

APPENDIX 3C

Written Representations Received Regarding Parking Tariffs, Operations & Development Call In Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 19th February 2024

1. **Pauline Dee BEM, on behalf of the Parishioners who attend the Wem Catholic Church**

I believe that the Committee you Chair, Economy and Environment, will have an item that has been called in from the Cabinet re the proposed car parking charges and the introduction of half price charging on Sundays and Bank Holidays. I have spoken to the other 3 churches who like me are concerned that those of us who attend our church for Sunday worship will now have to Pay to Pray.

Wem should have been in Group 7 as other small residential and business areas. You know Wem and the problems new independent businesses face in attracting customers because of the out of town shops in Shrewsbury and Whitchurch. Also Wem's catchment area was acknowledged as being only 8,000 as opposed to Whitchurch who had a catchment area of 22,000. This report was done when Shropshire became a Unitary Authority. Wem Urban is limited in developing more housing sites as its boundaries are very tight and we are surrounded by Wem Rural.

I am forwarding you the email I sent to Cllrs Lezley Picton, Dan Morris and Mark Barrow, Andy Wilde and the Chief executive Andy Begley:

I am writing this email with the knowledge of my Parish Priest Fr. Pat English who is also concerned about the new proposals. The Catholic Church does have a small car park but the Congregation also have to use the main car park whilst attending Sunday services.

I have read the proposed car parking charges approved by the Cabinet to increase the cost in Shropshire. I am appalled that once again you are proposing to introduce a charge for Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Wem is a small town with all the small shops and businesses, except for the Coop supermarket, run by independent owners. Our town should never have been included in those who have to pay to park but it was the will of the ruling party that it should be included. Wem, unlike the other towns in North Shropshire, does not have a viable Tourist attraction, like the Canals or the Meres, or National enterprises to encourage people to shop here. It is reliant on very hard working independent traders to keep the economy viable.

To charge for parking on a Sunday is a charge on people who attend one of the 4 Wem urban churches. There are no shops or businesses open on a Sunday except for the Coop and the majority of those who park on the main car park are those who are attending Sunday Worship. Why has this not been taken into account and discussed as happened the first time car parking charges were

introduced, in I believe 2018?

I would like a detailed breakdown of how much it will cost to alter the existing machines to the new charges and how much it will cost for officers to be employed (at Double time I presume) to monitor the car park. I would also like to know what the car parking income is for Wem's car parks.

I really think you need to reconsider introducing these new charges as Wem is a town that tries to help itself and is being penalised for doing this. The town is so close to Shrewsbury's out of town stores that it puts the existing business at a disadvantage.

This was recognised by the West Midlands Regional Assembly, Advantage West Midlands, Shropshire County Council and North Shropshire District Council in the 1980's and 90's. Nothing has changed except that more of the local services, e.g. Wem Town Hall Community Trust, the Swimming Pool and Sports facilities rely on grants from the Wem Town Council community charge payers. Examples of the local Town Council and Urban residents helping themselves.

2. From SEB Slater, Executive Director, On behalf of Shrewsbury BID

Please see attached separately below:

- ***letter from Seb Slater, Executive Director, and***
- ***parking tariff impact assessment report***

3. From Nathan Burley, Pastor Wem Baptist Church

My name is Nathan Burley. I am the Pastor of Wem Baptist Church. It has been brought to my attention that the council intends to begin charging for the use of the car park in Wem on Sundays and Bank Holidays, when it is currently free of charge. On behalf of my congregation, can I express how unsatisfactory this proposal is for a number of reasons.

Wem is a small market town which struggles to get much footfall as it is. The current cost of the car park already puts people off coming to Wem rather than going to the out-of-town stores on the edge of Shrewsbury where parking is free. To consider introducing more of a deterrent to come to Wem is appalling.

On Sundays, the only shop that is open is the Co-op. This means that the primary users of the car park are those attending local churches, of which mine is the closest. A great many people from my congregation would be enormously inconvenienced, as I'm sure would those attending other churches. Your proposals wrongfully target churchgoers, which is obviously unacceptable. To claim that these kinds of measures will encourage people to use alternative methods of transport is disingenuous since there is no viable public transport on a Sunday in Wem. Those who could easily walk or cycle to church already do so. You would be penalising the elderly, the disabled and those with young families. Our church (and others in the town) provide a real service to the community. The ability for everyone to attend, to

drop off and pick up children and older people without worry about parking, enables this work to continue unimpeded.

I understand that when parking charges were first introduced in Wem, the impact on churches was considered and borne in mind. Why has that not happened this time? Whilst Shrewsbury may be in need of controls like this, small towns like Wem are not. Can I urge you to reconsider these changes by exempting the car park in Wem? Either way, please can you explain how the introduction of such fees would benefit our community?

I look forward to hearing your responses.

4. Councillor Edward Towers

Please see representation attached separately below.

5. Gina Wilding, Town Clerk, on behalf of Ludlow Town Council

I am writing to confirm Ludlow Town Council's stated position against increases in parking charges on street and in car parks.

Ludlow is a rural small market town and it is important that residents and visitors are not deterred from spending time in the town centre due to high parking charges.