

Motion (Conservative)

Submitted by Councillors Janice Howard, Debbie Shears and Simon Withey

This Council recognises that parking is a key concern for many Merton residents, whether it is being able to park at their local parade of shops to pick up a newspaper or parking in one of the borough's town centres for a more varied shopping experience.

This Council notes that:

- The recent town centre and neighbourhood parade parking surveys highlight the serious concerns expressed by residents and businesses about both the cost and availability of parking in Merton, and particularly in Wimbledon, Raynes Park and Wimbledon Village.
- There continues to be low occupancy rates in some of the council's car parks whilst we see severe pressure on the limited amount of on street parking available in many of the residential areas that abut our town centres.
- The local retention of business rates now means that councils have a direct financial incentive to support business and retail growth in town centres. Vibrant town centres will raise more money for Merton and its council taxpayers and so it makes financial as well as environmental sense to encourage the borough's residents to support local businesses as much as possible rather than travelling further afield.

This Council believes that Merton's residents and businesses want to see a fair, coherent and consistently applied parking regime, which supports and encourages thriving town centres and shopping parades, rather than excessive parking charges and over-zealous enforcement, both of which are harmful to local high streets.

This Council therefore resolves to call on the Labour administration to:

- a) Amend with immediate effect the current 'zero tolerance' parking enforcement regime and allow the borough's traffic wardens and parking officers to use sensible discretion when enforcing parking regulations, in line with the Government's proposed 'grace period' for motorists to allow them to stop outside shops for short periods of time;
- b) Roll out 20 minutes' free parking to those neighbourhood shopping parades across Merton which currently do not benefit from any such arrangement, to help support our small local businesses; and
- c) Give Merton residents one hour's free parking in any of the borough's council-run car parks thereby encouraging people to use our town centres more.

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