

Maldon and District Community Voluntary Services (MDCVS) Car Parking Survey

Introduction

This is the report of the car parking survey carried out by Maldon and District CVS between August 2016 and January 2017.

Background

In April 2016 Maldon and District Council introduced car parking charges in the Maldon area on evenings and weekends.

Aim

To measure the impact of the introduction of care parking charges on volunteers, beneficiaries and volunteering organisations.

Objectives

To find out whether:

- Volunteers numbers have dropped since April 2016
- Particular groups of volunteers are more affected than others
- Volunteers are incurring costs and what they are
- Community groups are incurring costs and what they are
- Community groups have any concerns about the charges and what they are
- Attendance at community groups is reduced
- Any predicted long term implications for community group sustainability

Methods

Three structured questionnaires were designed to capture the differing perspectives from volunteers, beneficiaries and volunteering organisations.

The volunteers' survey asked questions on:

- The name of the voluntary organisation
- The location, time and frequency of volunteering
- The name of the high street car park used
- Their awareness of the introduction of car park charges
- The impact on their volunteering
- Whether parking expenses are met by the voluntary organisation
- Other comments

The beneficiaries' survey asked questions on:

- The name of the voluntary group they attend
- The location, time and frequency of the group
- Whom the activity is for
- The name of the high street car park used
- Their awareness of the introduction of car park charges

- The impact on their attendance
- The approximate cost per week of car parking

The voluntary organisations' survey asked questions on:

- The organisation's details
- Location, time and frequency of when their groups meet
- The high street car park used by staff/ volunteers / beneficiaries
- Which beneficiary group their organisation supports
- Their awareness of the introduction of car parking charges
- The impact on the organisation such as increased running costs and the decreased numbers of beneficiaries or volunteers
- Good practice such as the reimbursement of volunteers expenses
- Annual turnover
- Any concerns about the long term viability of the organisation including future attendances and the recruitment of volunteers

The questionnaires were inputted into Survey Monkey and send as a link to all one hundred plus Maldon and District Community Volunteer Service members through our E-bulletin on 22nd September 2016 and 6th October 2016 with a closing date of the 14th October 2016.

There was a poor response to the surveys, with 2 volunteers, 2 beneficiaries and 0 voluntary organisations responding to them. Given the poor response a 2nd period of data collection was added in January 2017, with a closing date of x.

Results

Volunteer responses

Which organisation do you volunteer for?

- Remap

Where do you volunteer?

- Throughout the CM area

How often do you volunteer?

- Between 8am-6pm continuously

Which high street car park would you use?

- Butt Lane

- White Horse

Are you aware of the recent introduction of charges to high street car parks?

	n
Yes	2

Has this affected your volunteering?

- Have stopped volunteering

- Will not take on more volunteering

Are your car parking expenses met by the organisation you volunteer for?

	n
No	2

Is there anything else you would like to add?

- lower the price

Beneficiaries' responses

Name of group

- Maldon URC
- Maldon Methodist
- All Saints Handbell Ringers (2)

Where does the group meet?

- Maldon URC
- Maldon Methodist
- All Saints Church (2)

What time does the group meet?

- Sunday 10.30am
- Sunday 10.30 am and alternate Wednesday 7/7.30pm
- 7.30pm (2)

Is this activity for yourself or a family member?

	n
Myself	4

Which high street car park would you use to attend the group?

- Butt Lane
- Edward Bright Close
- White Horse Lane (2)

Are you aware of the recent introduction of charges to high street car parks?

	n
Yes	4

Impact on attendance

	Yes	No
	n	n
Have stopped attending	0	3
Attend less often	1	2
May consider stopping	1	3
Will not be able to attend more activities	3	1

What is the approximate cost per week of the car parking charge associated with your activity?

- £1
- £2/3
- £1/2
- £1 – though one week it was £25 as I got a ticket

Conclusion

To conclude it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusions given the poor response to the survey. Perhaps a different method such as a telephone survey of voluntary organisations would have garnered a better response but unfortunately this was not possible given the specific resource allocated.

The findings from the volunteers do suggest some areas of further investigation required. For example, both the volunteers who responded said that the organisations they volunteer for do not pay car parking expenses which is not in line with good practice. It might explain the voluntary organisations apathy in responding to the survey if the car parking charges are having no cost impact upon them as they are passing the cost on to their volunteers.

Further the few volunteers and beneficiaries that did respond demonstrated the impact that the introduction of car parking charges has had upon them. For example, one volunteer had given up volunteering whilst the other was not prepared to take on any more voluntary activities. Whilst the beneficiaries said that they attended less often and would consider stopping going to their group activity.