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20th November 2008

G D Wild
Director of Law and Governance
Kent County Council
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

Your ref: LS/A/01386/328

Dear Mr Wild

**Manor Park Country Park
Teston Country Park
PAY AND DISPLAY ORDER 2008**

I refer to your notice dated 16th October 2008 concerning the proposal to enforce car park charges in the above two country parks, clamping vehicles which do not display a parking ticket. The imposition of parking charges in this car park, which I appreciate has been in force for some time, is a disgrace. The County Council should be providing these parks and encouraging the public to a better and healthier life style by their use. There are a number of country parks in Kent, such as Haysden Country Park in Tonbridge or Dunorlan Park in Tunbridge Wells which provide far superior facilities to either Teston or Manor Park and yet make no parking charge.

In Manor Park the facilities are extremely limited. The toilet facilities are exceptionally basic, there are very few picnic tables around the small area of grass that is kept short and there is a small play ground. Most of the park is left in a wild state and two large fields are used for the grazing of cattle. Although the children's play area in Teston Park has recently been improved, the facilities there can only be described as basic as well.

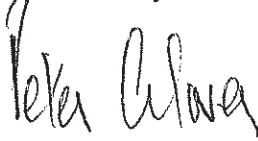
The vast majority of the users of Manor Park are local people who are usually there for less than an hour walking their dogs. In neighbouring West Malling car parking is free for up to 4 hours, provided those using the car park take a pay and display ticket. Likewise in Paddock Wood, as being somewhere close by to either of these parks, parking is free for 2 hours provided a ticket is displayed. If it is really felt that some sort of parking fee is necessary then perhaps a leaf should be taken out of the book of those who run these car parks and a similar system operated. There would also be the advantage that such a system is much more easily monitored and would not require regular patrols by wardens to try and enforce the parking fee.

I regularly walk my dogs in Manor Park, and sometimes Teston, and on many a winter's afternoon am often the only person in the park. I also question whether the charges are warranted in comparison to the initial cost of the ticket machines, their maintenance and the attempts to police these regulations. Is it really worth your while to have a warden come up to the park on an almost hourly basis just to find one car parked in the car park without a ticket? The vast majority of the users of the car park are there for less than an hour, particularly through the winter months.

It is particularly unreasonable that you propose charging £1.50 at weekends and bank holiday when parking in the towns and villages in the area, free on these days.

I would therefore ask you to reconsider the whole question of car park charges in these two car parks and the others which you manage.

Yours sincerely



Peter Glover

