

# Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board

<b>10:00</b>	<b>Wednesday, 29 April 2015</b>	<b>Conference Room, Great Notley Country Park,</b>
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**Quorum: One Member from each Council**

## **Membership**

Councillor R Hirst (Chairman),	Essex County Council
Councillor S Walsh	Essex County Council
Councillor G Butland	Braintree District Council
Councillor W Schmitt	Braintree District Council

**Please note that at the close of the meeting, there will be an opportunity for  
Members of the Partnership Board to tour the site on foot**

**For information about the meeting please ask for:**

Lisa Siggins, Committee Officer

**Telephone:** 033301 34594

**Email:** [lisa.siggins@essex.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.siggins@essex.gov.uk)



Essex County Council

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Please note that an audio recording may be made of the meeting – at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded.

## **Part 1**

(During consideration of these items the meeting is likely to be open to the press and public)

		<b>Pages</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies and Substitution Notices</b> The Clerk to report receipt (if any)	
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> To note any declarations of interest to be made by Members.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes</b> To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board held on 23 January 2015	<b>7 - 14</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Site Activity and Project Report</b> To receive report (GTP/05/15) from Nick Day, Parks and Open Spaces Manager, Braintree District Council and Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks Essex County Council	<b>15 - 18</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Car Parking Charges Consultation</b> To receive report (GTP/06/15) from Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks, Essex County Council regarding feedback, recommendation and agreement on the next steps following the recent consultation.	<b>19 - 24</b>

**6 Presentation on the Local Plan**

To receive a presentation on the Local Plan by Alan Massow, Senior Planning Policy Officer.

The presentation will cover future residential and commercial expectations for Braintree District and associated infrastructure requirements to support this, in particular, the potential that the Country Park can bring to this, and its long term role.

It is proposed that:

- Local Plan consultants ethos are approached to explore how they could contribute to the longer term strategy of the Great Notely Park.
- A sub commission of this work is undertaken to conduct a survey of park users with a view to gaining a better understanding of them.

**7 Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the Board will be held on Monday 27 July 2015 at 2pm.

**8 Urgent Business**

To consider any matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

**Exempt Items**

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, Members are asked to decide whether, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**9**

**Urgent Exempt Business**

To consider in private any other matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK  
JOINT VENTURE BOARD HELD AT THE DISCOVERY CENTRE, GREAT  
NOTLEY ON 23 January 2015**

**Present:**

**Councillors:**

Roger Hirst	- Essex County Council (ECC)
Simon Walsh	- Essex County Council (ECC)
Tom Cunningham (in Substitution for Graham Butland)	- Braintree District Council (BDC)
Mrs Wendy Schmitt	- Braintree District Council (BDC)

**Officers in attendance:**

Steve Bunn	- ECC/Northern Area Manager, Country Parks
Anna Lambert	Head of Delivery Transition ECC
Tim Dixon	- ECC/Head of Country Parks
Paul Partridge	- Braintree District Council/Head of Operations
Nick Day	- Braintree District Council/Parks and Open Spaces Manager
Andy Wright	Braintree District Council/Corporate Director
Lisa Siggins	- Committee Officer (ECC)
Judith Dignum	Committee Services Manager (ECC)

**1. Apologies and Substitution Notices**

Councillor Butland sent his apologies and Councillor Cunningham attended as his substitute.

**2. Appointment of Chairman for this municipal year**

The Committee Officer invited nominations for Chairman of the Board. Councillor Walsh proposed Councillor Hirst as Chairman and this nomination was seconded by Councillor Schmitt. There were no other nominations and Councillor Hirst was duly elected as Chairman for this municipal year.

**3. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**4. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

## **5. Site operational report, including a financial report by Steve Bunn, Head Ranger**

The Board received and noted the site report (GTP/01/15) from Steve Bunn, Head Ranger Great Notley Country Park.

Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks, introduced the report to the Board and advised that copies of the Financial Report would be handed to them at the end of the presentation of the Site Operational Report.

### Activities

A variety of events took place over the summer at Great Notley Country Park including, the Greyhound Show and parking for the Tour De France. "Park Run" started over the summer months and has proved to be very successful. On average around 100 runners per week used the Park. The park also hosted a New Year's Eve Marathon which started at the Bird of freedom and incorporated the Flitch Way. The site is becoming very popular with green gym type exercise, such as Boot Camps with three different Boot Camp groups using the site.

### Café

A new catering operator (Essex Outdoors Team) is now in place on a trial basis, with the previous operator having left on 4 Jan 2015. So far the the café has received very good feedback and the new arrangement may become a permanent one after the trial period has ended.

### Maintenance

Work on the play equipment safety surfaces was completed ready for the summer holidays. The new safety surface, Tiger Bark is a cost effective solution due to its durability and low maintenance requirements, representing a good investment for long term management. There is commitment to the regrading and resurfacing of the existing surfaces and continuing drainage works around the site totalling up to £10,000.

The frontage of the Discovery Centre has been resurfaced ready for the summer period and this has been well received by visitors. Further to the new frontage, additional ground works around the Discovery Centre were completed, as new gabions were constructed and installed by the rangers.

The annual play inspection took place with the inspector being impressed with the improvements that have made around the play trail and to the individual items of play equipment. However, as the play equipment is now six years old and parts are starting to need to be replaced. The likely cost of the remedial work will be in the region of £10,000 -£20,000, which will be taken forward by Easter subject to part availability.

Works continue with the sewage management project at the Park, which will total around £250,000 in 2015/16.

### Staff



Following the departure of one of the rangers a new ranger has been appointed and will commence employment at the end of January.

### Financial Report

Tim Dixon handed copies of the Financial Report to the Board and gave an explanation of the contents therein including the relevant contributions from ECC and Braintree District Council.

A discussion took place regarding the Bridle Ways with a Member commenting on the poor state of repair of the pathways as a result of damage by horses. It was confirmed that the Bridle Ways were being looked at with a view to introducing a "loop system" following the success of one at South Weald Country Park. A meeting had taken place with the local stables to address the issue. Various options for addressing this problem were discussed but no firm time frames could be confirmed at the present time.

## **6. Sports Update**

The Board received and noted report (GTP/02/15) providing an update on the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Great Notley Country Park. Paul Partridge, Head of Operations, BDC and Nick Day, Parks and Open Spaces Manager, BDC were in attendance for this item.

### Progress

Over the past year a total of 42 different football teams representing 19 different sports organisations have used the facility on a regular basis. This equates to over 900 players regularly using the facility through their football club, with an additional 451 hours of casual bookings being made by individual players over the last 12 months.

### Budget Update

Income received during the 8-month period from April 2014 – November 2014 was £28k compared to £22.4k for the same period in the previous year, representing an increase of just over 24%.

Total annual income for 2014-15 is projected to be around £45k, with the full year's operating costs also expected to come in around the £45k mark. The facility is therefore expected to reach the break-even point for the first time since its first full year of operation in 2010/11.

### Future/Ongoing Development

Various areas of development were outlined to the Board, which included the continued involvement of Braintree Town FC and securing support of The Football Conference Community Trust.

### Conclusion

Excellent progress has continued to be made over the past 8 months. In addition to increased use of the off-peak sessions by local clubs and community groups, Gt. Notley Football Club (which is the single largest user) has continued to take a more pro-active

role in our monthly management meetings and has committed resources to help develop and deliver the Football Development Plan.

Looking ahead over the longer term, there is confidence that the partnership with BTFC will result in greater promotion and increased use of the facility which will contribute towards the future vision and aspirations for the development and management of the Country Park as a major visitor attraction in the Braintree District and County of Essex over the next 5 to 10 years.

The Board expressed their pleasure in the progress that has been made and offered their thanks to the officers involved.

## **7. Joint report on: Developing Great Notley Country Park further as a 'Destination Park'**

The Board received (GTP/03/15) from Paul Partridge, Head of Operations Braintree District Council and Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks Essex County Council.

### **Car parking capacity and proposed charges**

All of the income generated from car parking goes directly towards offsetting the costs staff and operating the parks.

Car parking is being reviewed in Essex Country Parks with the aim of offering even better value and greater convenience and flexibility for visitors. It is therefore proposed that the current flat rate charge and reduced flat rate winter charge be replaced with variable charging models based on the length of stay.

Alongside the new charging tariff it is proposed to introduce a pay on foot/exit operating system. Payment will be collected through cash, credit/debit card and contactless as well as remote payment over mobile phone. The cost of installation will be fully funded by ECC.

Current capacity is 200/250 hard standing and 400 overflow car parking spaces. The maximum number of cars parking at the park on any day this year has reached two thirds of the capacity available, including the overflow. There is a further overflow area capable of holding another 200 cars in an adjacent field, should it be required.

A discussion followed which included the timing of the review and public consultation. It was confirmed that posters would be clearly displayed within the park giving full details of the proposals. It was confirmed that Communications Teams at ECC and Braintree District Council would liaise on this matter.

### **Sky Trail Course**

Building on the existing successful Joint Venture Partnership with BDC, ECC is seeking to invest circa £390k (Capital) in a 'pay to use' new adventure activity installation. This will deliver additional annual net revenue of over £250,000. It will enable the Partnership to move the park towards being cost neutral, whilst improving customers' experience of the recreational and play value the park has to offer

In order to build the new facility it is proposed that BDC agrees a new land lease for the proposed location, car parking and access, incorporating the existing café in the Discovery Centre. This would be for a ground rent of £15k from 2015/16 and increasing to £30k in 2016/17, which equates to around a 50% reduction in BDC's current revenue contribution of £65k p.a. to ECC by April 2016 over two years.

Tim Dixon handed detailed pictures of the proposed course to the Board and outlined how the system would operate.

As discussion followed which included:

- Security of the course and the various options available.
- The timing of the opening of the course and the car parking issues involved.
- The proposed opening times of the course 10am- 5pm.

### **Solar Panels**

BDC is seeking funding as part of its 2015/16 capital programme to remove the existing faulty solar thermal panels and replace them with an 18kW 72 panel solar photovoltaic array on the south facing roof elevation of the Discovery Centre, which will generate 17,000kWh/yr. The green electricity generated will be consumed on site. The cost of the system is £30k and offers a 7-8 year payback on the investment.

### **Replacement Wind Turbine**

In addition, it is proposed to remove the faulty 6kW turbine and replace it with a 20kW turbine on a 20m mast in the same location. This would generate an estimated 45,000kWh/yr. The original 6kW Proven wind turbine has not been in operation for at least 2 years and to repair the turbine would not be cost effective.

The cost of the system is £76,000 which should be recouped within 7-8 years. Both these projects are being led by BDC and funding is included in the 2015/16 budget.

The Partnership Board **Agreed to:**

1. Approve that the proposed parking tariff outlined within the report goes out to consultation, and it would be discussed with the Partnership at a later date;
2. Confirm that Essex County Council and Braintree District Council may proceed with the land lease and the construction of the Sky Trail & Little Tykes courses (funded by ECC),; and
3. To the installation of PV Panels on the roof of the Discovery Centre and the replacement of the Wind Turbine at the Country Park as outlined within the report.

### **8. Joint report on Joint Partnership and long-term vision for Great Notley Country Park**

The Board received report (GTP/04/15) from Paul Partridge, Head of Operations Braintree District Council and Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks, Essex County Council on developing a new joint vision for the site.

It was explained that the current partnership between Braintree District Council and Essex County Council for the management and operation of the GNCP was established back in 2008. Over the past 6 years, the Partnership has seen the park transform into an important visitor attraction in the Braintree District.

A discussion took place regarding the need for a strategic review of the Park and the Board stressed the importance of Joint Partnership and the need for communication between ECC and Braintree District Council.

Before any decisions are made on commissioning an external review, the Board requested that Officers from both authorities to pull together all the information and ideas they currently have. A summary report is then to be brought back to the June Board meeting outlining the officer findings, as well as identifying any gaps in information and solutions for filling those gaps. It was stressed that this piece of work needed to take account of the potential growth for the District and surrounding area as the Local Plan is developed'

## **9 Stakeholder Feedback**

The North Essex Astronomical Society regularly meet at the Country Park has a "wish list" and it was agreed that this would be looked at by officers with a view to offering assistance where possible.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

The Board agreed the following future meeting dates for 2015:

Thursday 12 March  
Thursday 18 June  
Thursday 17 September  
Thursday 10 December

All meetings to begin at 2pm

## **11 Urgent Business**

With the agreement of the Chairman two further issues were discussed:

Councillor Schmitt brought the Board's attention the existence of the Wilderness Foundation, who are located 2 miles from Great Notley Country Park in Chatham Green. The Foundation provides personalised development programmes for young people who are finding it difficult to engage in mainstream education and it was felt that Great Notley CP would be an ideal environment to assist in their programme. They will shortly be hosting a Breakfast event and it was agreed that a representative from ECC would try to attend.

Tim Dixon advised that there had been a very successful "take over day" involving Great Notley Primary School in 2014.

Chairman



		AGENDA ITEM 5
		<b>GTP/05/15</b>
Meeting:	GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD	
Date:	29 April 2015	
<b><u>Great Notley Country Park site activity and project report</u></b>		
Enquiries to:	Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks, Essex County Council <b><u>Tim.Dixon@essex.gov.uk</u></b> , 07717 867628  Nick Day, Parks and Open Spaces Manager, Braintree District Council <b><u>nick.day@braintree.gov.uk</u></b> , 01376 332314	

## 1.0 Introduction

This report provides an update to the Board on all aspects of activity taking place in the Park, with updates from both Essex County Council (ECC) and Braintree District Council (BDC).

## 2.0 Infrastructure Update

There have been some major resurfacing works taking place within the country park in the first section of the year, totalling an investment of over £60,000. These have included the majority of the main car park being resurfaced with tarmac, a new path installed in the car park and also path resurfacing works in various areas of the country park. The resurfacing in the car park has greatly reduced the amount of pot holes and has created a better impression to the visitor, along with the new path in the car park making it safer for pedestrians, as soon as they arrive on site.

A number of footpaths have been resurfaced around the country park to improve access during the wetter months. The previously water logged paths are now looking much drier and have been already appreciated by different user groups including the popular Park Run group.

ECC will be investing a further £250,000 into improving the sewage system at the park in 2015/16. Work towards this is in progress, with the aim to commence on site

in late June to complete works by mid-September, subject to a successful tender process.

### **3.0 Sports Facilities Update**

The sports facilities at the Country Park (the AGP and MUGA) continue to be well used with the total number of bookings received during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2015 – January to April – amounting to 735 hours of activity resulting in income of £16,178 being received during this period.

If this level of income is maintained throughout the coming year the annual income figure would be over £64k which compares well with the projected figure of £45k of total annual income for 2014-15 reported at the last meeting in January 2015.

In addition to the regular football sessions detailed above a Soccability Festival for disabled children was held at the AGP on 26<sup>th</sup> March, this was a joint venture with the Essex section of the FA which saw about 50 children turning up all with varying disabilities and having a very good day of fun and physical activity. The next one is planned for 14<sup>th</sup> May when we are hoping for a similar or even larger turn out of young people.

There was also a Soccer Camp held in February in aid of the Farleigh Hospice at which a total of 32 children turned up and enjoyed themselves with the local branch of McDonalds providing lunches and a total of £480 being donated to the Hospice.

### **4.0 Staff Changes**

Jenny Russell, the new ranger, started in early February replacing Duncan Fisher's role. Jenny has been settling in well and is keen to work a busy summer season at the park.

### **5.0 Equipment Updates**

Following the annual play inspection, the team has completed works on the sand play and building site, queen swing, wooden sheep, rotating plate, water play, hexagonal swing and giant see saw.

A bid for a new tractor and flail was accepted and we are also purchasing a new on-site utility vehicle. These vehicles will be essential for the maintenance of the country park and the Flitch Way.



## **6.0 Activities**

The Friends of the Flitch Way volunteers have been working hard along the Flitch Way. They have completed clearance work along the Felsted to Little Dunmow section of the Flitch. This clearance work benefits visitors and wildlife alike.

Great Notley Country Park saw a number of 10k and 5k races and school cross country runs at the start of the year. Claire Jones is also working with Park Run organisers to set up a junior park run on the site for Sunday mornings. This will be a completely separate event from the adult's park run.

## **7.0 Project Update**

Following the consultation around new car parking charges, works for the new car parking equipment to enable payment on exit is planned to commence 11 May to be in place for use on 1 June, subject to approval by the Joint Venture Partnership Board.

The High Ropes project is progressing well, with the structure in the process of being built. Installation of the structure is on track to be in place by the end of June. A slight variation to the planning permission is required, which does not impact on the project timescales is due to be submitted by the end of April. Stakeholders have been notified.

Work on the lease for the Country Park is nearing completion; aiming for signature at the end of April.

Recruitment of staff to run the course is about to commence, which will comprise of a Manager and two instructors.

New signage will be planned and installed as part of the project and landscaping will be carried out around the High Ropes area by the rangers.

In addition to a unit for equipping and preparing users of the course, the old Cycle Hire room will be renovated to create a new reception and refreshment space for the High Ropes course. People will be able to check in or book a place in this room, before going over to the high ropes course to start their session. It is currently being ascertained whether permission for change of use is required for the reception.



		AGENDA ITEM 6
		GTP/06/15
Meeting:	GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD	
Date:	29 April 2015	
<u>Great Notley Country Park Car Parking Consultation</u>		
Enquiries to:	Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks <a href="mailto:Tim.Dixon@essex.gov.uk">Tim.Dixon@essex.gov.uk</a> , 07717 867628	
Purpose		
<p>This report is to advise the JVPB of the feedback received as part of the public consultation regarding the proposed variable banding charges for car parking from 2nd February to 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015.</p> <p>As a result of this, the report makes the recommendation that the proposed charges are taken forward at Great Notley Country Park on installation of the new charge parking equipment that will enable visitors to pay on exit on 1 June 2015.</p>		
Background		
<p>Essex County Council Country Parks aims to improve the experience of our 150,000 customers and is driving towards to becoming cost neutral, and charging for car parking is the Country Parks' main source of income. All of the income generated from car parking goes directly towards offsetting the costs of managing the parks.</p> <p>Car parking has been reviewed in Essex Country Parks to provide convenience and flexibility for visitors. Variable charging models, based on the length of stay, have been proposed to benefit short stay visitors and create a fairer system for all users.</p> <p>Essex Country Parks introduced variable charging across all the parks (except Great Notley and Hadleigh Farm and Country Park Olympic Mountain Bike Venue) in early March 2015. This replaced the previous flat rate charge at the parks and removed the reduced flat rate winter charge that applied to Thorndon and Great Notley to reflect the shorter time visitors stay. There has been very little impact on the ground since the new charges have been implemented; with positive feedback relating to the short term charges.</p> <p>The introduction of a banded charging system takes into account and provides for, those visitors who only wish to stay for very short periods of time, offering a half hour charge and hourly rates. Short stay visitors could in effect be paying less than half of the fee they are currently charged.</p>		

## Proposed Charges

The proposed charges at Great Notley are as follows:

% of visitors per band	Band	Length of Stay	Charge
1.5%	1	Up to 30 mins	£1.00
1.5%	2	Up to 1 hour	£2.00
37%	3	Up to 2 hours	£3.00
40%	4	Up to 3 hours	£4.00
20%	5	Over 3 hours	£5.00

It was agreed that the proposal was to be taken forward for consultation, as it provided the best value for visitors and compares well to locations we have benchmarked against.

This option would deliver an additional annual income of ca.£11,000 excluding VAT. The figures have been based on 2013/14 visitor numbers, and include assumptions of increases in visitor numbers for the high ropes course at Great Notley Country Park to commence from summer 2015.

## Consultation Method & Feedback

The aim of the consultation was to inform visitors of the proposed charging model and gain their views on the proposed charging bands.

### Consultation Method

Posters were displayed within Great Notley Country Park inviting visitors to e-mail or write their views on the proposals from early February with the 6 week consultation finishing on 16<sup>th</sup> March. Users of the football facilities operated at Great Notley were contacted by letter to notify them of the consultation. Great Notley Parish Council was also notified of the consultation through the Head of Country Parks at a meeting to discuss the Park.

In addition, details on the consultation were provided on the Country Parks website <http://www.visitparks.co.uk/>, Twitter, Facebook and on the ECC intranet.

## Summary of Consultation Responses

A low response was received to the consultation when considering the 150,000 users of the park, with 7 comments via e-mail/letter and 9 directly relating to the proposed charges on Twitter. The consultation feedback is attached which includes responses to the comments/questions raised. Some additional comments were also made around the use of contactless payment and the proposed new pay on foot solution which have been included.

Appendix A gives details of comments received.

The summary below highlights the main comments received.

The majority of the responses received indicated that they felt the proposed charges are too high. One person commented that the current charges are already too high and drives people to park in alternative locations in the local area which are free of charge.

The proposed charging bands are based on information gained from benchmarking against a range of sites and compare favourably to these. Car parking is being reviewed with the

aim of offering better value charges that will improve convenience and flexibility for visitors.

The longer stay visitors will be impacted by the introduction of variable charging, but it will make the system fairer to all with visitors paying for the time they have spent in the park, rather than a flat rate fee regardless of the length of stay. The introduction of a banded charging system takes into account and provides for, those visitors who can only stay for very short periods of time, offering a half hour charge and hourly rates. Short stay visitors could in effect be paying less than half of the fee they are currently charged.

There were also concerns raised from an organised dog walking group who uses the park once a month and for their annual charity dog show that the charges were too high and if they were to be adopted then it is unlikely that they will continue to use the park. The new charges do offer flexibility to users, linked to their length of stay, and any formal use of the site for an event can be negotiated separately.

There were concerns raised regarding charges for those parents dropping off children to take part in activities such as football. Part of the Pay on Exit solution will include a free 15 minute drop off period which will be available free of charge. After 15 minutes car park tariffs will apply. For those who visit the park regularly, it is not proposed to increase the charges for car parking season tickets for local residents to reduce the impact of change for customers. These will remain at £65 for 12 months and £40 for 6 months, reduced to £45 and £30 respectively for Blue badge Holders and over 60's. ECC has maintained these prices since 2012, and sell around 1,800 per annum.

There were two comments around the facilities at the park including one around resurfacing. 2014/15 has seen investment in upgrading the car park access road, 500m of footpath and installing a new surfaced footpath across the play mound.

### **Recommendation**

After taking into consideration the low level of feedback received as a result of the consultation, It is recommended that the proposed charges are adopted. Following this, a Cabinet Member Action (CMA) will be prepared for agreement by the ECC Cabinet Member. It should be noted that there has been very little negative impact following the price increases already implemented in the other ECC run Country Parks.

The proposed milestones for implementation are as follows:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Partnership Board approves the proposed charges	29 April 2015
Cabinet Member Action prepared and approved to enable new charges	8 May 2015
New car parking equipment and new signage installed to enable visitors to pay on exit	11 May to 29 May 2015
Pay on exit and new charges commence	1 June 2015

The level of income from the different charging bands will be closely monitored and changes made to the system if necessary to ensure it works efficiently and is meeting our customers' expectations in terms of the choice in length of stay.



Feedback Ref	Comments	Responses to comments
E-mails received regarding charges (Countryside.assets@essex.gov.uk)		
ECC-GNC-001	What a shame that the great british greyhound walk won't be at Notley this year because of car park charges. Oh well your loss.	We are happy to negotiate with organised groups who wish to use the site for specific one off events.
ECC-GNC-002	<p>I read with dismay your proposal of increasing the car parking charges at Notley Park (and, I imagine ultimately other ECC Parks) The facilities at the Park certainly don't warrant such an increase and I think that all it will do is drive people away. In an age where we need to encourage more people to enjoy outdoor activities, this proposal is totally unjustifiable. Since the last increase in parking costs I have visited Notley Park less frequently and if you go ahead with the next round of increases, I won't be visiting there anymore and suspect that I won't be the only one.</p> <p>Please reject this proposal.</p>	<p>The proposed charging bands are based on information gained from benchmarking against similar sites and compare favourably to these. Car parking is being reviewed with the aim of offering better value charges that will improve convenience and flexibility for visitors. The level of income from the different charging bands will be closely monitored and changes made to the system if necessary to ensure it works efficiently and is meeting our customers' expectations in terms of the choice in length of stay</p> <p>2014/15 has seen investment in upgrading the car park access road, 500m of footpath and installing a new surfaced footpath across the play mound.</p>
ECC-GNC-003	<p>I was actually a bit shocked to be asked to pay £5.00 when I took family in two cars for a look around (2 cars each £2.50) a few weekends ago, so any reduction would be appreciated.</p> <p>But your proposal still doesn't make it easier for those parents taking children to pay football once or twice a week – they will be there for about 2 hours (or more), for which you are proposing at least £3.00 charge.</p> <p>Perhaps free for 30 minutes so that the café could benefit, or if people are collecting children etc.?</p>	<p>Part of the Pay on Exit Solution will include a free 15 minute drop off period which will be available free of charge. After 15 minutes the car park tariffs will apply.</p> <p>For those parents who wish to stay and watch, season tickets are available to be purchased at £65 for 12 months and £40 for 6 months, reduced to £45. ECC has maintained these prices since 2012</p>
ECC-GNC-004	<p>I read with dismay the change in parking charges planned for Notley Country Park, which I consider to be exorbitant.</p> <p>I am the trustee of a dog walking group that have used the park every single month for a walk since April 2006. In that time we have seen the charge go from £0 to what is now proposed.</p> <p>We are now being sorely tested if we can justify using the park when our walk members, who travel some distance will be asked to pay £4 if they have their hours walk, sociable chat and cup of tea. We have supported the park over the years and absorbed the changes made taking it from being a relaxed convivial walkers facility to a 50:50 walkers facility to incorporate a very targeted children's play area,</p> <p>In addition to the monthly walk we also hold our annual dog show at the park. We have a good relationship with the park staff and are encouraged to promote it for our event, however as a charity event we will be embarrassed to ask people to pay £5 to park for our free event and this charge taken by the council is bound to impact on the profit for the participating charities.</p> <p>On a personal level I no longer use the park to walk my dogs on a regular basis partly because of the parking charges, partly because of the play areas and partly because in the winter months the ground is sodden and muddy. I can head off to the Flitch Way for a drier and much more pleasant walk that costs me nothing.</p> <p>As I use other parks you might be interested to know that the excellent Ferry Meadows in Peterborough charge noting to park! Brandon Country Park charges the following which is more than reasonable: cost of parking all day (Monday-Friday) £1.50 the rate for up to two hours of parking at weekends £1.50, £2.50 for over 2 hours two hour rate for weekdays £1. All other rates, including the £25 a year season ticket and free blue badge parking.</p> <p>Their comments when they reviewed and increased the charges last year were " whilst ensuring value for money and that regular local users of the park are not unduly disadvantaged."</p> <p>I feel local user are seriously disadvantaged! On a personal level I don't use the park to walk my dogs on a regular basis because of the parking charges, the children's play area and because in winter month many part of the walks are so sodden and muddy.</p> <p>I would submit that Essex County Council review the changes they have in mind and be more mindful of local users, and regular supporters.</p> <p>I would be very keen to know if there will be a public meeting to discuss these changes as we picked this information up from a local group on Facebook of all places and when at the park/cafe last week we really do not recall seeing any notifications.</p>	<p>We are happy to negotiate with organised groups who wish to use the site for specific one off events.</p> <p>The introduction of charging bands provides flexibility enabling visitors to pay for the length of stay. Season tickets are not increasing and provide good value for regular visitors.</p>
ECC-GNC-005	<p>Your proposal seem to imply the following; Daily rate from £3.50 to £5, a 42% increase and doubling winter rate from £2.50. This seems excessive in a deflationary economy. Charges are already too high and driving users to alternative locations such as Tesco car park, which is FREE for up to 3 hours.</p> <p>The variable pricing structure proposed seems to actually increase the cost of parking for all but the very shortest of visits. A football match or parkrun all need over an hour onsite. What activity could you do in the park with 30 mins parking?</p> <p>"Great Notley will also become a pay on exit car park." This needs further explanation. Will you be able to drop-off and pick-up without incurring a charge? Cars are already regular seen parked along the by-pass blocking access gates, this will only increase if there is no free entry and exit and no enforcement.</p> <p>Overall the variable pricing model seems to offer minimal benefit to irregular users, whilst regular users would be wise to obtain season tickets.</p>	<p>The longer stay visitors will be impacted by the introduction of variable charging, but it will make the system fairer to all with visitors paying for the time they have spent in the park, rather than a flat rate fee regardless of the length of stay.</p> <p>The level of income from the different charging bands will be closely monitored and changes made to the system if necessary to ensure it works efficiently and is meeting our customers' expectations in terms of the choice in length of stay. The proposed charging bands are based on information gained from benchmarking against similar sites and compare favourably to these. Car parking is being reviewed with the aim of offering better value charges that will improve convenience and flexibility for visitors.</p> <p>Part of the Pay on Exit Solution will include a 15 minute drop off period which will be available free of charge. After 15 minutes the car park tariffs will apply.</p>
ECC-GNC-006	<p>I have just read about your proposed changes to the car parking fees at Gt Notley Country Park. Personally, I think you are looking to charge too much and may in fact put young families off visiting the park as they usually go for a few hours, so what was a cheap excursion to keep the children happy, fit, and healthy outdoors is now no longer cheap - especially in school holidays as some families would have gone up more than once or twice during a holiday period.</p> <p>But anyway, onto the main point of my email. We have a yearly ticket for the car park at Gt Notley, and I am just wondering how we will use this as you state that the car park will be becoming a pay on exit car park. Our pass is just a sticker on the front windscreen, how will any machines, barriers, cameras, etc. know that we have paid?</p>	All visitors with season tickets will have their car registration details entered onto the pay on foot system 'white list'. This means the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system will recognise the number plate and allow the season ticket holder to exit without charge when they approach the barrier.
ECC-GNC-009	Could some consideration be given to our older generation which have had quite a time of it and might appreciate a little slack, that generation that went thru WW2 have had a lot to contend with over the years.	Discounted season tickets, reduced to £45 for 12 months and £30 for 6 months are available for those aged over 60.
E-mails received regarding the Pay on Foot System (Countryside.assets@essex.gov.uk)		
ECC-GNC-007	As part of the changes to pay on exit will there be a way of dropping off at the country park without paying for those who do not wish to park but just drop a child etc. off, otherwise the only option will be that people will drop off on the dual carriageway which is clearly not safe.	Part of the Pay on Exit Solution will include a free 15 minute drop off period which will be available free of charge. After 15 minutes the car park tariffs will apply.
ECC-GNC-008	<p>Thank you for sending us the information regarding the changes to the car parking system at the country park. We are a charity for disabled children, our centre is located near the country park car park, we have our own car park for our staff and members. However I wonder if you can let me know where this new barrier system will be as we are concerned that it may affect our members and staff. If the new system will be put by the underpass it won't be a problem for us, however if it is right at the top of the entrance it will cause us some issues as many families use our centre o a daily basis but often just to drop their children off and pick them up again.</p> <p>Thank you in advance for you help.</p>	PARC hold a list of all the vehicle registrations for the parents/carers of children visiting the centre. These will be entered onto the pay on foot system 'white list'. This means the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system will recognise the number plate and allow them to exit without charge when they approach the barrier. The Head of Country Parks has advised PARC face to face of these arrangements.
Comments on Twitter about charges		
001	<p>Lots of park users are dog walkers who visit for 1hr so don't want to pay an all day charge. Same for all @visitparks esp #Danbury. £5 for all day seems a bit much though.</p> <p>(Replying to tweet around the proposal to introduce a variable charge for car parking at Great Notley).</p>	



002	Ridiculous it will cut down number of visitors. I go there lots with grandchildren can't afford to at those prices. (Replying to tweet 'It would cost just £1 for 30 mins parking at #GreatNotleyCountryPark under new proposals'.)	The level of income from the different charging bands will be closely monitored and changes made to the system if necessary to ensure it works efficiently and is meeting our customers' expectations in terms of the choice in length of stay. The proposed charging bands are based on information gained from benchmarking against similar sites and compare favourably to these. Car parking is being reviewed with the aim of offering better value charges that will improve convenience and flexibility for visitors.
003	So what exactly do we pay council tax for? Prices are an outrage. And 2put them up this much,shocking.And dressing it up as "fairer" (Replying to tweet 'Let us know what you think of our plans for the car park at #GreatNotleyCountryPark'?)	Country Parks aims to improve the experience of our 500,000 customers and is driving towards to becoming cost neutral, and charging for car parking is the Country Parks' main source of income. All of the income generated from car parking goes directly towards offsetting the costs of managing the parks.
004	It will still cost to much whether I pay by card or cash (Replying to tweet about being able to pay by card)	The proposed charging bands are based on information gained from benchmarking against similar sites and compare favourably to these. Car parking is being reviewed with the aim of offering better value charges that will improve convenience and flexibility for visitors. The level of income from the different charging bands will be closely monitored and changes made to the system if necessary to ensure it works efficiently and is meeting our customers' expectations in terms of the choice in length of stay
005	Parking should be free (replying to tweet about charges being fairer to short stay visitors)	Country Parks aims to improve the experience of our 500,000 customers and is driving towards to becoming cost neutral, and charging for car parking is the Country Parks' main source of income. All of the income generated from car parking goes directly towards offsetting the costs of managing the parks.
006	or simply more expensive..... A great way to discourage people from using a council facility... We do pay council tax... Right? (replying to tweet about charges being fairer to short stay visitors)	The proposed charging bands are based on information gained from benchmarking against similar sites and compare favourably to these. Car parking is being reviewed with the aim of offering better value charges that will improve convenience and flexibility for visitors. The level of income from the different charging bands will be closely monitored and changes made to the system if necessary to ensure it works efficiently and is meeting our customers' expectations in terms of the choice in length of stay
007	So what could you do in 30 mins and still get in and out of the car park? Otherwise you're just proposing to increase costs to all (replying to tweet about charges being fairer to short stay visitors)	There are occasions where a 30 minute tariff would be appropriate for visitors to fulfil various activities such as short dog walks and strolls.
008	Reimburse the cost of parking like supermarkets do when visiting the coffee/gift shop (replying to tweet about charges being fairer to short stay visitors)	This is often considered and may be used during off peak winter periods.
009	This is daylight robbery. Hope you are going to resurface and mark the parking bays up? Where exactly is the exit barrier going? (replying to tweet about charges being fairer to short stay visitors)	The access road throughout the car park has been resurfaced.
Comments on Twitter regarding the Pay on Foot system & other comments		
010	Will it have street lights? (Replying to tweet 'Let us know what you think of our plans for the car park at #GreatNotleyCountryPark'?)	There will be no further additions to the existing lighting provided.
011	what the point you wont listen (Created own tweet '@Essex_CC what the point you wont listen #GreatNotleyCountryPark')	All feedback received as part of the consultation will be considered as part of the decision making process.
012	Good (Replying to tweet regarding being able to pay by card).	
013	Great credit companies get hold of more of our details and more junk mail (replying to tweet about Contactless payment is among proposals for car parking changes at GreatNotleyCountryPark)	Any cardholder data will be held in a secure environment that meets the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) required.