

**RESPONSE TO MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION**  
**Notice of proposals (off street parking places)**  
**Order 2006**

**Objections of the East Grinstead Business Association**

We refer you to our submission to the last consultation in July 2024. Our position has not changed and we feel that none of our business concerns have been addressed. The small changes to parking permits go some way to addressing residents' concerns but this does not address the overwhelming opposition to the changes from businesses in the Town.

We also contest that this latest consultation cannot be seen in isolation from the last one. A reducing number of submissions should not be seen as submission.

Our position: We object to the introduction of parking charges from 6-8pm and charges for Sundays and bank holidays

- Trading conditions have been described by retailers and hospitality as the worse they have known, witnessed by the number of vacant shops and the number of closures. We know many high street businesses are on the brink; and there are several gyms relying on 6pm trade after work. The Chequer Mead Theatre relies on volunteers for evening performances who so far have not had to pay parking. The theatre is an important part of our community and economy
- More shopping of all types will go to the edge-of-town supermarkets – Sainsburys, Aldi, Lidl and Waitrose. Not the independent shops. Waitrose will also experience parking issues after 6pm as it gets used for free parking, being in the town.
- Parking charges, we have to accept, are an emotional purchase that few want to make whatever the cost and will avoid if they can.
- Locals complain there is less and less reason to go into East Grinstead due to the closures
- The extended parking charges cannot be economically enforced
- We have not seen any evidence that it is a business case that is valid based on evidence
- West Sussex County Council have overtly stressed their support for local business. They are also leaving their charging regime the same. But this will put additional stress on 'on-road' parking.
- Villages appear not to be sharing their burden of the revenue generation and EG continue to have to compete with free parking in surrounding villages with a decent sized retail and hospitality footprint; and the nearby town of Crawley with its retail parks and free parking.

**NOT evidence based**

We have seen the out-of-date evidence and the lack of valid follow-up by the consultants, those appointed and used by MSDC. Their work we feel has brought the consulting profession into disrepute. We have no confidence in them, or your use of them. Better evidence is from the 5,200 people of East Grinstead who signed the petition in just one week, including business people and their customers. You chose not to take the petition into

account without providing a valid reason for doing so. These two points deserve a judicial review but of course that's not going to happen because of legal costs.

If you insist on going ahead with the proposals, we expect to see the investment plan for additional parking in East Grinstead, clearer signage displaying where the spaces are and ANPR parking facilities so that car users only pay for what they use. After all, improved parking was highlighted by the consultants to promote 'vitality in the Town'.

East Grinstead Business Association, 30 October 2024

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