

On behalf of the residents of Fort, Seafield and Wallacetown and following several requests, as Chair of the Community Council I must raise formal objection to the recent Ayr Parking Consultation. Local residents, as well as Community Council members, have voiced concerns at both the proposals and the way the consultation has been presented. This parking consultation has been put forward with very little advertisement, at a time when many individuals are on holiday and agencies, such as community councils, are in recess.

The Ayr Seafront consultation of 2020 was presented with a similar absence of publicity and received very little participation. Whilst some of the proposals therein were strongly opposed by the few who did respond, plans to make the Esplanade a safer, more enjoyable area for pedestrians and cyclists were popular. The new proposals to turn the entire Esplanade into a car park, actually removing cycle lanes, are in stark contrast to the policies of providing pedestrian safety, active travel ambition and preserving the natural and historic beauty of the seafront. It also contradicts the aspiration to 'link the seafront to the town centre', as more seafront parking will simply encourage visitors to drive directly to the beach, bypassing the town entirely.

The parking consultation is also contradictory within itself. Whilst arguing that 'limited waiting restrictions also demand considerable resources to effectively monitor compliance' on one hand, it goes on to propose myriad limited waiting times on residential streets. The proposals conflate two separate issues, whilst failing to provide a solution for either; town centre and residential parking require different management solutions. Any 'high street' business will point out that provision of readily available parking is essential for trade, therefore limited free waiting times are important, but they must be clearly signposted and robustly enforced to ensure turnover. After normal business hours, relaxation of parking rules and charges will encourage use of hospitality and entertainment venues.

By contrast, availability of spaces in residential areas must be preserved for those who live there to be able to return home from work or other appointments beyond the 'business hours' under current and proposed regimes, particularly in many of the conservation areas where the traditional housing lacks off street parking. The current parking permit system is simplistic and fairly effective but would benefit from some updating, such as the addition of expiry dates and requirement to confirm eligibility on renewal. Technology to prevent abuse, such as unique QR codes, is widely available, inexpensive and could be funded by maintenance of or only a modest increase in the nominal permit fee, combined with requirement for annual renewal. Should a tiered system to discourage multiple vehicle ownership be required, this could also be applied by the same system, as could allocation of visitor permits. Clear, simple signage, such as "No Beach Parking" at the entrance to residential streets would remove the current ambiguity that encourages errant parking. An absence of enforcement further emboldens those who choose to ignore regulations.

Genuine trades persons rarely cause issues in residential areas and a sensible, discretionary system of parking enforcement, such as a handwritten note to say where they are working (which could be

checked if necessary) would allow trades persons to go about their business without the administrative burden, added frustration and inevitable abuse of a formal permit system.

The above are some examples of the concerns and observations that have been raised by local residents. However, the format of the questionnaire, with no provision for narrative comment, is the single most criticised aspect of this consultation and the reason that some have turned to the Community Council to voice their concerns. It engenders the perception that this is simply a disingenuous 'box-ticking' step in the process of driving through controversial legislation, rather than a genuine attempt to consult those whom it will affect. This fosters a lack of community trust in South Ayrshire Council, whilst the contradiction of previous proposals suggests a lack of strategy.

We look forward to receiving a statement that the Community Council can distribute to residents, addressing and assuaging their concerns.

Norman McLean

Chairman

Fort Seafield & Wallacetown Community Council

Ayrshire

15 August 2021