

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL

St Marks Car Park Charging

Recommendation to Full Council

It is recommended that Full Council:

- **Tender and appoint a private car parking operator** for the two St Marks car parks using the Government Procurement Portal under CPV code 34926000: Car park control equipment.

Returning to the FGP Committee on completion of the tender for contractor appointment & clarifications.

- **Introduce a parking regime permitting up to TWO hours free parking**, followed by a sliding scale of charges from the second to the twenty-fourth hour, designed from hour six to discourage unauthorised overnight & long-stay commuter parking.

- **Allocate charges on the following benchmarked bands:**

0-2 Hours:	FREE
2-3 Hours:	£1.00
3-4 Hours:	£2.50
4-6 Hours:	£4.50
6-8 Hours:	£12.00
8-24 Hours:	£20.00

- **Ringfence all Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) and income revenue** for improvements to the car park, including resurfacing, relining and lighting only.

Report Details

Introduction

Since 2010, the St Marks tennis facility has benefited from substantial investment, initially from Swindon Borough Council and subsequently from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), National Tennis Association and Central Swindon North Parish Council.

Key improvements include:

- Court resurfacing.
- A £550,000 pavilion and café.
- LED lighting upgrades and extended to all courts via an LTA loan.

This sustained investment has elevated the facility into a regional tennis hub, hosting major events and drawing thousands of users annually from as far afield as Cornwall and the Home Counties.

Current Context

The adjacent Brunel Crescent development has introduced over 80 new dwellings, with characteristically inadequate parking provision for residents, visitors, and deliveries.

Since 2023, the associated car park has been externally managed via permit-only enforcement

further causing overspill for those flats where the car quota is exceeded, such as work vans or visitors.

This has led to increasing misuse of the St Marks Recreation Ground car parks, which are currently free and within walking distance of the town centre and railway station. The location is also exploited by nearby businesses, most notably the KwikFit garage, which have on occasion used the site to offload vehicles from their forecourt, especially during peak periods and holiday weekends.

As a result, parking availability for tennis users and general park visitors (including dog walkers and families) has been significantly compromised and affected the operations of the facilities for users.

Proposal

With a formal lease to be in place for the Recreation Ground, albeit delayed as of August 2025 for legal matters, there is scope to implement appropriate car parking restrictions. The aim is to safeguard access for legitimate recreational use while deterring commuter, overnight, and resident parking.

It is proposed to tender for a professional parking management company on the following basis:

Operating Schedule

- Restrictions to apply 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- The first two hours of parking to remain free of charge.
- Modest incremental charges to apply hourly from two to six hours.
- Charges beyond six hours to be set at a deterrent level, suggested in the recommendation of the report subject to market endorsement.

Pricing

- The operator should propose an evidenced pricing structure benchmarked against local rates if they can demonstrate the rates proposed are unworkable. In any case, the matter of pricing will be referred back to FGP for validation and reforecast.
- Final approval of charges will rest with Full Council as well as any incremental rises which should be agreed in advance to enable a correct ITT.

Exemptions

- The Council will retain access to a management console to exempt vehicles connected to site operations and act on behalf of the NTA Tennis Operator and Leisure & Library Trust.
- Exempt categories to include vehicles from SBC, IDV, councillors, council officers, and facility tenants. Blue Badge holders will not be exempt from charges.

Stakeholder Feedback

The Central Swindon North Leisure & Library Trust has generally expressed support for the proposed charging regime, provided that all revenue is ringfenced for reinvestment into St Marks car parking facilities and broader park improvements.

The tenant (NTA) has also indicated support for the scheme on the condition that the management console is installed within the pavilion.

Infrastructure

ANPR Technical Specifications

The Council shall seek an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system to consist of high-

definition cameras (minimum 1080p resolution) with infrared capability to ensure accurate capture during both day and night. The system must be court approved:

- Provide 95%+ accuracy in plate recognition under varying weather conditions.
 - Retain data in compliance with GDPR and UK Data Protection Act requirements as the Council will NOT be the data controller.
 - Securely store & encrypt data, with retention periods not exceeding statutory limits.
 - Integrate seamlessly with the operator's payment and enforcement platform.
 - Have legal access to the DVLA driver database and if this is lost will forfeit the contract to manage the car park.
 - Be capable of distinguishing between multiple vehicle classes and flagging overstays automatically.
- A barrier-free system with no requirement for manual intervention by Parish Council staff.
 - Installation of ANPR pole-mounted cameras, solar-powered payment terminals, legal signage, and contactless payment systems to be at the operator's capital expense. It is proposed the site does not have a cash option to reduce costs and security.

Income

- FPN income from overstays and no tickets to be split with not less than 90% retained by the Parish Council, and no more than 10% allocated to the operator, subject to ITT.

Contract Term

- Maximum contract duration to be five years.

Summary

This report recommends the appointment of a professional car parking operator for the St Marks car parks. Key elements include the introduction of a two-hour free parking period followed by incremental charges, ringfencing of all parking income for reinvestment into St Marks car park only, and the installation of a modern Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system.

The proposal has received support from the Central Swindon North Leisure & Library Trust, on the condition that income is reinvested locally, and from the facility tenant, provided the management console is located within the pavilion.

The implementation of this regime will long term, protect parking access for legitimate users, deter misuse by commuters and nearby businesses, and generate revenue for ongoing car park maintenance.