

Official Verderer and Verderers and the members of public attending court today, I am Sarah Nield, Chair of the New Forest Association (NFA). I am giving this presentment following the Court's September decision relating to the introduction of car parking charges.

We note from the Court's minutes that consent was given subject to conditions. We would like to highlight the importance of these conditions as well as implications of certain Forestry England's representations given to the Court.

One condition is that FE *"are to confirm that they are legally able to enforce parking restrictions."* Regulatory powers are important because the stronger they are the less the need for physical measures. Furthermore, all parking consultants I have spoken to emphasise the need for early and robust enforcement of parking controls to send a clear message. There is no doubt that FE can fine visitors who do not pay to park in designated car parks. Our concern is what powers are there to stop verge parking on both FE managed land and the adjacent commons? The FC Byelaws are largely unhelpful unless amended and, in any event, have been rarely enforced nor do they extend beyond FE managed land. Other possibilities, which we understand the Verderers have explored in the past, include Traffic Regulations Orders or a PSPO against verge parking. But both would require local authorities' co-operation.

Physical measures include ditching and dragon's teeth which the Verderers reiterate will require their and Natural England's approval. Both these mitigation measures bring their own environmental and aesthetic issues. For example, recent ditching between Matley and Lyndhurst has caused environmental damage and is now undermining the road – see attached photograph. We hope the Verderers will keep these in mind when considering any ditching proposals particularly when dragon's teeth could do the job.

Displacement parking is likely to affect neighbouring landowners, forest villages and settlements. The Verderers proposal for a memorandum of understanding with 'significant landowners' is thus welcome, but does it go far enough? We urge FE's engagement with parish councils and support for smaller landowners affected by displacement parking.

Now turning to the money which we appreciate the Verderers cannot directly influence. Nevertheless, visitors are less likely to park on verges where charges are reasonable and where they know the money will go the Forest. We thus are disappointed that there are no plans for a reasonably priced local parking permit unlike other FE managed forest such as the Forest of Dean or the Forest of Bere. The only annual permit offered

is a national membership permit at £96 although local users may rarely visit other FE car parks nor wish to become FE members!

We also join the CDA, NFDOG and others in seeking assurance that the money stays in the Forest and the Verderers' minutes record FE's assurances to that effect. But how is this to be achieved? We believe that the safest mechanism is by way of hypothecation to ring fence this income from other FE funds.

So, in short, we urge the Verderers to stick rigidly by their consent conditions and insist that FE have robust regulatory and physical mitigation measures to protect against verge parking across the Forest and to ensure that only the Forest benefits from this income.

