

## Report of the Walberswick Car Parks Ltd. – April 2018

For those unfamiliar with the WCP Ltd, I will start with a very brief background. As you heard in the Charity's report, the Car Parks Ltd is a free-standing, limited liability company registered at Companies House since February 1997. The company was formed in order to run the car parks for profit for the benefit of the Common Lands Charity, contribute to better parking/traffic management in the Village by providing a place for off street parking and also to be an employer for people in the village as appropriate. The Company rents the land for the 2 Car Parks from the Charity and we are in a legal covenant with the Charity to transfer to the Charity all our annual profit. In the past two years, the Car Parks has covenanted £26,500 to the Charity.

The company is very lucky to have a group of dedicated villagers who are the Directors of the Company and who take the decisions and support the operations. I would like to particularly thank Alvin Hunt who just stepped down as a Director after 14 years and Kate Goodchild who remains a Director but has just stepped down as Chair. The Directors hired Victoria Cowley last year as our excellent Operations Manager and Victoria, in turn, manages a staff of 7 parking assistants through the summer months. Tony Kohn is hired as the Company Secretary and to do the Company accounts.

As many of you are aware, we introduced Pay and Display machines into the Village in the summer season of 2017. They provide us with many benefits including reducing the handling of quite a lot of cash and freeing up our parking attendants to help organize the parking, assist visitors and contribute to better traffic flows. Without the machines, the attendants were confined to the huts selling parking tickets and, on busy days, this meant it took much longer for cars to disperse into the parking field and off the street.

Despite these obvious benefits, there were some teething problems when we began, but Victoria and her staff and the Directors, and in this I would especially like to thank Jane Hamilton, have worked very hard to get these problems sorted out and to adjust the operations to make them better for Walberswick. Am happy to say that now that the village has 4G reception, the credit card function is working much better. We have learnt how to remove the sensitive bits of the machine if they are ever threatened with floods and have improved the interface to make it easier to use. So, although still not perfect, the machines are definitely much improved and we think we should see everything going quite smoothly this summer given all the experience gained.

The other change that we introduced in the past year is the winter charging. The Directors introduced this, on a trial basis, given that the presence of the machines made this a realistic possibility for the first time (since before we had to depend on parking attendants to collect money). The fact is that we have expenses all year (for example, we pay business rates above £1600 a month, plus maintenance of the property) and Walberswick itself is now a year round destination for visitors. In addition, we found that all of the surrounding

communities with pay and display machines also charge year round. As I said, we did this as a trial and we encouraged feedback and ideas from people and I will elaborate on that in moment.

I am pleased to say that in terms of income, the winter operations surpassed our expectations. We had takings in excess of £16,000 in the period October 1 through the Easter holidays. We have found a very high compliance rate amongst people who park. We did hear from some villagers, particularly those who live near the green, that they were concerned that people would avoid paying for parking and would instead use the green. Others warned of the risks of flooding to the machines. We also had feedback suggesting that the rates – with a £3 minimum – may be too high for winter when the days are shorter and people may be coming into the village just for a quick walk with the dog on the beach.

In response to these concerns, we introduced a £1 for one hour parking option. This has been well received by our visitors and we will keep it in effect all year to see if this is suitable for the way people use the car parks. We are also introducing this summer season some other improvements including replacement of the old huts and repositioning them so that they better enhance the flow of traffic in and out of the car parks. This, together with pay and display, should continue to reduce any tailbacks as people enter the car parks. Our staff is putting out the traffic cones each day along the Green and on the run down to the Ferry Road car park to encourage visitors to obey the law with regard to not parking on the yellow lines. There were some problems on super busy days last summer, but in general, we hope that this and other improvements we introduce through the summer will help. And of course, as already mentioned, the Traffic and Parking Review will be critical in looking holistically at parking and traffic problems in the village and hopefully make recommendations that will help address the problems.

Thank you.