

## Waverley accused over fines in 'parking blitz'

WAVERLEY has come under fire from Haslemere Town Council for its 'completely unacceptable' policy of issuing parking tickets on bank holidays.

To add insult to injury, fines were handed out in council-owned car parks on the day of the town's popular Charter Fair, which attracted thousands of visitors from several counties.

Craig McGowan, newly-elected president of Haslemere Chamber of Commerce, was one of the victims of the crackdown.

Mr McGowan said: "This is just another example of the disjointed thinking at Waverley Borough Council, even setting aside their financial woes. Charging on bank holidays is just completely unacceptable at any time but to charge on the same day as the Charter Fair is an abomination.

"I paid for two hours in Chestnut Avenue car park as I was carrying out some duties on the morning of the Charter Fair and unfortunately overran by 20 minutes. I am appealing but don't hold out a lot of hope.

"We have tried nearly every year

for as long as I can remember to get Waverley to understand that their car parking policy has a huge effect on business in Haslemere. The level of charges drives people to other towns over the county line and into Hampshire and West Sussex, depriving our businesses of much needed income.

"The charges also have a disproportionate effect on businesses expenses, coming on top of the rise in the business rates. If Waverley are not careful the current, relative to other towns, low unoccupancy rates in Haslemere will start to rise, and their income will suffer immensely."

Responding to the barrage of complaints, Haslemere Mayor Malcolm Carter fired off an angry letter to the borough council, demanding that all the parking tickets issued were rescinded as a matter of common sense and 'fair play.'

Mr Carter said: "How thoughtful it was to send parking wardens in on Bank Holiday Monday and issue a number of parking fines. I am now sure there is little understanding of commerce in Waverley. The parking

revenue increased over a normal bank holiday so you have benefited.

"The Charter Fair happens every other year and Waverley naturally benefits from the extra parking fees from the extra 5,000 people visiting the town for this historic event."

Waverley's head of environmental services, Richard Homewood, responded to invite affected motorists to appeal.

Mr Homewood said: "Waverley has had a policy of charging users of our car parks on bank holidays since 2011. Last Monday, our parking enforcement officers carried out their usual responsibilities, in order to encourage visitors to park appropriately and to enable a turnover in the car parks, which in turn helps local retail businesses by providing parking opportunities for more customers throughout the day.

"If you are aware of any visitors who may have been charged, please invite them to appeal in the usual way: online at [www.waverley.gov.uk/challengeapcn](http://www.waverley.gov.uk/challengeapcn) or by email: [parking@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:parking@waverley.gov.uk) or in writing."