

Report to	-	Council
Date	-	26 February 2018
Report of	-	Executive Director of Business Operations
Subject	-	Petition Received from the Little Common and Cooden Business Associations 'Save our village – make the car park free campaign'

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the petition be debated in accordance with the Council's adopted Petitions Scheme.

Introduction

1. The Council's Petitions Scheme states that if a petition contains more than 1,500 signatures it will be debated by full Council (unless it is asking for a senior Council officer to give evidence at a public meeting) and that the Council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next ordinary meeting.
2. The Council has received a petition from the Little Common and Cooden Business Associations - 'Save our village – make the car park free campaign' and it has been requested that the petition be debated by full Council. The petition contains 1,581 signatures and whilst it is considered that not all of those who have signed the petition reside, work or study in the Rother area, the majority, and certainly more than the prerequisite 1,500 do meet this criteria; under the Petitions Scheme, it is therefore eligible for debate at full Council. The actual petition will be available for inspection by Members at the meeting.

Petition details

3. Information submitted with the petition asks for the current charging scheme at Little Common car park to be removed to enable people to park at no charge. Information submitted with the petition states:

"People felt so strongly 1581 signed the campaign.

Lost nine businesses in Little Common within the last year, many of whom quoted the lack of free parking was a huge contributory factor.

Because you have to pay, people park in the laybys all day which affects passing trade.

Sidley has free parking which is unfair, Sidley businesses have unfair advantage.

Lack of free parking is a health and safety issue as people are parking on pavements, zigzags, yellow lines etc.

Car park is empty most of the time.

Since the introduction of Tesco's more laybys have been removed due to extra lights.

Tesco as an example offers free parking and is busy all day – as this is good business sense.”

Action to be taken

4. The petition organiser, Darren Bush, has confirmed that he will be in attendance at the Council meeting. Under the Petition Scheme he will be given 5 minutes to present the Petition. Following this, Council can debate the matter for a maximum of 15 minutes.
5. Members will be aware that on Monday 4 December, Cabinet agreed that in order to encourage use of the Little Common Car Park the annual parking permit charge will be reduced from £498.50 to £175 as at 1 April 2018. In addition, it was also agreed that a concession of 45 minutes be granted twice a day during term time to assist with reducing the congestion at school pick-up and drop-off times at times to be agreed with the local school. The charging scheme for Little Common car park was introduced in October 2012 and income received is shown in the table below:

Year	Pay and Display Income	Standard Charge Notice to Pay Income	Total
2012 – 2013	£4,991	£120	£5,111
2013 - 2014	£10,484	£240	£10,724
2014 – 2015	£10,688	£200	£10,888
2015 – 2016	£13,347	£300	£13,647
2016 – 2017	£12,437	£320	£12,575
2017 –to Dec 17	£7,881	£60	£7,941

6. Under the Petition Scheme, at the conclusion of the debate, dependent on the nature of the petition, Council may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take any action for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter.

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director of Business Operations

Risk Assessment Statement

Failure to debate the petition at full Council would be in breach of the Council's Petition Scheme.