

REPORT OF THE BUSINESS & PERFORMANCE MANAGER

SUBJECT: MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR SOLVA AND SAUNDERSFOOT CAR PARKS

Purpose of this report

To determine the management arrangements for Solva and Saundersfoot car parks.

SOLVA CAR PARK

Background

The Authority owns part of Solva car park and leases the remainder from the National Trust, with the exception of buildings on the site owned by Pembrokeshire County Council and Welsh Water. Parking charging was introduced in the summer of 2009 amongst a degree of opposition from the local community council and residents. In the previous few years there had been an increase in site maintenance resulting in concerns of soft spots and voids developing below the surface. The complete relaying of the car park was beyond the resources of the Authority without additional income. With the benefit of European grants the car park was completely refurbished with significant improvements to the entrance and pedestrian paths during the winter of 2012/13. The planning permission for the refurbishment includes the installation of pay and display machines.

Parking charges in Solva are the Authority standard with a 30 minute free period for people just 'popping to the shops' and a reduced season ticket for residents of Lower Solva without off street parking. The car park is manned seven days a week between April and the end of October.

Arrangements for 2013

Members will recall approving a pilot scheme for Solva Community Council to take over the day to day management of the operation of Solva car park on a profit share basis during the summer of 2013. This included employing seasonal staff, and keeping the car park and picnic site in good order. The community council set up a small car park management committee to oversee the operation. A combination of greater community involvement and the extended run of good weather has resulted in record takings of £56,881 net of vat, compared to £43,206 in 2012, an increase of 32%. This compares with an overall increase of 12% for the other car parks suggesting that the closer management available by the community council added value and increased the takings.

There is significant support from the residents and businesses of Solva for the local management of the car park with the additional revenue to the community council being used for local projects including refurbishment of the children's

playground, support for the village memorial hall and solar powered lights to the Sand Quay and footpath to Upper Solva.

The profit share exercise was expected cost the Authority approximately £8,000, but resulted in an actual cost of about £14,000 although it is difficult to compare like for like. The exercise has reduced the day to day involvement and management of the operation by passing the responsibility for recruitment, equipment, payroll, covering sickness, cash collection and complaints, to the community council. Previously the cash collection and car park litter clearance was carried out seven days a week but this has now been reduced to 5 days.

Options for 2014

The community council has now asked for a longer term management arrangement following the pilot year.

In these difficult financial times Members will need to consider whether the income passed to the community in any management agreement is compensated by the partnership and engagement with the community council and the wider community of Solva, possibly based on an agreed percentage share of the income.

The alternative methods of operating Solva car park are

1. Continue with management by Solva Community Council with an income to the Authority and accept a reduced income each year
2. Take the management back in house and deal with the various management costs and resource requirements but maximise the income.

SAUNDERSFOOT REGENCY CAR PARK

Background

The Authority owns the Regency car park in Saundersfoot and the day to day operation of this car park has been managed by the Saundersfoot Harbour Commissioners (SHC) for the past two years.

Arrangements for 2013

The service provided included frequent visible patrols of the car park, litter collection, monitoring the machines and routine servicing, cash collection, and occasional reminders about buying tickets. The involvement of SHC staff has resulted in a small increase in revenue of up to 5%, but has reduced the Authority's management costs and time. The gross takings by SHC were £75,780, compared to £75,039 in 2012, although this may increase by about £9,000 with an insurance claim following vandalism. The compensation arrangements for the two years has been based on an agreed baseline with a 50-50 split of income above that level. In 2012 SHC received £8,069, with a similar amount due this year.

Proposal for 2014

The Harbour Commissioners are keen to continue with the arrangement and perhaps develop a traffic management plan for the village involving all the parking providers in the area in coming years.

The Harbour Commissioners have suggested a small change in sharing the revenue. The current method results in a single payment at the end of the year of approximately 11% of the total revenue. It is proposed that this is revised to a payment of 10% of the revenue collected, but paid monthly.

Future consideration

The management of car parks is included in potential joint working arrangements with Pembrokeshire County Council, and PCC have indicated that the off-street parking order should be confirmed by June 2014. While both of our existing partners are keen to develop the partnerships into long term agreements, any arrangements should not prevent the option to involve PCC if appropriate in future arrangements.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to determine whether the arrangements for managing Solva and Saundersfoot car parks are to continue with the existing partners for the next year (i.e. 2014) and if so should any changes be made.

(For further information, please contact Alan Hare (Business & Performance Manager) on ext 4810