

Didcot Town Council

16th January 2019



Orchard Centre Management Suite (By Hand)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Didcot Town Council's Planning Committee. Didcot Town Council has been approached by a number of members of the public regarding specific difficulties with the use of the car park in the Orchard Centre. Accordingly, we would like to bring to your attention and request that you reconsider your existing policy regarding:

- i) Four hour maximum stays. A high proportion of the correspondence received by the Town Council is in regards to the four hour maximum stay in the car park. It is quite common for people to come to the Orchard Centre wishing to have an evening out by going to the cinema or theatre and to have dinner. Unfortunately, many are unable to do this within a four hour window and are ticketed as a result. The Town Council would expect that it is good business sense to encourage and enable those wishing to make full use of the facilities provided by the Orchard Centre and request that consideration be given to extending the maximum stay to six hours, particularly in the evening time when the car park is less busy and when people are more likely to visit the cinema/theatre and be having an evening meal. Feedback from our residents indicates that people would be willing to pay a premium to enable them to have the choice to stay beyond four hours.
- ii) No-returns within three hours. Feedback from residents indicates that this policy causes significant confusion and difficulty. The most common complaint is that it penalises people who drop and collect others off, for example children dropped off by their parents at the cinema and who then collect them afterwards. Likewise, it inadvertently catches out families in one-car households when one person goes to the Orchard Centre and then the other does without knowledge that the first has done so. The Town Council asks that a change to the policy be considered to allow people a maximum time in the car park within a 24 period before purchasing a ticket, rather than the no-return within three hours policy.

We know that a lot of people really value the Orchard Centre and hope that by making small adjustments to current policy even more will be able to do so.

Many thanks

Deputy Town Clerk

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