

Mr Andrew Kerr
Chief Executive
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

CONFIDENTIAL

24 May 2011

Dear Andrew

Salisbury car parking charges

You will, we are sure, be very aware of the growing unrest and concern in Salisbury at the council's recently introduced increased parking charges for short and long term parking in the city's car parks.

You will also be aware that the Salisbury Journal, backed by Spire FM have taken up this issue and have launched a campaign asking Wiltshire Council to *show some sense* and *think again* about the current level of charges. In particular they are asking the council to re-introduce a one-hour parking charge and reduce the cost of all-day parking to £6.00 This campaign is gathering momentum and support from businesses and members-of-the-public alike.

As organizations representing more than 500 businesses in the city we are very concerned at the current charges. We believe that they are too high and we firmly believe that they will deter people from visiting the city. Indeed our members are reporting that this is already happening. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Strawberry Fox is reporting takings down by 10%+ whereas earlier in the year they were 30% up; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(Please note that with the exception of The Strawberry Fox this information is given in the strictest confidence; it is given for the purposes of this letter only and is not for public consumption). There is also a growing amount of anecdotal evidence which supports the view that the new parking charges are already putting people off from visiting Salisbury.

We have carried out a comparison of parking charges in Salisbury compared to our major competitors and this clearly shows that:

- For long stays of 3, 4 and 5 hours Salisbury is more expensive than Basingstoke, Bournemouth, Southampton, Winchester and Andover. Only Bath is more expensive than Salisbury.
- For short stays of 2 hours Salisbury is more expensive than Basingstoke, Bournemouth, Southampton (West Quay multi-storey) and Andover. Bath, Southampton (inner area and West Quay Podium) and Winchester are more expensive than Salisbury.
- For short stays of 3 hours Salisbury is more expensive than Basingstoke, Bournemouth, Southampton, Winchester and Andover. Only Bath is more expensive.
- For short stays of less than 2 hours Salisbury is considerably more expensive than all of the other towns and cities because of the 2 hour minimum stay.

We have attached a copy of the comparison table to this letter.

It is not, of course, parking charges alone that determine whether or not someone will visit Salisbury or any one of our competitors for their shopping. Among other things it is how far they have to travel, it's about how easy it is to park, it's about the quality of their last experience, it's about how attractive the town or city centre is and it's about the quality and variety of places to eat and drink. But most importantly it is about the shops on offer. Salisbury has some fantastic shops and for a city of our size we certainly punch above our weight. There is, however, no denying that many people prefer to go to Southampton and Bournemouth and even Basingstoke because they have certain shops that Salisbury doesn't.

The widely respected company Experian produce an annual retail ranking of all of the UK's major towns and cities. In 2007 (the last year for which we have figures) Salisbury was ranked 168th. Southampton was 13th, Bath 74th, Bournemouth 106th and Basingstoke 116th. Since then Bath and Basingstoke and possibly Bournemouth, would have improved on their position as a result of major retail developments.

So generally Salisbury has higher parking charges than its competitors and yet we are ranked much lower than them in terms of the attractiveness of our retail offer. This is a recipe for disaster. If we cannot compete in terms of our retail offer we must compete in terms of parking charges. Until we can improve our retail offer to at least match or come close to our competitors (i.e. when the Maltings and central car park development is completed) we must keep our parking charges low.

Councillor Tonge has indicated that the council will examine the situation in 12 months time. This will be too late. If people are deterred from visiting the city in significant numbers, then businesses will close. This, in turn, will lead to even more people choosing to visit Southampton or Bournemouth rather than Salisbury and soon we will be in the Circle of Decline so eloquently described in the Salisbury Vision document. We do not say this lightly. We certainly do not want to be accused of scaremongering. That we, as responsible representatives and leaders of Salisbury's business community, are

saying this now, will hopefully indicate the depth of our concern and our joint determination to ensure that the city continues to thrive and prosper.

In meetings with you previously you have stressed that economic development and the economic wellbeing of Salisbury is one of your main priorities. For this reason and for reasons outlined in this letter we would ask that the council re-considers its position on the current charging regime in Salisbury. We have consulted with our members and would ask that the council consider the following proposal as a matter of urgency.

Proposal for consideration by Wiltshire Council

Revised parking charges in Salisbury city centre car parks

Period	Charge	Note
<i>1 hour</i>	<i>£1.20</i>	<i>Our members are asking for this as a priority</i>
<i>2 hours</i>	<i>£2.20</i>	<i>As current charge</i>
<i>3 hours</i>	<i>£4.00 / £4.20</i>	<i>As current charge</i>
<i>4 hours</i>	<i>£4.60</i>	<i>As current charge</i>
<i>5 hours</i>	<i>£5.50</i>	<i>As current charge</i>
<i>All day</i>	<i>£7.40</i>	<i>As current charge but see proposal under park & ride</i>
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>£1.00</i>	<i>To make us more competitive</i>

We believe that the re-introduction of the one hour charge needs to be done sooner rather than later. It needs to be done now because waiting a year to review the situation is not an option.

We also ask that the council introduce a pay on exit system for the city's car parks within the next 12 months. This is something that has been requested by both businesses and by customers for some time. It is also something which could actually bring in additional revenue for the council.

Park & Ride

We fully support the council's revised plans for the park & ride service as recently outlined by Councillor Tonge. We believe, however, that there is considerable scope to increase the usage of the service by people that work in the city if it more closely matched their working patterns. We, therefore, propose that the service should run from 6.00 am to 8.00 pm. After this has been in operation for, say, three months we believe that it would be appropriate to increase the charge for parking all day in the city centre to £9.00 with further increases annually.

We are fully aware of the difficulties facing the council in terms of the need to make savings over the next four years as a result of government cuts in funding. We recognise that our proposal, as outlined above, may have financial implications to the council. We also know that the council, like our three organizations, has the best interests of Salisbury, its residents and its businesses at heart. We, therefore, want to work with the council to find a solution to the problem that we undoubtedly face.

If you need any further information or if you would like to discuss our proposal please do not hesitate to contact us – initially through Ian Newman.

We look forward to hearing from you.



Ian Newman
Chairman, Salisbury City Centre Management



George Trytsman
Chairman, Federation of Small Businesses

Melanie Murrell
President, Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce & Industry

PS

Theresa Wood, the owner of The Strawberry Fox has recently sent a very impassioned e-mail to Councillors Tonge and to Wiltshire Councillors representing Salisbury City wards. This e-mail sets out how she believes the council's parking strategy is affecting her business. A copy of her email is attached to this letter.

Email from Theresa Wood, The Strawberry Fox

From: thestrawberryfox@googlemail.com [mailto:thestrawberryfox@googlemail.com] **On Behalf Of** Theresa Wood
Sent: 23 May 2011 15:50
To: john.brady@wiltshire.gov.uk; richard.clewer@wiltshire.gov.uk; chris.cochrane@wiltshire.gov.uk; brian.dalton@wiltshire.gov.uk; mary.douglas@wiltshire.gov.uk; bill.moss@wiltshire.gov.uk; ricky.rogers@wiltshire.gov.uk; richard.tonge@wiltshire.gov.uk; fleur.derhe-philipe@wiltshire.gov.uk
Cc: lindsey@salisburyccm.co.uk; Graham Gould; chairman@salisburyccm.co.uk; John Glen; Bill Browne; Melanie Murrell; Crosskeys; Paul Burrough sign o rama; Will @ Regent Tailoring; Nicki Blake; Keith Hanson
Subject: Award winning Retailer - A serious complaint .

Dear Sirs, I have an exceptional business. I own a new store in Salisbury. We turned over £225k in our first year. Have recieved exceptional press due to our innovative and creative approach.

On a recent Mary Portas masterclass we were seen as leaders in the field. Our modus opperandi is based around driving business locally..we have used all local companies to establish our exceptional Brand.

I have just been contacted by leading fashion companies begging me to enter into the Top Industry awards this year.

In last years local business awards we were finalists in 3 categories even though we were only trading for 6 months.

I am an innovative futuristic leader. I create powerful teams and exceptional businesses in which employees thrive, I am a member of two business networking groups and have just started my own group which created 7 pieces of really good local business in its first meeting.

I have had 3 roles as senior manager in major household names (Director of flag ship Oxford circus NEXT, Director Hays Accountancy Personnel..)and bring a a great deal of skill to the work place. As a headhunter my last placement was VP at Vodafone Business. My husband and I launched the first ever parking payment solutions company "Park and Phone" . Launched in Westminster.

At the start of the year my business The Strawberry Fox was 30% up on last year!

The last month has been awful and we are now looking at a negative on last year . We are rapidly passing the 10% down figure and sinking.

It does not sit comfortably that after 18 months business a decision made by yourselves has totally undermined my business plan.

Today I have just had to tell a relatively new and the youngest member of staff that I doubt I will have any work for her for the next two weeks. This galls me as I am an educationalist, I train and invest and I do it well.

Today I have had to tell a working mum (who has made several arrangements to extend her working hours) that i am cutting her hours. This means she works 4 hours a day. She cannot afford to park for that time centrally. Yes she can use the park and ride but when you run tight schedules based around school runs this isn't always viable. Its almost not worth her working. If I were her I would try and find another job. Luckily she loves working here and will bend over back wards to accomodate me and help the business.

That is months of training compromised.

In July I have two school work experience young people. I should cancel. I feel so sorry for them . **There is no one to serve.**

I now have to work on the shop floor. That is fine, I love it but I was driving the business to expansion.

I have cancelled our internet expansion. I have secured enough brands that I could open a second store and have been considering the Old George mal for Christmas.

I cannot do that anymore. My cashflow has crashed. My store is seriously affected by the parking . **Trade has been killed off.**

Your decision to raise the parking has created that. This has affected us all.

I would like you to arrange a time to visit me at my store and discuss your decision with me or you can call me on the numbers below.

In the meantime I shall be applying for hardship rate relief. I have copied in to other interested parties, please feel free to circulate my mail.

Yours sincerely
Theresa Wood

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