

OASTLER ROAD CAR PARK PETITION, presentation to Bradford Council December 13th 2017

In September this year during the popular Saltaire Festival a group of Shipley residents spent only 6 hours collecting the signatures on the petition we are submitting. Many residents in Saltaire and Shipley we spoke to were angry about the fact that Smart Parking has been able to make profit from extortionate fines by using the public DVLA database of number plates.

Most of the businesses along Bingley Road, Saltaire who are served by Oastler Road car park signed our petition, in fact four businesses kept the petition for their customers to sign. They have been incensed that customers have been stung by unfair fines and are keeping away, damaging their livelihoods.

Smart Parking Ltd were engaged by the land owners Saltaire Investments to run the car park on Oastler Road, after the Council withdrew from running it earlier this year. They gave the money collected at machines to the landowner. This left Smart Parking to pay for the machines and signs and seek their profit entirely through the issuing of fines, called charges.

We believe the incentive to fine in order to recover costs and make profits is why rules were intended to be infringed. An example is the necessity of taking a ticket for a period that was supposedly free. The idea that something is free but you will be charged £100 if you don't jump through an unnecessary hoop which is set there to catch you out, is immoral. But it is legal. The incentive to fine in order to make profit has led to no grace periods before issuing fines: – a few seconds over time resulted in a fine. Driving through from one end to the other and out again led to a fine. Again, this is immoral yet legal.

The fines were administrated through use of an automatic number plate recognition system, linked to the DVLA database to trace the addresses of car owners. This is use of a public service to make an indecent income out of victims who are innocent of any real infringement. Smart Parking uses the same system at its other car parks in the south of England and Scotland.



This Saturday we canvassed the 35 shopowners closest to Oastler Road. They are clear that a car park is needed. They are also clear that Smart Parking should be given no opportunity or support to legitimise their operations in Saltaire or to begin them again.

We want to thank the Council for taking the opportunity to quickly dismantle the carpark operation on Oastler Road, after finding earlier this autumn that the road had never been approved for use as a car park. However we want to ensure that whatever replaces it is fit for purpose and will be fair on people parking and the businesses and other services in the area. This need not be a party political issue – all residents and parties have declared their disgust with Smart Parking's operation.

What to do? We ask the Council to find a way of restoring the car park without a system of fines which puts people off visiting local shops and damage local businesses.

The immediate need is to clarify the use of Oastler Road now. The Council must declare that no-one parking on Oastler Road will be pursued by traffic wardens.

The Council must then apply for Oastler Road to be legally designated a car park with the following restrictions, either stated within the designation or legally agreed with the landowner:

- A free 30 minute period not requiring ticketing.
- Rules for fining, that allow for grace periods in line with industry standards.
- No use of automatic number plate recognition unless the rules of pricing and pursuit of infringements is agreed by a majority of shop owners and the Council.

The Council should also:

- Put public and private pressure on Smart Parking to refund their unfair fines, and not give any support to their running a car park in future.
- Discuss the future of the car park with the local business owners, who are happy to host such a meeting.
- Explore the possibility of the Council or the Co-op running a car park in Oastler Road.

Thank you for your time.

Vick Jenkins on behalf of the signatories to the petition.

Car park rip-off at Oastler Road behind the Co-op

We call on

- **Smart Parking to remove their fines for parking less than 20 minutes, reduce their fines for other 'offences', and adhere to the industry 'grace' periods.**
- **Bradford Council to publicise this company's disrespect of the District's**

residents and businesses, warn other Councils, and offer the land-owner to run the carpark again.

- Government to remove access to DVLA from companies who make indecent profit out of a public service.

