

Parking Policy: (Cash Meters) Task and Finish Group

Public Comments for Consideration

In today's East Barnet Press & Advertiser the public were asked to send you their comments on the cashless parking system in place in the borough. So here are mine:

Parking meters situated at the sides of roads - I never park using these so do not mind how these are paid for.

Parking in car parks such as Stapyleton Road in High Barnet and Lodge Lane in Finchley - I am deliberately avoiding shopping in these places as I do not wish to avail myself of cashless parking. I take my custom to Enfield instead, which has a much more vibrant town centre with more choice too. Dean Cohen mentioned in the paper that there would be a significant financial implication to reintroducing parking meters with coins. That may be the case with individual parking spaces but surely the larger car parks would only have 3 or 4 meters?

Last time went to Stapyleton Road I did not at first realise that one could not pay with cash. I was one of 3 people in those 5 minutes that chose to leave the car park rather than register for cashless parking. This cannot be helping the regeneration of Barnet as a shopping centre.

I trust that the council will reintroduce cash parking, at least in all car parks where it has been removed, and that this will help encourage local people such as myself to spend our money in our own locality.

yours sincerely
Elizabeth Burling

Barnet council review of cash parking provision

These comments are based on observations and from our active involvement with the council over parking provision in High Barnet

Major changes to pricing in the council-run town centre parking spaces has significantly increased usage, particularly so now that council parking is cheaper than the private provision. These comments are therefore made in the context that we consider pricing as a means of optimising usage of parking spaces is decidedly more important than the method of payment.

Being located at the edge of the Borough we do have a lot of visitors to the town centre who come from Hertfordshire. Traders report that some do have difficulty with the absence of a cash facility in council spaces notwithstanding the recently introduced card payment facility. Many therefore perhaps do prefer to use the two private car parks in town which offer cash facility, so the council may be losing some potential revenue. More important is the possibility that the absence of a cash facility in the council bays could put people off visiting at all, though perhaps more a problem of perception due to the extensive negative publicity of the past couple of years. 500 of the 800 or so spaces around the town are in two private car parks both of which have a cash facility so in reality there is no problem for those who wish to pay by cash. And paying a small premium in parking charges for this facility is perhaps reasonable given the additional cost of servicing the machines.

We have a phone only facility in the largest council car park which is designated for long term use. Most users here park every day and the car park routinely fills. This suggests that for regular users the phone is actually a positive and a cash option is not needed. We would therefore only need to consider the short-term parking areas to provide a cash facility for the benefit of short-term visitors. That said, the on-street provision in the town centre is very limited and in constant demand. though users may find it more convenient, a cash facility would not increase overall usage there.

Of course, we recognise that providing a cash facility does incur operational costs and the council would need to be sure that provision is cost effective. We do believe that in High Barnet the demand for a cash facility in council bays is likely to be somewhat limited. With this in mind a cautious approach might be desirable, perhaps pick one town centre to start with as an experiment. That would allow the council to evaluate demand and costs before committing to every location.

There is one further problem. The credit card machines in the car parks have been broken and on occasions and have taken some time to be repaired. An evaluation of the availability and the maintenance arrangements for the machines should perhaps be considered alongside consideration of the possibility of introducing cash payment. Having just card only constantly available would be preferable to an even more intermittent card/cash facility.

Gordon Massey
Chairman
Barnet Residents Association

I for one am very much FOR re-introducing cash meters for parking. I will NOT phone to pay to park, why should I give my credit card details for them to be on file, so I avoid anywhere if I have to phone and pay to park which means I take my business out of the borough in order to be able to pay for parking using cash. I am sure many people especially the elderly feel the same. YES PLEASE do re-introduce the cash meters and get our town centers buzzing with sales again.
best regards

I am away so will not be able to attend the meeting on 11th February. I would like you therefore to please put forward my view on the idea of re-introducing parking meters.

This enquiry should have been held before the meters were removed. The little experiment carried out by the council will have cost us the taxpayers a fortune when we would have told Barnet before the removal that the entire idea was a folly. To have a system that firstly is based in the idea that everybody has a mobile phone is more than presumptuous. It also increases the cost by the charge for the phone call and the charge made by the parking company so in fact the half hour parking is something like 15% more than the price set by Barnet. Secondly to make it compulsory to purchase a half hour parking when maybe three/five minutes are required to say purchase a loaf of bread, makes that loaf of bread almost double the price.

I vote for what I know most people would wish for and that is parking meters charged for by the minute so a driver can choose how much time they wish to pay for.

I also vote for those who decided to take the meters away in the first instance to pay for the reintroduction.

Many thanks for representing my view.
Sharon Klaff

I wish to submit the following contribution to the discussion of the task and finish group of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 February 2014:

The evidence of shop closures caused primarily by the withdrawal of cash parking meters in high streets and car parks is overwhelming, as are the views of shopkeepers and shoppers. The remedy is to bring back cash meters.

With all good wishes

Keith Martin

I am one of many residents who are very upset about the lack of parking meters. I have stopped going to the little shops in Barnet as I find the telephone parking so complicated. I am elderly and suffering with various illnesses. It is difficult enough to find a parking space and then when I have got one I have to stand outside, several times it has been in heavy rain and try to telephone a number which is often difficult to get through to.

It has given me reason to do more and more of my shopping on the internet. Taking business away from the local shops.

I know so many people who feel the same.

Please reinstate the parking meters!!!

Kind regards

Lisbet Davies

It is an utter outrage that these machines were removed by the Council in the first place and replaced with the phone parking service. The Council then backtracked and reintroduced machines which only accepted credit/debit cards. Now they are backtracking yet again to introduce cash machines.

Who pays for these stupid mistakes by the Council? The taxpayer. This is quite clearly a political move by the Conservative party with an eye on the election due in May. Had the Conservative Council not been so loose with the taxpayers' money, moving to a clearly inadequate and unworkable system of pay by phone these machines would still be in place. **THEY SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN REMOVED IN THE FIRST PLACE.**

If the Council do return these machines to our streets, then there is absolutely no way the taxpayer should foot the bill.

Peggy Sherwood

1) Since 'pay by phone' parking was introduced to North Finchley/Talley Ho area, I have virtually stopped shopping in that area, other than going to Waitrose or Homebase where there are car parks.

On one occasion I set up the system to use my phone for parking, but never again. Now, whenever I'm driving through the area, and think it would be nice to stop and browse the shops, I don't because it's too much hassle and too expensive to park the car.

I would be prepared to pay using a debit or credit card if enough machines could be set up - especially in the car parks - otherwise I am unlikely to frequent the area very much.

2) It's also time the Council stopped penalizing many residents in that area by removing parking restrictions at the far end of the roads, such as **Mayfield Avenue**, which is nowhere near the shops, buses or trains, but which makes life for visitors to people in that area exceedingly difficult if they cannot park near their friends houses, on an otherwise empty street, because the visitors permit charges are so exorbitant and unjust. If there must be restrictions then make them no parking between eg 2 - 3 pm etc

Otherwise this will only encourage more people to concrete over their front gardens to create more off street parking, which leads increased flooding risks.

Thank you.

Harriet Copperman OBE

My contribution to the review as follows:

I am fully in favour of the re-introduction of cash meters because they are machines that everyone can use easily and safely. People usually have some cash on them - not everyone likes to use credit/debit cards, especially on dark days in the winter when car parks and streets often have few people around, and they can be quite threatening with people more exposed to theft.

To pay by phone is often fraught - no signal, long wait for a response, if any at all. Not everyone uses a mobile or credit/debit cards.

In High Barnet, many people use The Spires car park, although now dearer than the Council parks, because they find the cash machines there, more convenient.

Yours sincerely, Diane Nightingale M.B.E.

Hello!

As a resident of north Finchley I would welcome the return of cash meters in the Borough of Barnet, not only in town centres like ours (Tally Ho, North Finchley) but across the borough in residential areas where visitors could pay for a few minutes at a time rather than waste all day parking vouchers.

Though I have a residents permit that allows me to park within my own parking zone (FN) it is not easy to drop the car off outside a shop to pick up a newspaper, drop in to the doctors surgery, pick up kids from McDonalds etc etc, without the hassle of texting for a 10 minute slot. In short, London (and other Town centres for that matter) are not allowing for the spontaneous action in our lives. You drive past a coffee and want to stop for a takeaway coffee. We can't do it because there is nowhere that takes cash!

The other element to the argument is simply one of choice. With a previous council vision of cashless parking, there was suddenly imposed upon us the lack of choice - of means to pay. No cash on you? Use the credit card. No credit card on you, or you are visitor from another borough or far away place, use cash! The choice should be available.

Incidentally, and this is a separate issue really, but the parking restrictions in this Borough are not consistent, and (forgive me for saying this) not entirely logical. There are residential areas where there is 'free parking' for folk who already have off street parking by way of carriage driveways, and restricted parking where folk are forced to buy a residents permit. In these areas particularly, the problem is compounded by residents who then apply for drop down kerbs - thus taking away vital parking space for permit holders.

Please bring the meters back, it makes for a friendlier place to live, work and welcome people. Barnet is not Westminster or Chelsea, its a friendly residential borough full of hard working folk who don't need the hassle redolent of other wealthier areas. There have been many divisive issues taking place in this Borough of late - parking not being the least. Let's get some unity back and some friendly sense of community harmony. Saving money, and making a profit doesn't make the world go round.

Many Thanks,
Kind Regards,
Martin Hurrell

I would strongly encourage the reintroduction of cash meters in Barnet.

I used to be a regular visitor to North Finchley but stopped when Pay by Phone was introduced and instead now go to other shopping areas Brent Cross etc

Regards

Ben

Ben Holroyd-Doveton

I may not be a typical car-park user, but there may be a significant number like me.

I do not use car parks that require me to use my mobile phone.

I am not in that minority that has no mobile,
but I am in the minority that does not often carry my mobile.
I am also in that minority that does not use text.

The question you might like to consider is:
"How big are these minorities?"

Thanks for your attention

Michael Franklin
A Barnet Council Tax payer

Ever since Barnet introduced cashless parking systems it has been an irritant to have to sit the car and handle the transactions on mobile. Quite apart from continuing security issues, the costs are further increased with a service charge each time. I have no problem getting out of the car and paying in cash as we've been doing off a generation. I, for one, would like to see them brought back.

Yours

David Carman

I am a local shop keeper and the removal of the cash parking system was a terrible decision. Many older people who do not use technology are unable to fathom the system. Visitors from outside the borough are clueless. The sign posting is poor. On my particular parade on Totteridge Lane The minium stay on the cash stream was only 20p. This jumped to £1.10 with the pay by phone system. Cash meters must be brought back and also a 10 minutes free period should be introduced.

David Harvey

Totteridge & Whetstone Locksmiths Ltd

I am responding to your article in the this weeks Hendon and Finchley Press about parking. I firmly believe need to have meters that take cash. It is not just the elderly that may not have a mobile phone to us but there are times when one might have left their phone behind or that it might have lost charge. Also getting a phone and a credit card out in a public place leaves you very vulnerable to theft.

I had a terrible experience when I went for a job interview in a school that had controlled parking near by. It took me ages to find a meter and when I did find one. I was unable to use it as I had changed my credit card and car since I had used a cash less meter, therefore I was unable to pay. I had to drive to Brent Cross and run to the interview and was very nearly late.

I never use a cash less meter. I would rather drive somewhere else to shop and I know many of my friends feel the same.

Unfortunately I am able to make the public meeting but I hope that my views on this matter will be considered.

Regards
Jennifer Kuntner

The re-introduction of cash parking meters is to be welcomed for the following reasons:

1. The present card-based system puts visitors off parking in our streets and is bad for trade, because
 - a. Each Authority operates its own system, which means registering in every locality. This is a big cause of complaint to be heard from visitors. Many people have written to the Press to state that they will NEVER park in Barnet.
 - b. Not everybody has a credit card
 - c. Not everybody has a mobile phone
 - d. Some people that have mobile phones, can't either find them, are not carrying them, or have credit on their phone, at the time of trying to park
2. Chipping Barnet is particularly disadvantaged because of its proximity to Hertsmeres Potters Bar. Not only does Potters Bar provide free parking for 30 minutes, but they operate cash machines to boot.
3. Cash machines give a visual signal of time remaining. This is not the case with card operated machines. You know where you are with cash.

4. Card machines favour local residents over visitors, because visitors have to go through a steep learning curve in order to park. The effect of this is to further decrease business take from non-locals. Businesses need visitors in order to thrive. One casual stop by a visitor can lead to years of profitable patronage, from eateries to car sales, Barnet needs to be recognised as a friendly place to visit. Locals, on the other hand, should be discouraged from parking in the High Street. There are plenty of places for locals to park, should they have Zone parking permits, in addition to the various car parks.

Yours sincerely

Chris Carstairs

As I am unable to attend the meeting on 11th February, I would like to contribute in advance.

I strongly support the reintroduction of cash parking meters - this would be a real boost for local businesses. Recently, several shops have closed and not been replaced. I fear that these closures are partly due to the complicated parking setup used at present.

Kind Regards

I've lived in the borough for more than fifty years, am 82 years of age and a widow. I am unable to come to the meeting at Hendon Town Hall.

1. Most parking measures in the Borough have been decided arbitrarily without consultation with the residents so at least this is an improvement. In fact I have a blue disabled badge so these issues are not immediately relevant to me except that I need a car as I suffer breathlessness on hills so getting around independently is very important until I become too old to drive.

2. Other pensioners have been completely put off by the sudden imposition of complicated notices re change of parking meters and are not willing or able to read the long-winded wording of such notices. One family came to East Finchley from a neighbouring borough in order to go to the Phoenix Cinema and then have a celebratory meal for one of the party but were not prepared to go to such lengths as using a mobile phone or credit card to pay for parking so left our area and took their business elsewhere.

3. Another friend refuses to give details of her credit card in this manner and although she uses a mobile phone very competently it wastes her valuable time keying in details. This person is still in her sixties and still working and can't afford complicated procedures instituted by other bodies to interrupt her working day.

4. A lot of people of my age cannot stand around trying to decipher complicated information or even have hearing problems on the telephone. I also have not got into regular texting as I use a simple mobile phone just for emergencies and don't intend to spend vast sums on buying a more modern device. I already spend enough on Visitors' Permits in our CPZ area whether or not I own a car.

5. I have noticed recently that Parking Attendants are now targetting cars in our road with the use of photographs, especially outside our Doctors' Surgery where people may have to stop urgently or take an ailing relative. I realise that the Attendants have to protect themselves and I'm grateful that rogue drivers are checked but this seems to be like "Big Brother" and I'm wondering how far this will be extended. The money spent on these cameras could be used for proper old-fashioned cash parking meters plus staff to deal with them.

6. No, I'm not a grumpy old woman but a normal citizen with some common-sense and experience of employment in different fields but as one gets older we need services which are simple, easy to use and not dictated by some remote bureaucracy which doesn't have to suffer the results of their legislation.

MRS. JEANNE WRAY

After reading the item in this weeks Press dated 06 February 2014,
I am writing to inform you that I have had to stop doing a lot of my shopping in North Finchley, as well as visiting my Dentist in East Finchley as a result of parking in these areas.

In most cases I find the only parking is by telephone payment which gives me a problem as my car Registration number is never recognized to the make, model or colour of my vehicle.

As I live in Whetstone it would be nice and helpful if the car parks went back to the old cash payments in these areas, not only for my self but others who do not own mobile phones.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs Janet Dale

My thoughts:

Cash is the quickest method of payment.

It is convenient (just keep a small bag of coins in your vehicle)

It is inclusive. It doesn't discriminate against the deaf or the elderly, those without bank accounts (1 to 2 million people in UK) those without credit cards and overseas visitors.

It will lead to an uptake in usage of car parks. I currently avoid all PayByPhone locations.

The increased take-up will lead to increased visits to our town centres which councils should be taking positive steps to support.

It gives proof of payment for the windscreen which drivers find comforting as they know the traffic warden can see it and it is quick and easy for the traffic warden to check.

The parking meters can be made vandal proof in a metal cage and put under cctv surveillance in order to reduce vandalism and theft. (see the meter in Carcassonne)

It is universally available to everybody.

It will enable PayPoint to be dispensed with. A slow method of payment even if you can find the nearest shop.

It will give residents & visitors greater choice as PayByPhone can be retained alongside it.

The meters could also be used to regulate free parking periods by giving out tickets to prove how long you have been parked free for (see what Harrow are doing with 20 minutes free across the borough.)

If the mobile phone network goes down a payment method is still available.

As the Transport Select Committee says cash options should be retained where there is a clear need (which there always is for some elderly people and the unbanked).

I will attend the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Mr D R Dishman

Attachment:



I understand there is a public meeting tomorrow to gather views on the possible re-introduction of cash parking meters, unfortunately we are unable to attend and therefore are writing to you as advised on the website.

My wife and I have been Barnet residents for over 50 years and our major shopping expenditure was previously predominately in the Barnet High Street area. Since the introduction of payment by telephone which neither of us can master, we have transferred a high proportion of our shopping to on line sites (Ocado/Amazon etc) or to out of town sites where parking is free, which is bad for the local tradesmen and potentially negative for the local community in general.

The decision to do away with normal cash parking meters was in our view ill-conceived and it seems with minimal consultation.

We strongly urge the officers of the council (if there are any left?) and the elected representatives to earnestly consider reversing this poor decision if the views of the community are such. In addition, consideration should be given to a system allowing a period of free parking, such as that for example in Potters Bar.

Sincerely yours, Chris and Liz Bakhurst

My comments are:

- You can't always get a mobile signal which means you can't park

- It puts off casual shoppers who can't be bothered to spend the substantial time it takes to register
- I think it's detrimental to shopkeepers (evidenced by a growing number of empty shops on Temple Fortune parade)
- I think we should take a leaf out of Borehamwood's book by giving people 30 or so minutes free parking. I think this should be for everyone, but it would be a start to give that benefit to Barnet parking permit holders

Thanks for the opportunity to put my point of view.

Cheryl Kuczynski

Having just by chance noticed the above meeting we have actually started a petition against the parking regulations and charges in Temple Fortune as I am a Shop Owner.

We have once again started a petition because customers have complained bitterly about the parking charges which ultimately killing our high street. We will be asking many of the shops in the high street to join in our "To save our high street" campaign as I have been very proactive in the past.

Once we have enough signatures we will be inviting the local press to once again highlight our situation.

I would very much like to attend this meeting if it would be possible for me to speak.

What a pity that shopkeepers are not made aware in advance of such meetings.

Yours sincerely

Lorretta Paterson

I regret I will be unable to attend the public meeting today due to a prior commitment. However I do have a suggestion for consideration.

I believe in the 21st Century operating parking machines that accept cash is unnecessary. Aside from the operating cost there is the issue of security. Parking attendants walking around carrying the money they have collected from the machines are a target for criminals.

However, I agree with the vast majority of Barnet residents that pay-by-phone is both tedious and inconvenient, and I welcome the introduction of credit/debit card payment as an alternative. Could this not be extended to include chip-and-pin pre-pay cards (similar to the old phonecards used by BT) which would be inserted into the same slots as a credit/debit card and debited by the appropriate amount? Cards with chip-and-pin technology are cheap and could be sold like phonecards at newsagents and other outlets in, say, £10 and £20 denominations. With these low values they may not even need a pin number to protect them.

This should be acceptable to those who cannot manage or prefer not to use phones or credit/debit cards to pay for parking.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Foster

My name is Rupert Spencer-Smith and I own the Sound Garden Music Shop established 1994 on Barnet High Street and am also a Barnet resident.

My business has suffered considerably since the introduction of Pay by phone parking as it has made the High Street an inconvenient place to shop as confirmed by numerous of our customers. The situation has improved slightly with recent improvements but we still hear the same complaints about lack of free parking and particularly the fact that cash cannot be used even though the machines already installed are capable of accepting coins.

The High Street will benefit hugely by re-introducing cash payments.

As a resident, I myself have found the current system inconvenient, and have watched others struggle and sometimes give up, particularly the older generation.

Thanks
Rupert Spencer-Smith
Proprietor
Sound Garden LTD

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

7 February 2014

Dear Sirs,
Cash meters

We understand that you are considering the reintroduction of cash parking meters in the borough. We should like to convey a view on this as large numbers of our members have expressed an opinion in the period since cash meters were discontinued.

The reports we have received indicate that many of our members find the alternative methods of paying parking charges by telephone, text or voucher to be awkward or inconvenient. In addition the elderly tend to find these systems confusing and not infrequently they inadvertently fall foul of parking restrictions as a result.

We would therefore strongly support the reintroduction of conventional cash parking machines in Barnet generally but specifically with an interest at our most local shopping areas of Temple Fortune and Golders Green.

In order to maximise convenience for the public might we suggest that should cash meters be reintroduced these be designed to provide change where required so that motorists are not over-charged for the amount of time they need to purchase. Machines that could accept credit or debit cards as well as coins would probably represent the optimum arrangement if the technology permits.

Yours faithfully,

Gary Shaw,

Chairman, Roads & Traffic Committee