



Forestry England

Forestry England New Forest Car Parking Charging Proposals

Supplementary Document to Accompany the
National Parking Equality Impact Assessment

1. Background

Forestry England uses a National Parking Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to assess the impact of introducing car parking charging to locations that have previously been free to park. Due regard is given to how the introduction of car parking charging might affect people with protected characteristics.

The National Parking EqIA was used to inform the planning of the New Forest car parking charging scheme. Stakeholder engagement has further informed the design of the scheme. This supplementary document details considerations and adjustments made to the design of the scheme to reflect the local needs of the New Forest.

This working document is updated as new issues or measures are considered.

2. Information relating specifically to the New Forest

Details	Source of Evidence
Statistics on visitor profile with the New Forest: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 83% of visitors were on a short visit from home (76% in summer, 86% in winter)• 26% of visitors visited on a daily basis• Typical duration of visit was 95 minutes• 90% of visitors arrived by car/van/other motor vehicle• 20% of 'short visit from home' visitors had postcodes within the National Park. 62% lived within a 5km radius of the New Forest• 10% visited more than once per day, 32% visited every day, 12% visited most days.	Footprint Ecology Report: Recreation use of the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar - New Forest visitor survey 2018/19
New Forest District Council economic profile: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15% of New Forest residents are 75+ years• 15% of New Forest residents are 65-74 years• 55% of New Forest residents are 16-64 years• 16% of New Forest residents are 0-15 years	New Forest District Council https://www.newforest.gov.uk/localecconomydata https://www.newforest.gov.uk/media/2911/Economic-Profile-2022/pdf/FINAL_New_Forest_Economic_Profile_2022_6.pdf?m=1666862352457

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Forest overall is one of the least deprived local authority areas in England (ranked 241 out of 317 - where 1 is the most deprived) • There are 6 urban neighbourhoods and 1 rural area identified as being within the 30% most deprived in England. 	
<p>Learning disabilities - requirements for a driving licence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning difficulties, e.g. dyslexia, do NOT need to report to DVLA as they are not deemed to affect driving safety. • Mild learning disabilities must be reported to DVLA with a covering letter/form from GP - allowed to drive after DVLA assessment. • Severe Learning Disabilities - likely to be refused licence. 	<p>DVLA</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/learning-disabilities-and-driving</p>
<p>Statistics on internet access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 88% of adults have internet access at home. • 53% of over-74s are internet users. 	<p>Ofcom</p> <p>https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/research-and-data/cmr/cmr17/uk/uk-internet-online.pdf?v=321494</p>

3. Impacts relating specifically to the New Forest

3.1 Protected Characteristic - Age

Consideration of impact in the New Forest car parking charging scheme

People over the age of 65 are less likely to own a smartphone device (77% own one). They are therefore less likely to be able to pay to park using the RingGo app.

The scheme will address this in a number of different ways to pay for parking in the New Forest:

Accessible payment

We understand that not everyone has a mobile phone or access to the internet and have listened to feedback on this. With this in mind, we are providing additional methods of payment to support accessibility.

Visitors with access needs, can make payment after their visit by calling Forestry England Customer Relations on 0300 068 0400 and selecting option 1. Lines open Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm. For assistance outside these hours, visitors are asked to call back as soon as the line reopens, and no later than 3 days after parking, so we can ensure a parking charge is not issued. Visitors will be asked to provide their parking location, duration, and vehicle registration.

An alternative way to pay for those with internet access is via a payment link on our New Forest parking page.

We will also sell Forestry England Membership from our office in Lyndhurst to support anyone not able to access the internet and would like help from our team.

Mobile payment

Payment by mobile phone will be available at all of our 129 car parks in the New Forest. Options to pay include via the RingGo app, through the RingGo website or by calling the RingGo dedicated phone number.

Drivers will not incur any additional booking fees from RingGo for paying for parking via these methods. This cost will be absorbed by Forestry England. It is possible for anyone using the RingGo app to opt in for additional services such as text alerts at their own choice and these incur charges.

To deal with any problems with mobile signal, visitors can pay later until midnight the day after visiting.

Car payment via machines

At 16 car parks across the New Forest payment can be made using contactless debit or credit cards. The pay machines are designed to be clear and straightforward to use, and staff regularly monitor sites to ensure machines are working properly.

Tickets bought at these pay machines are transferable. This means they can be used to cover parking at any of the 129 Forestry England New Forest car parks, as long as the payment covers the total length of your stay.

The number of pay machines is limited as network connectivity is insufficient to support a machine in some locations, as well as the avoidance of installing infrastructure in this natural setting.

Forestry England membership

Many visitors choose to become Forestry England members. Membership includes free and unlimited parking, which removes the need to pay for each visit and can be particularly helpful for people who visit regularly.

Youth groups will continue to be accommodated through the existing permissions system. A grace period of 15 minutes will apply in car parks before charges apply. This enables anyone dropping someone off, or not able to find a parking space and needing to exit, to do so within this timeframe without being charged.

3.2 Protected Characteristic - Disability

Consideration of impact in the New Forest car parking charging scheme

Levels of disability within the New Forest are considered to be in line with national averages. As a result, our National Parking EqIA also applies in this local area.

This includes ensuring that signage, tariffs and parking charge information will be designed to be clear and easy to understand for all. An assumption is that someone able to have a driving licence will be capable of understanding the system.

We have a number of disabled parking spaces in the New Forest. These allow blue badge holders to park close to their destination. We also provide accessible trails in many locations across the New Forest and these cater to a range of abilities.

In line with our national approach, parking charges will apply to all vehicles, including blue badge holders, and the money raised will help to look after the New Forest and maintain facilities for people to enjoy the area.

3.3 Protected Characteristic - Gender Reassignment

Consideration of impact in the New Forest car parking charging scheme

Not considered relevant to car parking charging.

3.4 Protected Characteristic - Being married or in a civil partnership

Consideration of impact in the New Forest car parking charging scheme

Not considered relevant to car parking charging.

3.5 Protected Characteristic - Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin

Consideration of impact in the New Forest car parking charging scheme

Car parking is not permitted overnight and there is no usage of the car parks by the protected travelling community.

3.6 Protected Characteristic - Religion or belief

Consideration of impact in the New Forest car parking charging scheme

Parking charges will apply in the Lyndhurst Cemetery Car Park at the request of the parish council. This car park will be closed to the public to accommodate religious events, e.g. funerals.

3.7 Protected Characteristic - Sex

Consideration of impact in the New Forest car parking charging scheme

Not considered relevant to car parking charging.

3.8 Protected Characteristic - Sexual orientation

Consideration of impact in the New Forest car parking charging scheme

Not considered relevant to car parking charging.

3.9 Protected Characteristic - Being pregnant or on maternity leave

Consideration of impact in the New Forest car parking charging scheme

Not considered relevant to car parking charging.

3.10 Socio-economic status

Although not a protected characteristic, consideration of socio-economic status recognises that asking people to pay to park somewhere they have never had to pay before will have a financial impact.

The New Forest district is one of England's least deprived areas. There is an assumption that most local people who currently park their vehicles within Forestry England's car parks would be able to afford to pay a parking charge. However, 30% of residents living in the New Forest district are over the age of 65, and there are 6 urban neighbourhoods and 1 rural area identified on the edges of the New Forest which are among the most deprived in England.

The tariff for the car parking scheme in the New Forest has been benchmarked against similar car parks in the area and ensures a range of tariff choices are available. All vehicle types will be charged the same tariff to park. Tickets will be transferrable between all Forestry England car parks in the New Forest making it easy to visit several locations with one payment.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) provide free access to greenspace close to new housing developments around the New Forest. These are designed to attract people away from the sensitive, protected habitats of the New Forest to reduce the recreational impact of new housing developments. The introduction of car parking charging to Forestry England car parks in the sensitive New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) may encourage people to choose to walk their dogs or take exercise on their local SANG land close to home.

Awareness of the car parking charging scheme and the tariff will be well publicised and promoted through a variety of methods, including a leaflet drop to all New Forest postcodes, in order to reach as many people as possible, and ensuring off-line methods of accessing information are available. Parking information will also be included in the New Forest Essential Guide published by Forestry England and the New Forest National Park Authority which is available at a wide range of physical locations.

Copies of these and other materials will also be available to access in person at Forestry England's Kings House office in Lyndhurst.

Signage, charging rates and penalties will be designed to be clear and easy to understand for all user groups.

The money raised by parking charges will help us continue our critical work in the New Forest and avoid closures of car parks or trails. The scheme will also significantly boost the numbers of rangers on patrol to look after the Forest and engage with visitors.

3.11 Commoners

Although not a protected group, the Commoners of the New Forest are a protected, long-standing community with ancient, legally mandated rights. The

Verderers of the New Forest are charged with regulating commoning on the Forest. The Verderers also have responsibilities relating to development control and conservation.

Practising commoners will be exempt from car parking charging. The process for exempting commoners has been agreed with the Verderers of the New Forest. Commoners will be able to register vehicles used in the management of their livestock.

Forestry England has engaged with and gained consent from The Verderers of the New Forest for the installation of infrastructure associated with car parking charging. This includes signage, payment machines and verge protection measures. Forestry England has worked collaboratively with the Verderers to agree the specification of the verge protection ditching designed to prevent cars from parking on roadside ditches while catering for the needs of livestock.

The car parking charging scheme will enable Forestry England to enforce against parking at access points to the forest (gateways, barriers and bellmouths) to ensure 24-hour access to the Forest for Commoners. This has been a long-standing problem for the working forest.

4. Listening to feedback

Since early 2025, we have attended over 85 engagement events and listened to feedback from local organisations and members of the public. As a result, the following adjustments were made to the design of the car parking charging scheme as it was developed from October 2024.

1. Provision of additional methods of payment to support accessibility for people who do not have access to a mobile phone or computer.
2. Increased hours when parking is permitted in the car parks to ensure access for people who visit early morning or late evening, e.g. people working shifts, people watching wildlife at dawn or dusk, and people enjoying the night sky (as recommended by the National Park Authority).
3. Creation of the pay later scheme to enable people to pay for their parking session when they arrive home, up until midnight the following day - developed for the New Forest and piloted in Yorkshire in 2025.
4. Provision of discounted parking for regular users of the New Forest through Forestry England membership - drop-down box for the New Forest option became available in March 2026.

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5. Development of the monthly direct debit option for Forestry England membership to increase affordability - made available from November 2025 in time for the introduction of car parking charging in the New Forest.
 6. Provision of payment machines at car parks where the mobile network signal supports contactless card payments for people who want to pay for their parking session on site but do not want to/ are not able to pay by phone.
 7. Provision of the face-to-face sale of Forestry England membership at Kings House in Lyndhurst to enable people without internet access, or who do not want to call the membership team, to become a member by visiting the Forestry England office in the New Forest.
 8. Bench-marking of tariffs against similar car parks in the New Forest and provision of a choice of tariff periods for the New Forest to increase affordability. Tariff periods include 1 hour, 2 hours, 4 hours and over 4 hours. All vehicle types will be charged the same tariff to park to support access and avoid confusion.
 9. Provision of tickets that are transferrable between all Forestry England car parks in the New Forest to simplify the process of paying to park for customers and avoid confusion.
 10. Enforcement of parking at access points to the forest (gateways, barriers and bellmouths) to ensure 24-hour access to the Forest for Commoners.
 11. Exemption from car parking charges for those supporting the Forest through commoning and other key working forest activities. An exemption system for practising commoners has been developed in conjunction with the Commoners Defence Association and the Verderers of the New Forest.
 12. Reduction in the amount of infrastructure needed, e.g. signage and car park payment machines, to protect grazing for commoning and the open landscape. We have negotiated a reduction in the number of signs usually required by the British Parking Association in recognition of the special nature of the New Forest (grazing and open landscape).
 13. Developed a risk based approach to verge protection and agreed the extent and specification of targeted roadside verge protection measures with the Verderers of the New Forest to ensure grazing and access for commoners.
 14. Introduced a 15-minute period of grace to enable youth groups to drop off and pick up participants without paying to park.

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15. Worked with Hampshire County Council to apply for a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order to address road safety concerns that may arise from roadside verge parking.
 16. Included Lyndhurst Cemetery car park in the car parking charging scheme to avoid use of the car park by visitors wanting to avoid charges in nearby car parks (as requested and agreed by the parish council). This car park will be closed to the public to accommodate cemetery events, e.g. funerals.
 17. Expanded the role of the Parking Rangers to include PSPO enforcement to support the New Forest District Council.