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Parking in the Beaulieu High St

1. Purpose

To provide an update on the increasing parking pressure associated with school pick-up and drop-off times and consider the feasibility of options to alleviate this pressure.

2. Background

Parking capacity in the village is increasingly strained during primary school pick-up and drop-off times, particularly in the afternoons. The volume of vehicles associated with parents collecting children exceeds the capacity of suitable nearby public parking areas.

A specific and growing concern is the agreed use of Fairweather's Garden Centre car park by parents during school hours. This issue is most acute in the afternoon, when the garden centre can be extremely busy. It is exacerbated by some parents parking there up to an hour before pick-up time, occupying valuable customer parking spaces and causing operational difficulties for the business.

In response to parking pressures, including use by non-customers (walkers, cyclists, etc.), Fairweather's Garden Centre is planning to introduce an ANPR-controlled restricted parking scheme that limits parking to a maximum of 90 minutes and introduces a penalty regime.

3. Wider Parking Context

Forestry England is introducing charging across all of its car parks within the New Forest. This is expected to have wider consequences for village parking, beyond school-related pressures.

There is a concern that the introduction of these charges will displace general parking demand into nearby free or unrestricted areas, including the High Street, and commercial car parks such as the Motor Museum, Fairweather's Garden Centre etc.

This additional pressure is likely to exacerbate existing congestion during school pick-up and drop-off times and further reduce parking availability for residents, school parents, businesses, and visitors.

4. Summary of Issues

The introduction of Fairweather's 90-minute parking restriction, combined with Forestry England's move to charge for forest car parks, is likely to increase pressure on village parking unless alternative arrangements can be identified. Issues arising are:

- a) Parking demand during school pick-up and drop-off exceeds available capacity;
- b) Parents sometimes struggle to find parking spaces on the High St and circle around, with some using Fairweather's car park;
- c) Forestry England's forthcoming parking charges are likely to displace additional vehicles into the village;
- d) The issue is largely outside the direct control of the Parish Council, the school, and Fairweather's Garden Centre; and
- e) Most potential solutions involve the Beaulieu Estate, regulatory authorities, and/or significant behavioural change.

6. Options for consideration

- Encouraging car-sharing among parents
- Use of the museum car park, with children walking approximately 10 minutes to and from school
- Pick-up and drop-off in the NFDC-managed public car park behind the village hall
- Use of the school field for pick-up and drop-off
- Extension of the private village car park at Hayward's Meadow
- High Street parking restrictions introduced by Hampshire County Council, for instance limiting parking to 90 minutes and potentially on a meter-paid basis to make it viable for HCC
- Additional school minibus provision

All options identified present challenges and in most cases require approval, funding, or cooperation from third parties. None fall wholly within the immediate control of the Parish Council, the school, or Fairweather's Garden Centre.

8. Next Steps

- The school is to communicate with parents to highlight the issues and encourage car sharing and other potential changes.
- Beaulieu Parish Council to hold a public meeting to discuss the issues, options, and wider contextual pressures at its Planning Committee meeting on **Tuesday 17 March 2026 at 6.00pm** to be held at the CET Fort Climate Centre
- Consider whether any of the above (or other) options merit further exploration with relevant third parties and agree who is best placed to lead on such an option.