

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

14 December 2010

**Item 5 – Public Participation
Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 – Car Parking Strategy (item 6)**

Statement from Martin and Rosemary Gairdner, Berwick St James

We live near Amesbury and use the town for shopping and other purposes. We understand that the Council is proposing to impose parking charges for public parking in the town.

We are already concerned at the regular closure of businesses in the town which has recently been exacerbated by, we would guess, the opening of a Tesco store only a mile or so from the town centre. We are, consequently, dismayed at this latest proposal, which can only have the effect of driving more shoppers to Tesco, or to Salisbury, and further decimating the town.

We don't know the economics of this proposal, but we ask whether the Council has fully evaluated the consequences. On the one hand there will be a degree of parking income, though Tesco and Co-op stores have their own free parking; on the other, the Council will no doubt have to employ parking attendants and bear the cost of signage and machines. Additionally, it can expect the advent of these charges further to encourage shoppers to avoid the town and thus to force more businesses to close. Not only is the parking charge income likely to be on a downward spiral but the Council gradually lose business rates.

We have to ask whether the Council has a joined up policy for the town. It has recently spent thousands of pounds and caused endless inconvenience on 'improving' the main shopping street. (Most of us thought it was perfectly all right before; and that the money was largely wasted, but that is another story). What was this money spent for if not to encourage shoppers? So now, the Council wishes to discourage them. This is surely madness.

We earnestly ask you to dismiss this idea, unless you want Amesbury to become yet another rural ghost town.