

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
AGENDA ITEM 20C (iii)

Catherine Vaughan
Acting Chief Executive
Brighton & Hove City Council

Dear Catherine

I would like this letter included on the agenda for the Environment & Sustainability Committee meeting of 17th October under Council Procedure Rule 23.3.

When the new arrangements for charging for parking in Preston Park were first brought to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Cabinet Members Meeting on 24th January I drew attention to the problems that this may cause for sports clubs that use the park.

When the Preston Park Traffic Regulation Order was finally agreed by the Cabinet Member at the Special Meeting of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Cabinet Members Meeting on 4th May, I was pleased that some concessions were made, in particular, stopping charging at 6pm rather than the 8pm originally proposed. However, I remained very concerned that charging is still being introduced at weekends. At the meeting, a review of the new parking arrangements was promised after 6 months and, in particular, it was agreed to look at the weekend parking situation. As this 6 month period has now elapsed I would like to pass on to the new Environment & Sustainability Committee some concerns that have been raised with me by park users and make a suggestion as to how these concerns could be addressed.

First and foremost, it seems to me to be completely unfair that those selfless individuals who volunteer and give up as much time and energy as they do to encourage and facilitate sport for young people in Brighton & Hove should be financially penalised for doing so. There has been much talk about Olympic legacy in recent weeks and as a council we should be doing everything in our power to help local sports clubs flourish and thrive, not put people off by charging for parking.

One specific problem which has been raised with me by St. Peters Cricket Club is that if a game runs over its estimated time (as they frequently will do), umpires, scorers and indeed players cannot get to their cars to top up their parking tickets.

For example, I know of one parent who was recently volunteering at St. Peters (as a scorer for a Sunday under 11 game) who paid the £6 for his

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parking and then got issued a fine for running 10 minutes over his allotted time.

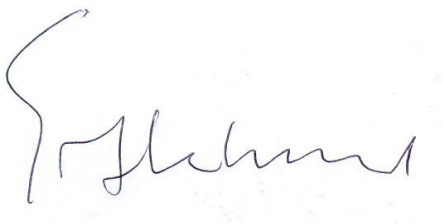
My understanding is that there is only one other major club in the whole of Sussex where you have to pay to park next to the ground and that is Chichester Cricket club. However, they have managed to negotiate a number of club parking spaces for umpires / scorers / coaches and others that give up their time for free.

I have two suggestions as to how these problems can be remedied and I would like the Environment & Sustainability Committee and the officers carrying out the 6 month review to consider these.

Firstly, stop charging for parking in Preston Park at weekends. The main purpose of introducing charges in the first instance was to deter commuters who had been using Preston Park as a free car park. As commuting is not an issue at weekends it seems to me to be fair and reasonable that charges should not apply at weekends. Otherwise, the parking regime is quite understandably seen by residents and park users as a money-making exercise. This in my view undermines the whole parking policy of the Council.

Secondly, if the Administration is still not prepared to stop charging completely at weekends then I would like officers to look at offering coaches, umpires, players and other volunteers associated with sporting clubs that utilise Preston Park some kind of "free parking " disc - or the Club itself being given a number of these discs which it could then allocate on a basis of its own deciding.

With all good wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Geoffrey Theobald', written over a faint circular stamp.

Cllr. Geoffrey Theobald OBE