

EPPING FOREST CAR PARK CONSULTATION

INTRODUCTION

Epping Forest is a charitable trust (charity number 232990), which is funded by the City of London appointed as the Conservators of Epping Forest under the Epping Forest Acts 1878 and 1880. Managing a busy Forest with 4.2 million visits each year, alongside internationally important nature and heritage conservation assets is a demanding exercise which costs £4.5 million to manage each year, without the support of local taxation. Most of the charity's funding comes from the City of London Corporation's philanthropic endowment fund and with the charity also generating income and seeking alternative sources of funding.

The Epping Forest and Commons Committee have taken the decision to introduce car parking charges from Spring 2021.

The charges for a standard tariff have been agreed as:

- £1.50p up to 1 hour
- £2.50p up to 2 hours
- £4.00p 2 – 4 hours
- £6 Full Day (up to 6 hours)

These will be introduced in 16 car parks in the first phase. These are:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Centre Road | • Hollow Ponds |
| • Alexandra Lake | • Boathouse |
| • Jubilee Pond | • Eagle Pond |
| • Bury Road | • Pillow Mounds |
| • Chingford Golf Course Car Park | • Generals Ride |
| • Connaught Water | • Rushey Plain inc. turnaround |
| • Barn Hoppitt (& seasonal overflow) | • Wellington Hill (when re-opened) |
| • Connaught Tennis Club | • Flagstaff Hill (when re-opened) |

For location maps please see FAQ's on our web page:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/whats-new-in-epping-forest/car-park-charging>

CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The introduction of car park charges has the following four aims:

A. To generate income to offset part of the significant cost of continued car park provision so that the charity's limited resources can be spent on protecting the Forest and improving the visitor experience.

Many heritage green spaces such as the National Trust, English Heritage and Royal Parks charge visitors, on entry or for car parking, to generate income to fund and reinvest in the sites. Adding a small charge for parking will help the Epping Forest Charity to preserve and manage the Forest, including the upkeep of 50 car parks.

B. To reduce the impact of non-Forest users on Forest car parks to free space for genuine Forest users

The number of cars trying to access our car parks regularly exceeds the capacity available especially at peak periods. This is an issue where Forest car parks are located near other facilities with 'pay to park' arrangements such as train stations, healthcare provision or even local high street shops. This leaves those genuinely visiting the Forest at a disadvantage and in effect means the Epping Forest Charity is subsidising commuters, shoppers and other business workers & visitors.

C. To better protect the Forest's ecologically sensitive areas by influencing where visitors visit.

Around 45,000 vehicles pass through the Wake Arms roundabout in the heart of the Forest each weekday. Tens of thousands of vehicles travel up and down the other roads through the Forest every day. Exhaust pollutants are up to three times higher than the limits set to protect plant health. Car use, particularly in the interior of the Forest should therefore be discouraged where possible, to better protect this ancient woodland for future generations to enjoy. Whilst car parking charges won't influence those driving through the Forest they can dissuade visitors to the Forest from driving through the Forest to access car parks in the interior such as at High Beach.

D. To encourage more sustainable access to the Forest, for example travel by public transport or bicycle, to reduce the impact of harmful vehicle emissions.

There are 270,000 homes within a short walking distance of the Forest and we are confident that visitors have excellent alternative means of accessing the Forest other than by car. There are 14 train/underground stations within a 12-minute walking distance of Epping Forest and 16 different bus services within a maximum eight-minute walk to the Forest.

Car-free access was tested in March, during the first period of 'lockdown' in 2020, when for a large part of the time the car parks were closed. The Forest was possibly at its busiest ever with an estimated 1.3 million visits over a 6-week period. Cycling is welcomed across most of the Forest and newly refurbished car parks include cycle parking points. The Charity would like to install more of these in other Forest car parks which could be funded using revenue raised from car park charges.

1. After reading the reasons for Epping Forest Charity introducing car park charging, how far do you agree or disagree with charging?

- Agree Completely
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree completely

Heavily used car parks cost the Epping Forest Charity more to maintain. Several, more popular car parks in the Forest suffer from overcrowding and irresponsible parking, particularly at busy times like weekends and bank holidays.

Weekend parking activity increases by 50% and weekday parking activity increases by 30% in the summer months and on average for most of the car parks. Furthermore, visitors often drive through the heart of the Forest to visit the most popular' locations contributing to pollution levels within the Forest.

One solution could be to add an additional 'peak times' tariff. This recognises Epping Forest as a desirable location for a 'day out', similar to a visit to a country park, cinema or even a shopping trip.

Another solution could be to add an additional 'premium central location' tariff at the most popular car parks, situated in sensitive areas in the heart of the Forest, such as Connaught Water, High Beach and Barn Hoppitt to encourage visitors to park in the free or standard charge, larger capacity car parks on the periphery of the Forest or choose alternative ways to access the Forest.

An additional 25% fee for 'peak time' and 'premium location' tariffs has been proposed. This could raise additional income and be re-invested in the Forest to accelerate planned improvements.

- 2. Do you agree that an additional 'peak time tariff' be added to the standard charge with the aim of preventing overcrowding and irresponsible parking at the busiest times, like weekends and bank holidays?**
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - No strong opinion
- 3. Do you agree that an additional 'premium location tariff' be added at the most popular car parks in sensitive areas, to encourage use of peripheral car parks to reduce pollution levels and alternative access methods?**
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - No strong opinion

We know that many people enjoy regular use of Epping Forest, with over 50% of users visiting daily or weekly. Regular visitors may prefer to join a supporter scheme which includes parking as part of an annual membership fee. This would offer a discounted rate and would be a convenient way to pay annually. The proposed annual pass would cost £150. This represents a saving for anyone visiting the Forest more than once a week for up to 1 hour at a time and a significant saving for anyone staying longer than an hour more than once a week.

- 4. How likely would you be to join a Forest supporter scheme, at an annual cost of £150, if it included an annual parking permit?**
 - Very likely
 - Somewhat likely
 - Somewhat unlikely
 - Very unlikely
- 5. Do you have any further comments*, concerns you feel we may have overlooked or alternative ideas to address the issues outlined in the consultation?**

**Please note, we will use additional comments for reporting purposes but we are unable to provide a response to individual comments.*