

# The community car park scheme – frequently asked questions

*Here are some of the issues that have been raised and our current understanding of how the scheme would work. This isn't cast in stone and we need everyone's views to make it work. It's your community and, if the council agrees, it will be your car park.*

## **Why do anything? Conigre Hill car park has been there for many years. Why do we need a change?**

The car park is owned by Wiltshire Council and so outside the control of residents. Over the last 10 years there have been several attempts to change the way it operates and, indeed, one attempt by the council to build houses on it. On another occasion it sought to bring in parking charges.

We fought off these changes, but there always remains a threat we will lose the car park entirely. With the population ageing, access to transport becomes more important and, having considered other options, a transfer of ownership seems to be the best way to ensure we keep it for the benefit of hillside residents. Whatever assurances the council may give us, both councillors and council officers change over time and the car park's future will always be under threat of review.

## **What will it cost each year?**

The intention is it should be as low as possible. But we obviously need to manage and maintain the car park. Annual costs would be quite small, but we must provide for work that might not need to be done for some years.

We can certainly do this for less than it would cost the council, using our own labour and resources. Also better than the council, which hasn't done any significant maintenance for many years. Our current projections are that it would cost no more than £3 per week. This is based on 30 members. If there are more, the cost would be lower, but there would also be more vehicles seeking to park in the same number of spaces.

## **Why should I pay for parking when others who work or shop in town also use the car park?**

In an ideal world we would have a mechanism for restricting access to those who live on the hillside. In practice this is likely to take some time and would need fundraising to cover the capital costs involved. However, this is no worse than the situation at present. In the first few years of community ownership, more detailed discussions will take place to agree what type of barrier or other means of access control we might need.

## **What will happen to my parking if I move house?**

It is intended that membership of the scheme would be available to everyone living on the hillside who does not have access to parking on a public highway on which to park. If you move, the new occupants — be they tenants or freeholders — could join the scheme. Major decisions about running the car park will be

taken by the members — they will all be directors of the company. This will include electing a small executive committee (if someone on that resigns or moves away there will be another election).

## **How will I arrange for tradesmen/delivery vans to be able to park?**

There should be no change from what happens at present. If we know someone is coming to do work on our properties, we tell them to use the car park and move our own cars, if necessary, to let them do so. So we would continue to act as good neighbours. We all have the same issue with parking and mustn't lose sight of the need to continue cooperating with each other.

## **How will our rubbish be collected? What about emergency vehicles?**

There should be no change to current arrangements. Access would continue to be available to refuse collection vehicles and there should be an area for an ambulance in the event of an emergency. This would have to be taken into account if any barrier system is introduced.

## **Will I be guaranteed a parking space?**

There are no guaranteed spaces at the moment, and it's likely there would still be more users than available spaces. However, all council proposals have involved a layout with "normal" dimensions for each space. This would mean less spaces.

If we lay the car park out ourselves, we could facilitate double parking and provide more spaces than the current haphazard arrangement. The council proposed 19 spaces. We believe we could achieve 25. The £3 per week cost of running the car park has been based on 30 users. So there would be an 83% chance of finding a space, as against a 63% chance under the council's previous proposals.

## **Who will pay for work to improve the car park, such as providing a barrier system?**

It would seem fairest if only those who join the scheme could park in Conigre Hill. We all know how often vehicles are parked there while their owners go shopping in the town, or even go to work. The car park was originally provided for hillside residents, because we don't have access to a public highway. But we don't have a barrier at present and we may just have to live with the existing situation for a time.

There are grant-making trusts that help community projects and we will approach them to fund such work. It should be cheaper for the hillside community to undertake it because, as we do now, many of us would invest our own time and labour. So we would only need to raise the cost of any materials or equipment.

This decision doesn't need to be made now. We can decide later whether, when and how to install any equipment. And we would only do the work when all the funds had been raised.