

REPORT OF BUSINESS & PERFORMANCE MANAGER

SUBJECT: CAR PARK ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2015

Introduction

This report outlines arrangements concerning the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's (PCNPA/Authority) car parks and requests decisions on a number of possible changes.

Off-Street Parking Order

The Authority provides 36 car parks of various sizes throughout the National Park and currently charges in ten. In 1989 pay and display machines were introduced at some these car parks and an off-street parking order was made by Dyfed County Council to regulate the charging and enforcement at eight of these sites. Variations to the order were made in 1991 and 1996 when charges were increased.

A new order is now being prepared by Pembrokeshire County Council for all the Authority's car park sites to enable easier management and control of misuse. The legal process of introducing a new order requires statutory consultation and subject to this being satisfactorily completed the new order is expected to be enabled later in 2015.

Initial discussions are also underway with Pembrokeshire County Council on a longer term strategy for potential joint management of the Authority's car parks. However, we are unlikely to be able to implement these until later in 2015.

1. Season tickets

Approximately 250 car park season tickets are sold each year. These are currently sold at £70 but discounted to £50 if purchased before the end on May which accounts for about 90% of sales. The season ticket can specify up to two vehicle registrations numbers and can be used in any of the Authority's car parks. Season tickets in many other locations in the county are considerably higher and notably in Saundersfoot Harbour where the cost is £100.

There have been several requests from car park users for a cheaper single site season ticket particularly for Freshwater East and Poppit, where users rarely use any of the authority's other car parks. It is proposed that season tickets for an individual vehicle and limited to Freshwater East or Poppit are sold for £25.

Recommendation – Members are asked to **APPROVE** a standard charge of £70 for season tickets for use at all car parks and the introduction of a new single site

season tickets for use at either Freshwater East or Poppit at a cost of £25 per vehicle.

2. Pay & Display - Newport & Poppit

The Authority originally introduced pay and display machines in 1989 and now has machines at seven of its charging car parks with Newport Sands, Poppit and Solva being the exceptions. Pay and display machines are used in all the county council's car parks and at almost all the National Trust car parks and are extensively used and accepted throughout the country.

The manned sites at Newport and Poppit have proved increasingly difficult to staff with recruitment in recent years often resulting in only one or two candidates applying. In recent years two car park attendants have left the Authority during the season causing a number of operational difficulties.

The technology used in pay and display equipment is now more secure, resilient and sophisticated and although there is an initial cost of purchase and installation these machines substantially reduce the cost of staff and often generate a small increase in income. Poppit car park has recently undergone a major refurbishment and the Authority approved the installation of pay and display machines as part of the planning application for that refurbishment.

It is proposed to investigate the cost and practicalities of installing machines at these two sites as soon as possible, with a view to installing pay and display machines as soon as practical.

Recommendation. That Members **authorise** the investigation and subsequent installation of pay and display machines at Newport and Poppit subject to acceptable costs.

3. Partnership working

3.1 Saundersfoot

In 2011 the Authority was approached by the Saundersfoot Harbour Commissioners (SHC) with the suggestion that they could provide day to day management of the Regency car park in Saundersfoot. They collect the cash, count and bank it, collect litter and keep the site tidy and patrol the site regularly, and can issue warning notices. This saves Authority staff time and supervision requiring only an occasional visit by PCNPA staff to carryout simple maintenance on the machines. SHC receive a fee of 10% of the gross takings for this service - about £8,000 each year.

Recommendation That Members **approve** the continuation of the arrangement with the Harbour Commissioners for 2015.

3.2 Solva

For the past two years Solva Community Council (Solva CC) has managed Solva car park on a daily basis on behalf of PCNPA. Solva CC presently employ two

attendants, sell tickets, collect and bank the cash, maintain the picnic site and generally keep the area in a clean and tidy condition. This arrangement benefits the Authority by reducing staff time on-site and reduces the general recruitment and supervision requirements. It benefits the community of Solva by retaining a 'manned presence' at the car park which, in turn, is seen as helping boost local trade.

The arrangement for Solva CC managing the car park on behalf of PCNPA is reflected by a management agreement between the two parties for a 50:50 split on surplus income. In 2014, this resulted £25,000 for each organisation and a similar sum in 2013. The community council has used their share for a number of community projects including the village memorial hall, and local children's playground. The overall income from the car park has increased during the past two years for a number of reasons. There has been an overall increase in visitor numbers to the area and the substantial improvements and refurbishment the car park is more of an attraction. In addition, Solva CC has been able to introduce a more flexible approach to staffing in order to meet busy periods of activity. In addition, some local businesses have indicated that the 'ambassadorial' role adopted by the attendants has been beneficial to local trade.

Since the reduction by Welsh Government in the National Park Grant in 2014/15 and with further reductions anticipated for next year, many in the Solva community have been concerned about future car park management arrangements and the potential impact on local businesses. A number of letters and emails have been received asking that the current arrangements are continued and in particular that pay and display is not introduced. There is also a Facebook campaign supporting the present arrangements although perhaps not surprisingly, some of the comments are not 100% accurate.

However, in the current financial climate, Members may wish to consider whether the cost to the Authority for this partnership approach continues to be an appropriate arrangement.

There are several possible options-

1. Retain the present arrangements with Solva Community Council with a loss of approximately £25,000 a year compared to the site being managed by the Authority.
2. Revise the arrangements with the community council based on an agreed management fee of for instance £8,000 or 10% of gross whichever is the larger with the costs of the attendants, and picnic site maintenance as at present paid from the parking income.
3. Take the full management of the car park back under the Authority's control and recruit our own staff - requiring extra management resources to recruit, train and supervise the site.
4. Introduce pay & display machines, something which the local community would not favour but which would reduce costs even further and maximise the authority's net income by an estimated £40,000 a year.

Recommendation Members are asked to **determine** the preferred arrangements for the future management of Solva car park.

Background documents:

Background information and proposal from Solva Community Council

Email from Solva Boat Owners Association

Email from Solva Business Group

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

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2015 PROPOSAL FOR THE CONTINUED MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF SOLVA CAR PARK

1 December 2014

Welsh Government Strategy - Overview

1. Solva Community Council (SCC) recognises we are in hard times with current and ongoing public spending cuts and rising living costs. Our community spirit has though been a key feature in helping people in our village through these difficult periods.

2. SCC has worked hard to embrace Welsh Government strategy to help counter the austerity effects. SCC has also worked hard to develop the resilience and capability of our community to better cope so that we can hold up under the strain of these reduced budgets and services but still do our best to continue to grow and thrive.

3. We firmly believe that our strategy to manage and operate the Solva car park benefits¹ the community and is aligned with the following Welsh Government policy:

a. **The Localism Act.** The Localism Act was passed in 2011 and is intended to devolve power from central government to individuals, communities and local councils. For too long communities such as Solva have not had a big enough say in what happens in their local area – whether it be about what happens to local amenities² (such as car parks), or how local services are delivered.

i. SCC has diligently worked with PCNPA to achieve a workable agreement for the car park that sits in the very centre of the community. It is not like many other PCNPA car parks that sit in isolation.

b. **The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 part 7:** The Measure will allow Communities and Community Councils to develop and strengthen their role, enabling them to deliver a wider range of services and actions locally as well as increasing the effectiveness of their representational role and their ability to work in partnership with other bodies.

i. SCC and PCNPA have a committed partnership fostered at all levels. The car park partnership has benefited everyone. Continued

¹ See Annex A – SCC Benefits Statement

² See Letters of Support (Solva Business Group) at Appendix 1 to Annex A

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praise and support has been received³ from many tourists who have visited Solva.

c. **Building Resilient Communities** - Helping people into work. Paid employment not only provides an income to sustain a family, it can also provide a sense of purpose and self-worth. People in work find it easier to get other, better jobs. A job can be the start of a route that leads to greater skills, higher income, better housing and a more fulfilled life.

i. Solva car park provides employment for local people, it helps support the local economy and benefits local businesses – a service⁴ a machine⁵ will not.

d. **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill** - Sustainability lies at the heart of the Welsh Government's agenda for Wales; it also lies at the heart of this legislative programme. Taken as a whole, it will promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing and enhance people's quality of life in Wales. It is about defining the long term development path for our nation. It means healthy, productive people; vibrant, inclusive communities; a diverse and resilient environment and an advanced and innovative economy.

i. Austerity⁶ is trying to squeeze the heart out of Solva but the benefits delivered by the car park are clear. Although the wider financial benefits are difficult to quantify in PCNPA terms, their contribution to this Bill is important – the Car Park Partnership brings to Solva an opportunity to improve the “Well-being” of everyone.

4. This proposal will therefore help develop a stronger community for the people and is strongly aligned with Welsh Government strategy.

Introduction

5. SCC is pleased to put forth our 2015 proposal for the continued management and operation of the car park in lower Solva that provides parking facilities for residents, visitors, businesses and shoppers. Tens of thousands of customers use the car park each year and for many, this service is their only contact with the Community Council and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA). SCC has delivered a clean, tidy and well maintained car park that gives a good first impression for visitors and tourists to Solva with the provision of valued income and benefits for the community.

³ See paragraph 10 – Car Park Attendants

⁴ See paragraph 27 – Dog Fouling

⁵ The community **objects** to any plans to introduce pay and display machines for the car park in lower Solva – there is **no consent** in the village to impose this type of parking system – the cry is “keep a real person for the obvious reasons”. Pay and display will also deter people from popping into the shops in lower Solva for a quick purchase – machines would be another potential barrier for trade. – See Appendix 1 to Annex A – **Letters of Support**

⁶ See paragraph 8 – Reduction of services in Solva

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6. The benefits statement and key financial figures for the car park at Annex A.
7. The unique partnership between PCNPA and SCC is an excellent example of how working together benefits community projects and organisations. SCC and the local community hope the collaborative, sustainable and long-term partnership continues.
8. £9,000 from car park proceeds has already provided vital funds for urgent work to the Memorial Hall. Without such funding the facility, which is the centre for many village activities, could have become unusable. Due to budget reductions, PCC have declined any financial support for the maintenance of the building and the funding from SCC has only been possible because of the successful partnership with PCNPA. Sadly, other services have suffered; our local school is also under threat. Solva Youth Club is the latest casualty. PCC funding is to be withdrawn – another blow to the youth of our community. SCC are discussing options with PCC but any funding to continue the youth service will have to come from the Community Council.
9. With regards to tourism, Solva has again been a popular destination for many people this summer. 36,227 cars used the car park between April and October bringing approximately 108,000 visitors to the area. SCC anticipate many more will visit from 2015 as a direct benefit of the Dylan Tomos film “Under Milk Wood” filmed in Solva over the summer and due for wide release at the end of this year.

Car Park Attendants

10. The good weather has no doubt helped make Solva a popular destination in 2014. Our diligent car park attendants have been given much credit by customers and tourists from around the world for their excellent work as ambassadors for Solva and their comprehensive knowledge of the surrounding area, PCNPA, the National Trust and local businesses.
11. Such excellent work must continue. The partnership between SCC and PCNPA will ensure a friendly and high quality car park service that will provide a warm welcome to everyone who visits Solva and Pembrokeshire - whatever the weather.

Proposal

12. The proposal will continue the 2014 Car Park Contract signed between PCNPA and SCC on 19 June 2014.
13. We are firmly committed to providing PCNPA and the Solva community with the highest possible professional service. This means first and foremost being responsive to the needs of every customer who uses the car park. It's our belief that

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those needs will be best met through our professional management and operation of the car park.

14. Our goal is to be efficient, speed up the processing of vehicles, especially during the high season, and improve the overall customer experience. We will continue to provide cost effective, professional, friendly and attentive parking attendants who will deliver quality services to all patrons using the parking facilities at all times.

15. Customers, local residents and businesses have expressed their satisfaction that 50% of the net profit is invested in local community projects and organisations.

16. The PCNPA and Solva are draw cards for tourists and the special relationship that we have will no doubt reinforce Solva and the National Park as a popular destination for visitors from around the UK and the world.

Parking Implementation Plan

17. Operating a car park that has seen during the 2014 season 36,227 cars carrying around 108,000 people requires discipline and teamwork. SCC has and will continue to work closely with the PCNPA to help build a long term partnership. We will maintain regular interaction with our parking attendants; continue to have frequent partnership meetings with the PCNPA and work with the National Trust and other stakeholders as necessary, while keeping all parties informed of upcoming events.

18. Our operating plan may indeed change as we continue to learn and hopefully grow during 2015. But our on-going operational focus remains unchanged - to verify that all parking spaces are used effectively and efficiently and to keep all patrons safe, including pets. The operation will be reviewed, adjusted and finalised for the 2015 season upon renewal of the contract with the PCNPA.

Operation Procedure

19. The following points outline the key ideas and guidelines that will be incorporated into the continued management and operation of Solva car park.

- a. All patrons are to receive a ticket upon entrance to Solva car park.
- b. National Trust members, on production of a valid membership card, park free of charge.
- c. 30 minutes free parking for shoppers and parents using the play park.
- d. Parking tariffs will continue the two hour option.
- e. SCC will train new employees and volunteers who will be performing tasks for annual events/regattas etc.
- f. All workers will be provided with appropriate clothing and a distinctive name badge.
- g. All parking personnel will help contribute to the operation for a safe, friendly car park and treat customers in a courteous manner.

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Hours of Operation for 2015

20. Commencing on Friday 27th March 2015 to Monday 2 November 2015 (subject to Authority confirmation).
- a. 9:00a.m. to 5:00p.m daily.

Parking Attendants Hours of Operation

21. Attendants will be required to arrive 15 minutes early and remain until 5:00p.m. daily.

Staffing and Equipment

22. Upon renewal of the contract, SCC in preparation for the 2015 season will engage attendants as needed, train them and provide appropriate clothing.

23. SCC will make regular deposits into the bank, maintain an Income and Expenditure account, procure the necessary ticket rolls, forms and other supplies.

24. Ticket machines will be provided by PCNPA.

25. We are committed to retaining quality individuals who illustrate the utmost in customer service and operational efficiency. All attendants will be kept abreast of Community Councils expectations and on what efforts must be made to improve their performance.

26. SCC will carefully check to see that all attendants adhere to our performance standards. A clean, neat and well-groomed attendant will make a favourable impression. A friendly smile, a helpful attitude, and an accurate answer to a direct question are extremely important factors in promoting a positive experience for everyone who visits Solva.

Dog Fouling

27. Solva Community Council require dog owners to carry a disposable scoop the poop bag whenever they take their dogs out to a public place in Solva or the surrounding area. SCC now provide free scoop bags and parking attendants will offer these to all car owners with dogs.

Summary

28. We look forward to this proposal being endorsed and will clarify any points the PCNPA may have.

**Solva Community Council
Cyngor Cymuned Solfach**

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brucepayne241@gmail.com

Annex:

A. Benefits Statement and Financial Statistics

Appendix:

1. Solva Business Group – Letters of Support

Distribution:

Action:
PCNPA Committee

Information:
Solva Business Group

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ANNEX A TO SCC PROPOSAL DATED 1 DEC 2014

BENEFITS STATEMENT AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

Introduction

1. SCC is pleased to introduce the collective benefits statement for Solva Car Park previously managed and operated by PCNPA.
2. The release of additional car park benefits should increase significantly over time and as such, the projected benefits forecast give grounds for confidence.

Solva Business Group Benefits – Letters of Support

3. In order to improve the potential for the forecast benefits to be realised PCNPA are urged not to transfer control of the car park to Pembrokeshire County Council.
4. Solva Business Group letters of support are at Appendix 1 to Annex A. Additional letters of support will be sent direct to CE PCNPA from Solva Business Group.

Solva Community Council (SCC)

5. PCNPA are requested to consider a longer term of management and operation by SCC.
 - a. A 15 year agreement should be considered with a break clause every 5 years.
 - b. One clear benefit of 15 years would be improved Budget and Precept setting by SCC.

Solva Financial Benefits

6. Proceeds from the car park are supporting the following projects and organisations in Solva:

Project/Organisation	Amount (£)
Solva Memorial Hall	£12,000
Gamlyn Play Park	£12,000
Solva Football Club	£2,100
Solva Youth Club	£3,155
Solva Edge Festival	£3,200
Solar Light Project including Lower & Upper Solva Pedestrian Access Improvements	£5,000 (TBC)

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Car Park Key financial figures (Gross)

7.

	PCNPA	SCC	Profit (Net)	
2011	£57,974			
2012	£51,580			
2013		£68,178	£46,000	
2014		£66,074	£47,000	

Car Park Expenditure (intangible Savings to PCNPA)

8.

Car Park Operation	2013	2014	Total
Salaries	£18,013	£16,207	£34,220
Holiday pay	£1,934	£1,738	£3,672
Stationery & clothing	£204	£243	£447
NI Employers Contributions	£1,168		£1,168
Grass Cutting	£360	£300	£660
Total	£21,679	£18,488	£40,167

PCNPA Intangible Benefits

9. SCC's management and operation of the car park supports PCNPA to optimise the use of their resources and reduces other backroom activities such as pay, accounting, cash collection and general management activities.

The Future

10. With recent announcements by the Welsh Government regarding the reduction in revenue to support Local Authorities, PCC have developed a cost reduction plan designed at generating savings of £20 million over a two year period. As a consequence Solva and all other communities in Pembrokeshire will see a decrease of service provision. Effects are already being felt.

11. PCC budget reductions do however provide SCC with an opportunity to set out how they see themselves operating in the future. This could mean taking more responsibility for the delivery of some services from PCC, but with no financial assistance.

12. The special partnership SCC has with PCNPA will ultimately support any such future operation. It will also benefit Solva and help to create a visible identity for the community SCC serve.

Projected Benefits

13. The future potential role for SCC is expected to produce other tangible benefits. It will enable SCC to:

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- a. **Be an asset based leader** to identify, utilise and optimise assets such as the Car Park for the benefit of the community.
- b. **Enjoy locally relevant services** that are designed and based on local needs. SCC must demonstrate effective use of car park profits and their influence on precept finance and local services.
- c. **Value local distinctiveness** by using some car park revenue to pursue initiatives that will support local heritage and tourism. In doing so this will:
- d. **Support a dynamic local economy** and allow SCC to better work with their local businesses, including PCNPA, the National Trust and PCC to support employment initiatives and mentoring schemes.

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**APPENDIX 1 TO
ANNEX A
TO SCC PROPOSAL
DATED 1 DEC 2014**

SOLVA BUSINESS GROUP – LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Dear Solva Community Council,

I would be grateful if you could express to PCC the opinion of Solva Business Group regarding the possibility of PCC taking over the management of Solva car park. SCC manages the car park with the best interests of both locals and visitors in mind, and uses the profit to enhance Solva. It understands the very seasonal nature of trade in the village, the importance of annual events such as the regattas in attracting visitors, and the benefits of having a parking attendant acting as an ambassador and information service. This would be lost should PCC move management decisions out of the village. In addition, the possibility of extended charging times, year round charging and pay and display machines would be disastrous for local businesses. Studies of any town centre show that, along with business rates, the biggest threat to successful retailing are parking issues. It appears that PCC would want to manage Solva Car park for short sighted financial gain, and does not have the long term interests of the village at heart. We hope that the current situation with SCC managing our car park in our village will be allowed to continue,

Bella Prickett
Chairman, Solva Business Group

I agree with what I have read and I think it would most definitely be detrimental to trade in Solva especially in the quiet months as they are already a struggle so you do have the support from the Harbour on these issues, and to loose the car park attendants would be a big loss.

You have our total support for this letter. I think the job that the attendants do promoting businesses in Solva is vital. Plus they provide a v friendly and personal introduction to our lovely village and is quite a unique feature for the area.

In the interests of our business Calebs Cottage B&B and Solva as a village, I fully support retaining the current arrangement for the village (SCC) to run the harbour car park.

Email from Solva Boat Owners Association

Dear Tegryn,

As you know the Solva Boat Owners Association since its formation in 1969 has had a special relationship with Pembrokeshire County Council, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and Solva. On this occasion the Association would like to add their support to the SCC's application to retain the Management of the lower Solva car park.

Over the past two years whilst the SCC have controlled the car park they along with the two car park attendants have been great ambassadors for Solva, Pembrokeshire, the National Trust and PCNPA, giving visitors a welcome smile and guidance to all aspects of Solva and the local area. From the SBOA aspect they direct families to Trinity Quay where they can crab fish, swim, see the boats, just sit and relax and enjoy the whole experience of what Solva has to offer.

Ticket machines will create a lot of restrictions especially to local businesses and local residents with no benefits to the community whatsoever.

Ticket machines are so impersonal and do not reflect the welcome that Solva and Pembrokeshire always offer its visitors and is one of the reasons people visit the area in such numbers

When the car park is full the attendants, direct traffic away thus alleviating traffic congestion in the car park and the main road.

Why alienate the local community by passing the control over the car park to machines whilst the PCNPA needs the present support Solva community gives.

We always thought the role of the PCNPA was to protect and preserve the area and the way of life of the residents, this why the decision the PCNPA made 2 years ago was the correct one, please make the correct decision again and let the good active team carry on looking after a local amenity where the village benefits and you still reap the rewards of their efforts with little strain on yourselves, please leave it as it is.

Best Regards,

On behalf of the membership of the Solva Boat Owners Association.

Dave Taylor

Secretary SBOA

Tel: 01437 721220

email: sboa@btinternet.com

Trinity Quay, Solva.

Tel: 01437 721725

Email from Solva Business Group

Dear Mr Jones,

I am writing expressing the views of the Solva Business Group regarding the possibility of a change of management at Solva Car park. The business group has over 50 members, all of whom are dependent on visitors to Solva for their livelihoods. Their staff and suppliers number many more. We feel the correct management of the car park is vital in maintaining a healthy and successful tourist environment.

Having attended many meetings on the subject, the business group has been encouraged that their views have been taken into account and balanced with the need of those of us lucky enough to live here. We have been very pleased with the way Solva Community Council has managed the car park, and would hope it has been a positive experience for the National Parks, too. The SCC understands the very seasonal nature of trade in the village, the importance of annual events in attracting visitors, and the huge benefit of having a car park attendant who acts as an excellent ambassador for the village. The parking attendant is invaluable for advising alternative parking when the car park is full, and acting as an informal information service. They are able to provide help for walkers catching buses, advising about tides, suggesting places to visit, and enhance everyone's experience of our lovely village. A pay and display machine would make a very poor substitute, and we fear this may be the case should PCC take over the management.

Having a share of the funds raised has been much appreciated by the village, and the goodwill gained from this has done much to temper the resentment that may have been felt by locals being charged to park in their own village. It's been good to know that money raised in Solva can be spent in Solva, with everyone having a say via our councillors. Our worry would be that should PCC take over management, this source of income would be lost and we as a village would not have a say in what these funds would be spent on. This is felt particularly keenly by the business group, as we are aware that money spent on parking means less money for visitors to spend in our businesses. Indeed, charging at all deters some visitors. By having a share of the income SCC is able to take a long term view of enhancing Solva for locals and visitors. Should the PCC take over management, a pay and display machine, year round charging and charging until 7pm are all possibilities. It is hard not to see these changes as for short term financial gain rather than a sustainable long term plan for Solva.

Solva's business community is enthusiastic and committed, but we do need support in these challenging times. Studying other villages and towns shows us many successes but also failures, and through reading industry magazines, it is undoubtedly the case that parking issues can make or break a business or tourist environment. Solva Business Group is unanimous in the hope that the present car park management is allowed to continue. I hope you will be able to reassure us that this will be the case,

Yours sincerely,

Bella Prickett

Chairman, Solva Business Group