



Car Park Charging Information Sheet



Ashdown Forest has an increasing level of visitor use and yet its funding is decreasing. The result has been that the Conservators, who are responsible for managing the Forest, have been less able to meet their responsibilities to conserve the Forest and its wildlife and ensure open and safe public access. The Conservators want to improve the condition of the Forest for wildlife and visitors.

Despite restructuring the organisation to save money and increase efficiency, Ashdown Forest has a deficit forecast in its budget which increases over the coming years.

At the Board Meeting held on 12 July 2021, in response to financial concerns, and in light of the powers given by the Act (The Ashdown Forest Act 1974, S.18 I (e), gives the Conservators “... powers to make reasonable charges for the parking of vehicles in the forest”), the Conservators agreed to explore the potential for introducing car park charging ([see meeting minutes here](#)). Following this decision, a series of Extraordinary Board meetings was scheduled to review the proposals and agree next steps. The process and accompanying documentation is outlined below:

1. First Extraordinary Board Meeting (27 September 2021) – to consider the feasibility study

The Board considered the feasibility study and agreed to the preparation of a full business case, investigating details of a feasible parking scheme with projections of revenues that might be generated.

- The feasibility study is available on the Ashdown Forest website [here](#)
- Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting can be found [here](#)

2. Second Extraordinary Board Meeting (25 October 2021) – to consider the business case

The business case looks in more depth into car park charging, the basis on which it could be undertaken, the potential revenues it could generate, and risks associated with it.

The Board reviewed the business case and agreed to continue the development and refinement of the business case and to launch a public consultation on the proposal. The proposal and business case will be considered in response to information gathered from the public consultation.

- The initial business case is available on the Ashdown Forest website [here](#)

3. Public Consultation (26 October – 06 December 2021)

A public consultation is being undertaken to gather the perspectives of Forest users on parking charges. The consultation has been designed by Ashdown Forest with support from East Sussex Country Council’s Communications Department who are hosting the questionnaire survey.

- The questionnaire can be found [here](#) (QR code above)

4. Third Extraordinary Board Meeting (January 2022 - date to be confirmed)

The Board of Conservators will meet in January 2022 to decide whether to proceed with parking charges on Ashdown Forest. The findings of the consultation survey will inform the decision of the Board regarding a car park charging scheme and, if agreed, to approve an implementation process.