

**WRITTEN QUESTION – NOVEMBER 2011**

| No | Date received & 9 wkg/day target to respond  | Question by  | Response from   | Sent to Cllr | Published |
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| 1. | <p align="center"><b>Received 24th November 2011</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Target response by 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011</b></p> <p align="center">Last updated<br/>5th December<br/>2011</p> | <p><b>Councillor Barlow</b></p> <p>Following the recent welcome cut in parking charges in the run-up to Christmas will the Leader or appropriate Cabinet Member undertake to review the punitive charges levied on the residents of Mill Lane in Witham who are unable to park outside their houses.</p> <p>The Council currently charges an excessive cost for these residents to park in the Council-owned Mill Lane Car Park even though this car park rarely approaches 50% capacity.</p> <p>Other residents who pay resident permit charges across the district pay only £30 a year.</p> <p>How is the excessive difference in charges justified, which effectively amounts to discrimination against these residents, and will the Cabinet Member equalise the charges for them?</p> | <p><b>Response by Councillor Wendy Schmitt, Cabinet Member for the Environment</b></p> <p>The Mill Lane car park is designated a short-stay car park and provides convenient parking for visitors and shoppers visiting the town centre. The Council has no wish to encourage long-stay car parking at Mill Lane, as this would undoubtedly have an adverse impact on the local economy. For this reason, it is expensive to park in excess of 6 hours and there is no provision for season tickets or other concessionary permits. The parking concession recently introduced includes this car park and the impact on utilisation will be closely monitored over the next 4 months.</p> <p>The Council carried out a review of car parking in 2009 and a revised car parking tariff was approved by Cabinet on 1 February 2010. The new charges were introduced w.e.f. 1 April that year, being the first increase since 2006. Prices were held down for as long as possible, but clearly the Council is subject to the same financial pressures as everyone else and unfortunately it was necessary to increase our charges to help ensure that valuable front-line services were maintained. In doing so, we set out to strike a balance between the level of charging and the impact on users and the local economy and we believe that we achieved this.</p> <p>On-street parking is a County Council function and the residents-only parking scheme they operate does not guarantee the permit holder a space to park, nor does it offer the security of a car park.</p> | 24/11/11     | 05/12/11  |