

Fareham Borough Council  
Feasibility Study – Extending Coastal  
Car Park Cohort

March 2023

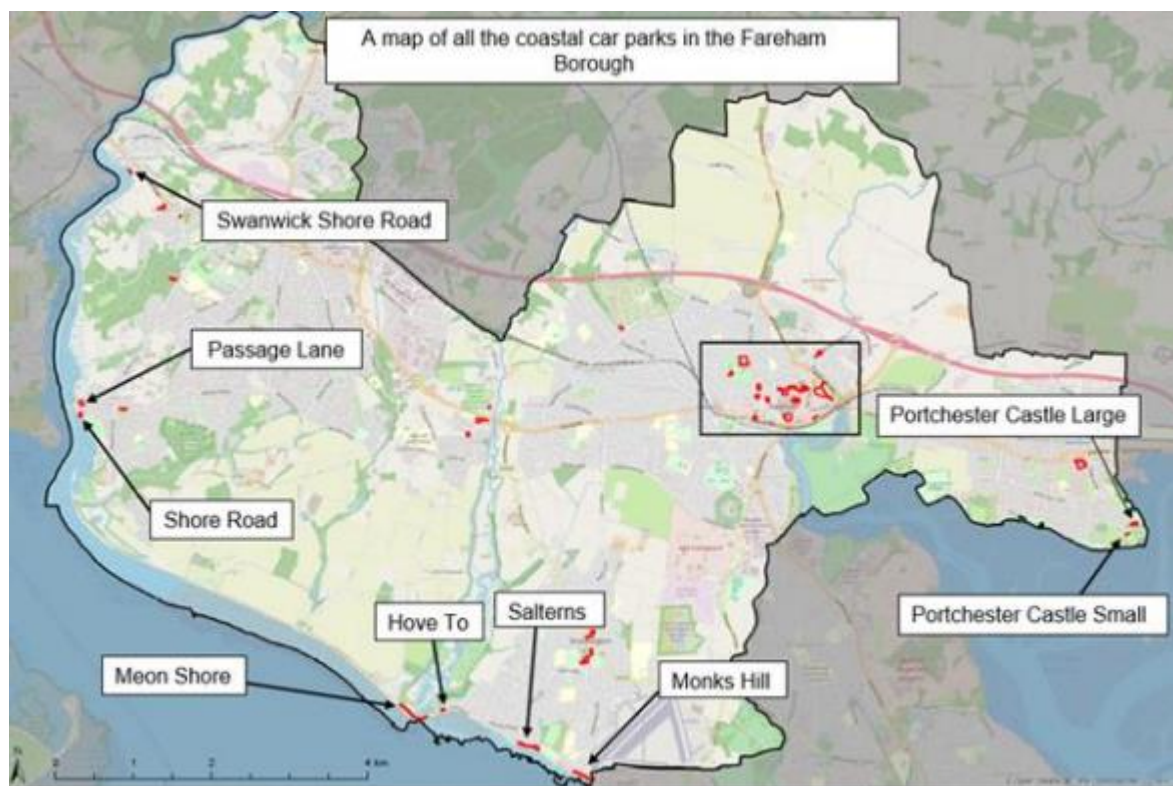
## 1. Background and Approach to Feasibility Study

### Introduction

- Fareham Borough Council introduced charges in coastal car parks from August 2021 onwards.
- Coastal car parking was reviewed after one full year of operation. As a result of the review, there was a recommendation to consider adding Wicor Recreation Ground, Seafield Park and Shearwater car park in the cohort of coastal car parks.

### Background

- Fareham Borough Council currently has 9 nominated coastal car parks.
  - Monks Hill
  - Hove-To
  - Salterns Road
  - Meon Shore
  - Swanwick Shore Road
  - Passage Lane
  - Shore Road
  - Portchester Castle Small
  - Portchester Castle Large



- Hourly charging and season tickets were introduced in the coastal car parks on 1 August 2021 (1 March 2022 in Portchester Castle car parks).
- Following the first full year of coastal charging, a review of the scheme was undertaken alongside a review of town centre parking options identified in the September 2020 report.
- At the Executive Meeting on 6 December 2022, the following was agreed:
  - Coastal season ticket prices be set at £145 per year, with a concessionary rate of £95 per year for Fareham residents.
  - Hourly charges in coastal car parks be increased by 10% in line with inflation.
  - The existing £6 per day cap on charges at pay-and-display coastal car parks be removed.
  - Changes were implemented on 1 March 2023.
- It was also agreed that a feasibility report to support the categorisation of additional car parks as coastal car parks should be undertaken. The car parks to be considered are Wicor Recreation Car Park, Seafeld Park and Shearwater Car Park.

### Why conduct a feasibility study?

- The three car parks to be considered all offer good access to the coast with all being well within a 5 minute walk for an average person:
  - Wicor Recreation Ground – 28 metres
  - Shearwater Car Park – 200 metres
  - Seafeld Park – 300 metres
- They are currently all classed as leisure car parks and are free to park.



- Building on lessons learnt from the introduction of charging at coastal car parks in August 2021, the feasibility study sets out the current condition and use of Wicor Recreation Car Park, Seafeld Park and Shearwater Car Park and additional works required if they were to be classified as chargeable coastal car parks.

**What were the aims of the Feasibility Study?**

- The outputs of the feasibility study are to identify:
  - Key issues when considering extension of the coastal car park cohort
  - Lessons learnt from the introduction of coastal car parking and changes to parking in the Borough
  - Additional information required to support decision making
  - Decision making process and draft timeframes
- Analysis of above to inform recommendations for next steps.

**What was the methodology?**

- Analysis of parking patterns and usage of current coastal car parks.
- Site visits to the three car parks with parking counts for each.
- Review of current use and income from the pitches and pavilions served by two of the car parks.
- Review lessons learnt from the introduction of charges at coastal car parks in August 2021 and identify mitigating actions.

## 2. Wicor Recreation Ground

### What is parking like now?

- Wicor Recreation Ground has six adult and two mini football pitches, two pavilions and a skatepark. These facilities are managed by Fareham Borough Council.
- Wicor Recreation Ground currently has 109 parking bays, including 4 disabled bays.
- Height restriction barriers are installed on both sides of the car park.
- There is a Traffic Regulation Order in the south car park (to the left in the image below) which limits waiting to 24 hours.
- Having the TRO on one side of the car park means that FBC Civil Enforcement Officers already visit the site regularly as part of their rota.



### AFC Portchester

- AFC Portchester lease an area of land which accommodates a floodlit adult football pitch and social facilities building.
- AFC Portchester hire additional pitches on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year.

### AFC Portchester Parking

- The lease AFC Portchester hold with the Council allows for the parking of motor vehicles by members of the Club and their visitors to play and watch football in both parts of the car park but does not state that this needs to be free.
- On-street parking on surrounding residential roads can be an issue when AFC Portchester are playing at home. AFC Portchester support residents in the management of parking in residential areas through their social media accounts.
- AFC Portchester have arranged the use of a neighbouring site for overflow parking. This is managed by two stewards, employed by AFC Portchester, and provides an additional 50-70 spaces on matchdays.

### Other car park users

- Jubilee 77 Youth Football Club are regular users of the site. However, the Club will move to Hunts Pond Road as their home ground by the end of the current season. The impact of this maybe a reduction in the demand for parking at Wicor Recreation Ground on Sundays.
- The National Coastal Trail passes the car park and walkers use this car park, as well as Shearwater, as a start/end point for their walk. As well as the National Trail, the car park area is well used by dog walkers, visitors to the coast for activities including paddleboarding and visitors to the skate park.
- Wicor Marine Yacht Haven, Salt Café and a Kayak Club are located adjacent to the car park. Whilst they have their own car parking facilities, it is possible that their patrons also utilise Wicor Recreation Ground car park.

### Level of use

- Table 1 shows the results of a recent usage survey (November 2022) which found that the car park was fully utilised on days when football activities were in place (matches and training), but otherwise averaged 15% occupancy.

Table 1: November 2022 usage survey at Wicor Rec								
	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs
Wicor	24	18	109	109	14	2	18	18

- Based on 15% occupancy 5 days per week for 6 hours, full occupancy 50% of weekends for 4 hours and adjusted by 25% for seasonal variations and VAT, this would provide an indicative annual income of **£31,434**.



### Public relations considerations

- The club will likely perceive any proposed parking charges as having a negative impact on attendance at their matches.
- Families park on site when their children attend training or matches and will likely object to charging.
- Residents may fear dispersion of parked cars onto their residential roads.

### Possible mitigations

Considering these issues, it is worthwhile evaluating proposals and mitigations that may reduce the risk of challenge:

- **Offer a limited number of transferable season tickets:** Up to ten transferable season tickets for use by volunteers are currently offered for purchase to each of the designated organisations served by the other coastal car parks. The Council could offer the same concession to AFC Portchester for use by volunteers, staff or visitors. This would reduce the Council's income from the car park if they were used consistently across the week.
- **Coastal season tickets offer good value:** Annual coastal season tickets are available to purchase for £145 per year, with a concessionary rate of £95 per year for Fareham residents. For Fareham residents, this is less than £2 per week.
- **Joint approach to enforcement:** AFC Portchester currently supports management of issues arising from parking on surrounding residential roads. On street parking is managed by Hampshire County Council. A joint approach between Fareham Borough Council enforcement officers, HCC enforcement officers and AFC Portchester will mitigate anti-social parking.

### Set up costs

This location would require the purchase of three pay and display machines at a cost of £4,565 each. This does not include costs associated with the installation or signage.

The existing TRO would need to be extended to include the right-hand car park and amended to support charges. This would require a 28-day statutory consultation process to inform the public of updates.

### **Additional parking spaces**

AFC Portchester aspires to install a 3G all-weather pitch. They have previously been advised that to support this, they would need to ensure additional car parking:

- A motion to agree funding to expand the car park at Wicor Recreation Ground was taken to the Streetscene Scrutiny Panel on 18 July 2019. This was partly in response to overspill parking on residential roads on matchdays, and partly to support the planning requirements of a 3G pitch.
- Whilst the Panel recognised that there were parking issues at Wicor, funding from the Council was not agreed. It was suggested that external sources of funding were sought.
- AFC Portchester have arranged the use of adjacent land at weekends to help alleviate parking on residential roads on matchdays.
- Increasing the existing surface car park by an additional 55 spaces would be at an estimated cost of £325,000, depending on the exact location.
- Based on indicative usage patterns, an additional 55 spaces would generate an income of up to £16,045 p/a with a payback period of 20.25 years.
- The area of the car park to be extended to provide the additional parking has not been identified, and this may impact on the final cost of the spaces with factors including drainage, surface condition and levels all having an impact.
- Dependent on the chosen location of the additional car parking, it may be possible to consider a less intrusive solution e.g. Grasscrete. Costs for this are estimated to be up to £198,000 depending on the agreed solution and location of the additional spaces.
- The location of additional spaces is restricted by the skate park and underground gas tanks. There would be a loss in income from pitch leasing if the car park was extended across existing playing fields.
- An indication of the most likely location of additional spaces is outlined in red, subject to site survey, feasibility, and planning permission.



- Planning permission would need to be sought for any additional car parking spaces.



**Further considerations**

- Consideration required regarding the impact on AFC Portchester and their access to car parking.
- Indicative costs have been included in the feasibility report for the creation of additional parking spaces. More detailed costings based on the location of additional spaces and the chosen solution would be required to support decision making.

### 3. Shearwater Car Park

#### What is parking like now?

- Shearwater car park is an unmarked gravel car park. The surface is in poor condition and vegetation encroaches around the boundary.
- In its current condition, a maximum 18 cars can safely park here at one time.



#### Users of the site

- Shearwater Car Park is the advertised starting point for the Cams Hall Self-Guided Walk – a coastal walk which circumnavigates Cams Hall Golf Course. It also provides access to the National Coastal Trail.
- There are no additional facilities associated with the car park – e.g. play area, so users of the car park are likely to be mostly walkers.
- The lease held by the Council for the land and car park requires that the parking area is used in connection with the recreational or leisure use of the remainder of the land. Specifically, it is not a general car park.
- It is anticipated that the average stay at Shearwater Car Park will be 2 hours at a time. This is the time it takes to complete the Cams Hall Self-Guided Walk (between 1hr 10mins and 1hr 45mins).
- There is some anecdotal evidence that the car park is used as overspill parking for Wicor Recreation Ground when AFC Portchester are playing, though this was not evidenced in the usage survey.

### Level of use

- Table 2 shows the results of a recent usage survey (November 2022) which found that the car park averaged 25% occupancy (based on 18 spaces):

Table 2: November 2022 usage survey at Shearwater								
	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs
Shearwater	6	4	7	7	2	2	5	5

- Based on 25% occupancy across 18 spaces each week, and adjusted by 25% for seasonal variations and VAT, this would provide an indicative annual income of **£6,486**.

### Options explored

- The site is currently unmarked and would require marked bays to be installed prior to the introduction of charging.
- The current site would accommodate 18 marked bays, of which 2 would be disabled bays (FBC do not currently charge blue badge holders in pay-and-display car parks).
- This could be achieved in several ways:
  - Bay markers installed on gravel base - budget cost £18,000 – an indicative payback period of 2.75 years.
  - Resurface car park with a hard surface including site clearance, excavate area, lay new sub-base with drainage, lay base course and wear course to form new surfaced 18 space car park - budget cost £115,000 – an indicative payback period of 17.75 years.
- Look to increase the size of the car park. There is no restriction in the lease to prevent this, provided that it continues to be used in connection with the use of the remainder of the land.
- Any work to expand the car park would require planning permission.

### Set up costs

- Based on 18 spaces, this location would need one pay and display machine at a cost of £4,565. This does not include the cost for ground works or signage.
- A survey of the site to ensure that there is a signal to facilitate card payments at the pay-and-display machine and Pay-by-App would need to be undertaken.
- The existing TRO would need to be extended to include Shearwater car park and charges. This would require a 28-day statutory consultation process to inform the public of updates.

**Further considerations**

- A review of the impact and effectiveness of bay markers at Meon Shore Car Park would need to be undertaken to support effective decision making on their use at Shearwater Car Park.
- Impact on surrounding residential streets – FBC would need to work with HCC to ensure that surrounding residents are not adversely impacted by visitors parking on surrounding roads rather than parking in a chargeable car park.
- High level costs have been included in the feasibility report. More detailed costing based on a survey of the car park would be required to support decision making.

#### 4. Seafield Park

##### What is parking like now?

- Seafield Park car park has a total of 59 parking bays, including 3 disabled bays.



- The sub-area marked in blue has a height restriction barrier and bollards separating it from the rest of the car park. This area is unlocked by users of the football pitches on match days only.



### Users of site

- Seafield Park is a recreational facility offering a play area, as well as general open space for leisure users. There are also two full sized football pitches and changing facilities.
- Crofton Saints and the Gosport Fareham & Solent League are regular users of the Seafield Park pitches.
- Introducing car parking charges at Seafield Park may encourage football clubs to find alternative locations for games which would impact on income both from loss of revenue from pitch fees and reduced car park usage at weekends.
- However, the Council has alternative pitches for hire at recreation grounds which do not currently charge for parking, although their location may not be so favourable to clubs.

### Level of use

- Table 3 shows the results of a recent usage survey (November 2022) which found that the car park was fully occupied on match days, but otherwise averaged 8% occupancy:

<b>Table 3: November 2022 usage survey at Seafield</b>								
	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs
Seafield	8	5	4	59	6	2	2	7

- Based on 8% occupancy across all 59 spaces 6 days per week, full occupancy 1 half day per week and adjusted by 25% for seasonal variations and VAT, this would provide an indicative annual income of **£8,923**.

### Set up costs

- This location would require two pay and display machines at a cost of £4,565 each. This does not include installation works or signage.
- The existing TRO would need to be extended to include Seafield car park and charges. This would require a 28-day statutory consultation period to inform the public of updates.

### Further considerations

- Consider if the entire site should be treated the same or if the area cordoned off for football users remain separate for use by football clubs, possibly at a concessionary rate.



## 5. Benefits, Lessons Learnt and Next Steps

### Potential benefits

- Table 4 shows the potential estimated annual income for each car park, modelled on occupancy levels in November 2022 and based on £6.60 p/day (6 hours).
- The full year figure has been adjusted by 25% to allow for seasonal fluctuations.
- Income figures have been based on a snapshot of one week's occupancy in November 2022. Occupancy may be higher in the summer months, and during school holidays. During winter months there will be lower occupancy with poorer weather conditions and earlier sunsets.

**Table 4: Potential estimated annual income across the three car parks**

Car Park	Basis of modelling	Potential Income
Wicor Recreation Ground (109 marked bays)	15% occupancy 5 days per week, full occupancy 2 half days per week.	£31,434
Seafield Park (59 marked bays)	8% occupancy 6 days per week, full occupancy 1 half day per week	£8,923
Shearwater Car Park (18 marked bays)	25% occupancy 7 days per week	£6,486
<b>Total</b>		<b>£46,843</b>

- Any concessions offered to AFC Portchester in response to the introduction of coastal charging at Wicor Recreation Ground car park would impact on this figure.
- There is a risk of loss of income to the Council if football users at Seafield Park choose to use alternative facilities.
- Income from comparator coastal car parks in Fareham for the first full year (August 2021 – July 2022) indicates that although the above figure may be less than the Council achieves in existing coastal car parks, it is commensurate with their location and facilities.

### Potential costs

- Enforcement activity would be met within the current budget.
- However, total set-up costs are as set out in Table 7. This includes the introduction of pay and display machines at each site and the installation of new bay markers on a gravel base (as a minimum) at Shearwater car park.

**Table 7: Total costs to prepare car parks for the introduction of charging**

Car Park	Basis of modelling	Cost
Wicor Recreation Ground (109 marked bays)	3 x pay and display machines	£13,695 plus ground works and signs
Seafield Park (59 marked bays)	2 x pay and display machines	£9,130 plus ground works and signs
Shearwater Car Park (18 marked bays)	Bay markers on gravel base 1 x pay and display machine	£18,000 £4,565 plus ground works and signs
<b>Total</b>		<b>£45,390 plus installation works and signage</b>

- Pay-and-display machines were costed at £4,565 in December 2022. This cost may change by the time of procurement.
- This proposal provides a potential payback period of a little under one year.
- The cost of new signage (approximately £150 per sign) and installation is in addition to this cost.
- There is a risk that AFC Portchester may seek to renegotiate or end their lease at Wicor Recreation Ground which would impact on Council income.

### Overall analysis

- The feasibility study supports Wicor Recreation Ground car park as having the best rationale for classification as a coastal car park based on its proximity to the coast and wide range of users, including visitors who use the car park to access the water for paddleboarding and kayaking.
- Initial figures for income suggest that Wicor Recreation Ground car park could generate an annual income of £31,434, against total set up costs of £13,695 plus installation and signage (based on December 2022 prices). This provides for a return on investment in less than six months.
- If proposals to redesignate Wicor Recreation Ground as a coastal car park are approved, we would work closely with AFC Portchester during implementation to minimise disruption to them. This includes offering the club the option to purchase up to 10 transferable season tickets for use by their staff, members and visitors.
- The feasibility study does not support the classification of Seafield Park or Shearwater as coastal car parks at this time. Neither car park supports the same wide range of users with such direct access to the coast as Wicor Recreation Ground, or provides a reasonable return on investment in set up costs.

### Lessons Learnt - Introduction of Charges at Coastal Car Parks In August 2021

- Feedback from residents is that the introduction of charging at coastal car parks led to a perceived increase in on-street parking on surrounding roads. The three car parks which form part of this study are in residential areas, and on-road parking would be detrimental to residents.
- However, Hampshire County Council manage on-road parking and have not identified a significant impact because of the introduction of coastal car park charges.
- During the introduction of charges at existing coastal car parks, some organisations raised concerns that their volunteers would be adversely impacted. This would result in a loss in support for their activities, impacting community cohesion.
- To support this, the Council worked directly with coastal organisations and was able to offer them the opportunity to purchase up to 10 transferable season tickets for use by volunteers.
- AFC Portchester are the main organisation impacted by the introduction of charges at the car parks in this study. The Council would work closely with AFC Portchester to support them with any concerns they have.
- Similarly, FBC could review the terms of leasing pitches at Seafeld Recreation Ground and Wicor Recreation Ground to mitigate against the impact of parking charges on users of the pitches.
- The introduction of bay markers at Meon Shore car park has only recently been completed and their effectiveness has not yet been tested to confirm if they would be a suitable choice for Shearwater.
- The procurement and lead time for pay-and-display machines took longer than initially anticipated when charging in coastal car parks was introduced in 2021. Timelines have been adjusted to accommodate this possibility.

### Decision Making Process and Draft Timeframes

Date	Activity
March 2023	Engagement with Councillor's and interested parties
29 March 2023	Health & Public Protection Scrutiny Panel for comment
3 April 2023	Executive Member meeting for approval
28 April 2023 – 26 May 2023	TRO (Amendment 7) statutory consultation
w/c 26 June 2023 - tbc	Delegated Executive Member Decision for approval of the outcome of TRO consultation
1 August 2023	Proposed implementation date