount. When it costs more to park in a Country Park than it does in a town centre then something is seriously wrong with the planning.
11. Charging more will turn people away from the venue, when it has taken a number of years to build up the events program
12. The charges in my opinion are far too high at present given the amenities at the Gnoll too expensive
13. I think the increase is too much - it's expensive enough to have a day at gnoll park during the school holidays. There are now rides every day, and stalls, and with more than one child it gets expensive. If these charges go ahead we will no longer be able to afford to visit health and well being are important
14. It will discourage participation in outdoor activities, reducing the number of people using the cafe, and impact adversely on the locals as many more will park on the neighbouring roads rather than paint.
15. It's counterintuitive to encourage activities such as parkrun on Sat and Sun then charge so much to park especially for the hour or less for parkrun.
16. Because it doesn't increase revenue it actually stops it. When Gnoll was free I visited most days, purchased tea and swan food. £1 charged reduced my visits to 3/4 a week and only one visit to coffee shop. £2 charge means I visit once a week and buy tea once a month. £2.50 charge will mean I no longer visit. This applies to all venues and places. I visit neath shopping once a week and only after 3..really not prepared to pay when shop choices are poor, and facilities lacking. You are driving people out not encouraging them in. How about £1 off tea or coffee with each ticket purchase might then feel like we are getting something back.
17. the Gnoll car park increase - I think you are trying to ruin our town. Let's encourage people in neath pro get healthy and use parks etc when ever I walk around neath that's all people say is the council is ruining the town with charging for parking etc cut the staff when ever I go in the council building in neath they are all on their mobiles on the front desks - this is disgusting if they have time to be on their mobile then they are not nee ed! U need to have a social media policy like most other businesses and if they are posting on Fb during the day then they should be sacked!

18. In terms of the Gnoll again I don't understand why the cafe is not better run, on a park run you have at least 100 runners there for one hour if you put on nice cakes etc they would be more inclined to stay, and who doesn't take cards these days? In Victoria gardens when the prom is on you could be having non alcoholic pims tents or ice cream carts from the gwyn hall etc I just question who is running the council as there seems to be no business acumen there.
19. No one should be on a salary of more than 90k there and if they are that needs to be axed teachers are earning a lot but moan all the time! Why are people going in to pay their council tax they should be encouraged to set up a direct debit etc councillors need to be axed no one likes them and they think they are celebrities it's quite funny oh and on that note why are we paying for lights on the top of harle street every Christmas ? When we can't afford them in the town!! It's properly because half of the councillors or wanna be councillors live there. The rubbish men down the tip just stand there and watch my 75 year old aunty carry things from the car if they can't ri the proposed increas in parking charges is not acceptable. Families take their young children to the Gnoll to play in open spaces ., There is very little to do in the grounds as playground equipment is poor., therefor it is just purely for walking and enjoying the countryside that families go there. The parking charge should go back to a £1 a day. Far more people would go there. I used to play in the Gnoll when I was young when there were never any charges to park cars!
20. My partner has suffered a stroke and can only manage short walks. We are also pensioners, living on state pension. The new charges are absolutely disgraceful. It is too far or us to walk and now you are going to deprive us of driving there. Will become another dead place just like Neath town.
21. Many of the people who use the Gnoll do so by car, a fixed fee of a £1 is acceptable.and what the everyday user can stretch to. However with increasing charges proposed I feel the council is hitting the constituents directly in the pocket again.with the extras put on through the year Rhodes added fees should be used to help with the upkeep.i have been a regular visitor for nearly 50 years.wouldnt it be a disgrace if this had to stop due to not being able to afford to park there! Stop crippling people financially by squeezing over inflated and ridiculous increases in charges.
22. Increasing car parking in the Gnoll will discourage people from using facilities of Neath. Investment is consistently ploughed into org talbot but Neath sees very little investment and whatever is promised either doesn't happen or is put on the back burner whilst port talbot investment takes place.
23. Will put me off going. Too expensive
24. the Gnoll estate was gifted to the people of neath, so there should be no charge at all. This charge is higher than any one in the Borough. Neath multi storey is cheaper and it is undercover, well lit with decent flooring. The Gnoll has gravel. When I was a child my friends and i spent our Summer holidays playing up the Gnoll. These days we are worried about our children spending to much time take their children to the Gnoll, not putting them off by chrging them £4 before they even park up.
25. Also, this will cause problems in Ivy avenue as people will be parking there and walking the rest of the way. There is a short cut from Ivy avenue. Other than the visitor centre and cafe, nothing has reeally changed so I don't see what they need all

that extra revenue for. Please reconsider charging the people of Neath to visit THEIR park.

26. This will work against the idea of getting people more active and healthy, as facilities are restricted to those who can afford a massive increase. It is making parking unaffordable for visiting families and will eventually cause the park to close.

For each proposal you have listed above, please indicate why you disagree

1. I am concerned to see the proposals to increase the cost of parking at Gnoll country park, once again. Gnoll park is one of few places in the county where residents can participate in physical activity in a safe, open-space away from traffic while having access to facilities such as toilets, cafe, shelter and car parking. Any charge is a significant barrier to participation in outdoor activity. Gnoll parkrun, a huge asset to Neath, allows people to run, jog or walk a 5km route at 9am every Saturday. Over the last 2 years, almost 2,000 people (the majority of which have NPT postcodes) have registered with parkrun for the first time (http://wiki.parkrun.info/index.php/Gnoll_parkrun). Many of these people are entirely new to routine physical activity. It's the inclusive, friendly nature of parkrun that has encouraged them to take those first steps into getting fit. On a cold Saturday morning, what would have usually been an empty park is now bustling with runners, volunteers & spectators. The course has been run 10,183 times with an average turnout (not inc. volunteers and spectators) of 92. Around 50 additional cars on average every week, exclusively because of Gnoll parkrun, each paying £2 raises around £3,500 a year. The run needs volunteers to setup, marshal, and perform other tasks at the and from the statistics available on the above link, we estimate around 4,600 hours of volunteer time has gone into parkrun at Gnoll. Based on government's own estimates of the value of volunteering (Annual survey of hours and earnings 2011 - part-time volunteer £8/hour) - that's $4,600 \times 8 = £28,000$ of free volunteering time that the people of NPT have benefitted from, from the Saturday Gnoll parkrun over the last 2 years. With all of this good will and community spirit being generated, along with the obvious benefits of a more healthy (in body and mind) community, it seems unreasonable that those using the parking facilities will be charged for an hour or so of running!

If yes, please give us your suggestions:

1. I completely understand the the council has a challenge in raising the money needed to balance the budget - but I would urge you to consider the bigger picture: - Increasing parking costs will reduce the number of visitors to Gnoll park. - Every person that is discouraged from taking part in physical activity increases the burden on the state (e.g. NHS costs) - Visitors to the Gnoll spend money in the cafe.
2. Removing or reducing the parking charges would increase visitors and increase the use of the cafe. - Gnoll parkrun attracts tourists (as does the park itself). Tourists generally spend money in the local area (e.g. shops and restaurants). Rather than taking a negative approach to balancing the budget (increasing costs, decreasing services) can the council consider other ways to raise funds? Here are a few ideas: - Improve the quality and the range of food/drink sold. Open the cafe earlier on Saturdays and Sundays - there are lots of parkrunners in the park from 8:30am. - Provide other paidfor activities in the park such as rowing boat hire on the lake in the summer. - Make the cafe more popular by adding a "£1 off in the cafe" voucher to the pay and display parking tickets. With regards to parking here are some ideas based

on what happens elsewhere in the country: - National Trust properties offer parkrunners free parking on Saturday mornings in many locations around the UK. –

3. The cafe at Parc Bryn Bach gives all parkrunners "free toast" when they buy a cup of tea (just show your parkrun barcode). - The cafe in Swansea Bay gives parkrunners a 20% discount upon showing their parkrun barcode on Saturday mornings. - Parking opposite Swansea Bay parkrun (at the Rec) is free - one of the reasons many parkrunners head to Swansea instead of Neath.

Are there any council services that you feel we should protect, reduce or stop altogether? (Protect)

1. Refuse collection, street cleaning, parks, parking enforcement officers.
2. Parking charges
3. The Gnoll
4. Lolly pop people
5. Local parks/Gnoll
6. Neath town centre.
7. The gnoll country park
8. Gnoll park health and leisure go hand in hand so should be protected

Are there any council services that you feel we should protect, reduce, or stop altogether? (Protect)

1. Parking
2. All
3. Youth services and street cleaning
4. Youth elderly services
5. Gwyn hall, gnoll Park.
6. Free parking for 1 hour in Pontardawe
7. Arts Centre, Vulnerable Adult Services, Free parking extended to 45 minutes to allow for more shops in the village to be visited.
8. Free 1 hr parking in Pontardawe
9. NPT carparking in Pontardawe to protect first hour free.
10. Free 1hr parking in villages

Are there any council services that you feel we should protect, reduce or stop altogether? (Protect)

1. Free parking pontardawe
2. 1 hour free parking in pontardawe and the current parking charges in gnoll. also i feel the proposed super scholl in pontardawe shuld not go ahead
3. The town for proprietors and residents free parking. Toilet facilities, swimming pool, childrens play areas, regular bin collections
4. Free parking in Pontardawe, Pontardawe Arts Centre, NPT Libraries, social services/social care, regular refuse collections.
5. afan forast park
6. Arts and culture services
7. Arts and Culture Services and Pontardawe Arts Centre
8. Cefn Coed Museum, Libraries
9. One Hour Free Parking in the Pontardawe Town Centre, Art Centre and Celtic Leisure opening times
10. Youth and disability services should also be protected.
11. Libraries, free first hour car parking
12. Arts centre and current parking position for pontardawe
13. Parking charges and services in Pontardawe arts centre

14. 1 hour free parking especially in the Pontardawe area as the community is in social hardship and with a growing elderly population. It is imperial for the community to visit their own village with peace of mind of 1 hour free parking.

Are there any council services that you feel we should protect, reduce or stop altogether? (Protect)

1. Gnoll park
2. Current parking situation in Pontardawe
3. Free parking for 1 hour

Are there any council services that you feel we should protect, reduce or stop altogether? (Reduce)

1. Home to School Taxis where parents/ carers are in receipt of Mobility Vehicle / Payment

Are there any council services that you feel we should protect, reduce or stop altogether? (Reduce)

2. Cut school taxi services, If families have cars, then they should transport their children to schools.
3. Traffic enforcement
4. Parking rates in general but especially at the gnoll. No one will use it before long especially with the disappearance of trees and the useless "fun" days.
5. Reduce staff in unimportant areas
6. Inefficiency in Council departments by getting rid of useless staff members and stopping nepotism
7. Car parking charges
8. The amount of money spent on the councillors and management in npt
9. Parking attendants
10. Staff in Civic Centre
11. Gnoll parking fees
12. Parking charges

Are there any council services that you feel we should protect, reduce or stop altogether? (Reduce)

1. Staff
2. None
3. Parking charges in Gnoll Country Park
4. Community led cafes and outsource in gnoll Park and Margam Park.. Good cafes and restaurants could easily bring more visitors increasing revenue.
5. Car parking costs
6. Parking charges
7. Parking charges at Gnoll park
8. Taxi services to take children to school.
9. transport cost- more community transport enabling people to get out in the community

Are there any council services that you feel we should protect, reduce or stop altogether? (Stop altogether)

1. ENV801 and ENV807 - We need to be encouraging visitors not charging them further by increasing
2. parking charges
3. Car parking fines
4. Community council
5. Housing immigrants.
6. Parking prices in local parks

Are there any council services that you feel we should protect, reduce or stop altogether? (Stop altogether)

1. Parking charges for short term
2. Hiking parking prices and no more vape/phone or charity shops in town centre.
3. Charging to park in Gnoll Park
4. Parking attendants
5. Parking enforcement
6. All social gatherings that are not open fully to the people of Neath Port Talbot. Stop the private social gatherings that are funded by the people, but yet the people are excluded from.
7. Council employees subsidy in parking their cars in nptcbc Car parks
8. Parking increases at Pontartawe
9. Unnecessary parking charges preventing people entering town.

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Skills and Culture Cabinet Board

15th February 2018

Report of the Head of the Head of Property and Regeneration Simon Brennan

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

Cymmer

PROPOSED INCREASE IN CAR PARKING CHARGES AT AFAN FOREST PARK 2018/19

Purpose of Report

- 1 To seek Members to approve an increase in the parking charges at Afan Forest Park and to incorporate the car park into the Councils off-street parking order.

Executive Summary

- 2 To agree an increase in parking charges at Afan Forest Park and to incorporate the car park into the Councils off-street parking order.

Background

- 3 Afan Forest Park(the facility) comprising the former Visitors Centre and Café (main building) ,car park, toilet/shower block and outside paths and grounds etc. as approximately shown edged in Black on the attached plan 1 was run as an operational facility under the control of the Head of Streetcare Services.
- 4 The adjoining Museum is leased to and operated by South Wales Miners Museum with the basement room in the main building leased to and operated by Afan Valley Bike Shed.

- 5 Members will recollect that as part of the 2015/16 Council Saving Budget it was agreed to reduce the running costs budget at Afan Forest Park by £200,000 to a break even position.
- 6 This meant that the facility would close unless a suitable operator was found to run the main building.
- 7 After a successful tender exercise a suitable operator was chosen which has allowed the facility to remain open as a visitor attraction.
- 8 Responsibility for the facility transferred from the Head of Streetcare to the Head of Property & Regeneration as part of this process.
- 9 The main building is now leased to Cedar Tearoom Limited with the basement room continuing to be leased to Afan Valley Bike Shed for which market rents are received by the Council. The adjoining Museum remains leased out to South Wales Miners Museum for which a small ground rent is received.
- 10 However the Council retains responsibility for the day to day operation and running costs of the car park, toilet/shower block and outside grounds etc.
- 11 The income from the car park as approximately shown coloured Grey on at attached Plan 1, helps to sustain the facility.
- 12 Some years ago solar powered Pay and Display machines were installed in the car park. However due to the high level of tree cover they do not work consistently resulting in a loss of parking income as visitors are unable to pay. As there are no Council staff on site it is not possible to collect the parking fees in an alternative way.
- 13 Two new electric powered Pay and Display machines have now been installed within the car park.
- 14 However it is also clear that many visitors are choosing not to purchase a ticket due to the lack of on-site enforcement.
- 15 This has resulted in an anticipated small budget deficit for the facility this financial year of circa £5,000.

16 For the Council to meet its commitments within the original FFP to balance the budget and to continue to ensure the sustainability of the facility, the following are proposed:

A Increase the car parking charges

- The increase in car parking charges will assist in ensuring a balanced budget thereby assisting in the continued development of this popular visitor attraction.
- Current charges are £1.00 all day at the facility. There is no season permit available at present.
- The current car park users visit the facility for a variety of reasons. This determines how long they stay in the car park.
- Many are short stay of no more than one hour (to go for a short walk or frequent the businesses in the main centre) whereas others that stay longer to take full advantage of the facility and other attractions nearby, including walking and cycling/mountain biking etc.
- It is therefore important to reflect this in the increased parking charges and also seek to ensure that existing businesses in the main building are not adversely affected.
- It is also important to ensure that as far as possible increased parking charges align with other such facilities in the area.
- The table below sets out current car parking charges as comparison:

Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre	£1.00 all day
Rhyslyn Car Park (NRW owned)	Free of charge
Glyncorrwg Mountain Bike Centre.	£3.00 per day
Margam Country Park charges	£4.90 per car
Gnoll Country Park charges	£2.00 per car Proposal to increase car parking charges to: £2.50 four hours

	£3.50 all day £52 season ticket
Coed Y Brenin Centre, Dolgellau (very similar to Afan Forest Park and run by NRW)	£1 one hour £3 three hours £5 all day
Bike Park Wales, Merthyr Tydfil	£8 day ride pass per person (free parking)

- The proposal to increase car parking charges at the facility was included as part of the Councils general consultation on parking as follows:
- “that the daily car parking charges are increased to £1.00 for up to one hour, £2.50 up to 4 hours and £4.00 for all day use from 1st April 2018”
- The proposed increase for parking has, perhaps unsurprisingly, received some negative through the consultation process. Replies show concerns that the proposed increase was too steep and would discourage visitors/tourism from using the facility and the surrounding area and those that do would find other places to park in the surrounding residential areas.

Other comments included for the introduction of a season ticket like at the Gnoll Country Park.

- Accordingly it is proposed that the daily car parking charges are increased to:

£1.00 for up to one hour,
£2.50 for up to 4 hours
£3.50 for over 4 hours.

The introduction of a season ticket at a cost of £52 (£1.00 per week) from the same date

The three existing businesses within the main building will be provided with up to a maximum of three free transferable season parking tickets for its staff. The changes to be

implemented with effect from 1st April 2018 or the earliest possible date thereafter.

B that a report be taken in due course to Streetcare and Engineering Cabinet Board to consider whether or not to extend the Councils off-street parking order to include the car park at the facility

- Effective enforcement can then be undertaken on an ad-hoc basis by the Councils parking enforcement officers.
- Charges have been in effect at the facility for several years now and there has not been any displacement from the car park to the access road or main highway. No control measures outside of the car park are proposed at present.
- If visitor parking on the access road becomes problematic then an order for double yellow lines could be progressed.
- Free parking is currently not permitted for any event in Afan Forest Park and should an off-street parking order be implemented that situation will continue, with the off-street parking order applying 7 days a week.

Financial Impact

- 17 Updated and/or additional signs would need needed at the facility the cost of which would be met out of the operational budget.
- 18 An amendment to the off-street parking order requires the proposal to be placed in a local Newspaper, a contribution towards the cost of circa £1500 may need to be met out of the operational budget.
- 19 Whilst site income will be retained with the operational budget the monies from any parking fines would be retained by Parking Services to assist with the cost of ad-hoc visits and appeals.

Equality Impact Assessment

- 20 A screening assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been

determined that this proposal does not require an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Workforce Impact

- 21 Ad hoc enforcement visits, although limited, will be a demand on the Councils Parking Services.

Legal Impact

- 22 Any changes to Car Parking charges and amendment to the Councils off- street parking order will require a decision in that regard to be made by Streetcare and Engineering Cabinet Board.

Risk Management

- 23 The budget for the facility needs at a minimum to break even to justify the future sustainability of the facility bearing in mind the ongoing climate of austerity as well as providing funds to undertake improvement works.

Consultation

- 24 The Council has consulted on the proposal to increase car parking charges, with brief details set out in item 16 above.
- 25 The local member has been consulted and is generally supportive of the proposal.
- 26 The 3 on site businesses have been consulted. Whilst not unsurprisingly they have some concerns about potential adverse effect on their businesses, acknowledge and generally support the proposal

Recommendation

- 26 It is recommended that:
- a) Members confirm their agreement to the increase in Car Parking Charges as set out within Option 2 namely that car parking charges are increased to £1.00 for up to one hour, £2.50 for up to 4 hours and £3.50 all day, and increase the cost of a season ticket to £52.

- b) That the charges proposed be referred to the Streetscene and Engineering Cabinet Board for acceptance and included in the legal order to be advertised. Any observations and objections will be referred to a future Streetscene and Engineering Cabinet Board.
- c) Streetcare and Engineering Cabinet Board be asked to include the Afan Forest car park in the Off-Street Parking Order.

27 These to take effect from 1st April 2018 or the earliest possible date thereafter.

28 These would be subject to approval being granted by Streetcare and Engineering Cabinet Board.

Reason for Proposed Decision

29 To protect an important income stream which supports the running of the park.

Implementation of decision

30 The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

31 Appendix 1 - Plan showing the extent of the facility and the proposed area to be included within the off street parking order.

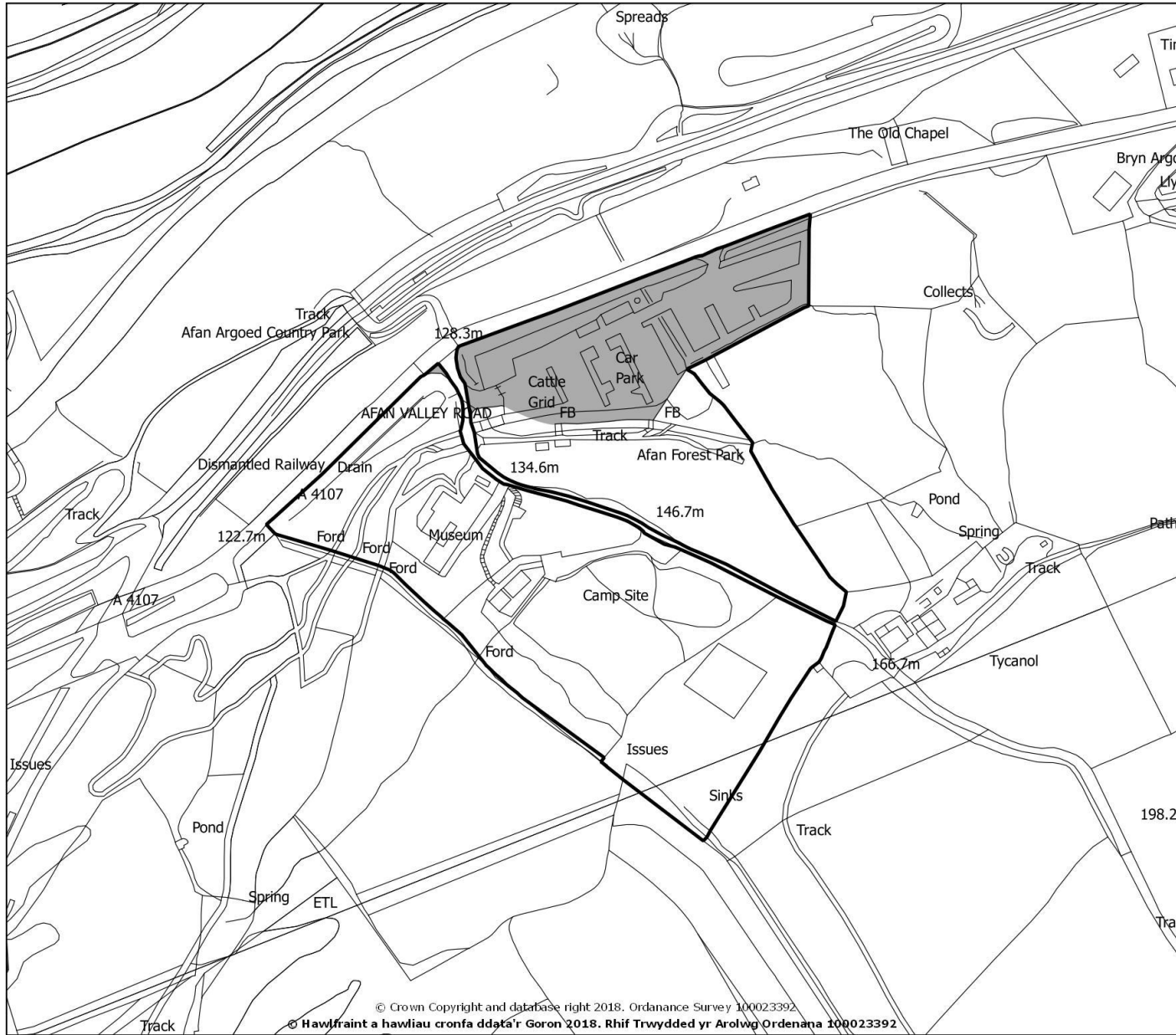
Background Papers

32 None

Officer Contact

33 For further information on this report item, please contact:

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NOTES NODIADAU



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Project Proiect

Drawing Title Teitl Lluniadu

Afan Forest Visitors Centre
 Afan Valley Road
 Cynonville
 Port Talbot

Scales **Dafol**
 A4 @ 1:2500

Drawing No. **Rhif gan Dynnu**
 18-0076

Rev. **Adolygu**



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