

**Summary**

Affecting: York Spiritualist Centre, 7-9 Wilton Rise, York, YO24 4BT.

The newly implemented Residents' Priority Parking Scheme (ResPark) scheme is negatively affecting the York Spiritualist Centre visitor attendance; there are not enough viable alternative parking solutions to service our centre needs.

York Spiritualist Centre relies on donations and income from running events at the centre to cover its running costs. If we cannot find flexible viable parking solutions for visitor parking, the church may become financially unviable.

Dear Sirs,

I am the Vice President of York Spiritualist Centre and I spoke at the decision session on the 22nd June 2017. The York Spiritualist Centre is located at 7-9 Wilton Rise, York, YO24 4BT; we are a registered church and charity #1175635; as such, we exist to serve the York and surrounding communities. Our offerings are especially important to the disabled, vulnerable, sick, senior & lonely as well as those seeking fellowship, the church is especially important to York; no matter what creed or faith an individual may have, everyone is welcome to join our services and activities.

Parking around the church has been competitive for a long while. York City commuters often used the streets around York Spiritualist Centre as a daily stay, car-parking opportunity, avoiding car-parking fees. This situation had a negative impact on resident parking, often leaving residents and their visitors, with parking challenges during workday working hours. However, we always managed to find innovative parking solutions for our visitors until recently.

### **Our Events**

The majority of The York Spiritualist Centre's events are short, and mostly require short duration parking opportunities. Furthermore, most main events operate outside of working hours, which means we have never caused long term congestion. Our visitors arrive from both inside and outside of York, they also use most modes of transport to arrive at the centre e.g.: bus, cycle, walking and vehicle sharing are commonplace, which has always eased any parking issues. Furthermore, our rear car parking facility, which accommodates approximately 6 – 7 vehicles, has always been fully utilised (even though it is difficult to navigate to, and locate; it is quite a hidden car park).

<b>Our Event running times and their durations</b>		
<b>Day</b>	<b>Event Duration</b>	<b>Event regularity</b>
Monday	14:00 – 15:30 - (1½ hours)	Regular event
Tuesday	19:30 – 21:00 - (1½ hours)	Regular event
Wednesday	19:30 – 21:00 - (1½ hours)	Regular event
Thursday	No events	No events
Friday	19:00 – 20:30 - (1½ hours)	Occasional events
Saturday	10:00 – 16:00 - (6 hours)	Occasional events
Saturday	14:00 – 15:30 - (1½ hours)	Occasional events
Saturday	19:00 – 21:00 - (2 hours)	Regular event
Sunday	18:30 - 20:00 - (1½ hours)	Regular event
A half hour buffer time would be adequate to assist arrival and departure		
		<i>table1</i>

### Park & Ride scheme

We have considered advising our visitors to use the Park and Ride service at Poppleton Bar during weekdays and Saturday's. Unfortunately, this service ceases to operate at 20:05 before our evening events conclude, meaning it is unsuitable for many York Spiritualist Centre visitors.

### City Centre\* to Poppleton Bar

Day	Time	Frequency
Monday - Friday	07:20 to 07:30	Every 10 minutes
	07:41 to 10:11	Every 7-15 minutes
	10:11 to 19:09	About every 10 minutes
	19:18 to 19:48	Every 15 minutes
	<b>Last bus 20:05</b> !	
Saturday	07:19 to 08:49	Every 15 minutes
	08:49 to 19:18	About every 10 minutes
	19:18 to 19:48	Every 15 minutes
	<b>Last bus 20:05</b> !	
Sunday	09:50 to <b>18:05</b>	About every 10 minutes

### Conclusion

Unsuitable for the majority of events.

### York Commuter Car Park APCOA

We attempted to direct visitors to this car park (it is near The National Railway Museum), not one person managed to find York Spiritualist Centre if they ever managed to find the car park.

Other challenges to using this route:

1. Visitors do not like the secluded nature of the iron walkway and footpath to the car park, especially after hours when we conclude our events.
2. The steep steps are unsuitable for senior visitors and the disabled.
3. It is difficult to find and navigate to the required destination.

### Conclusion

Unsuitable.

## Parking Permits

At the ResPark consultations, we were unaware that York Spiritualist Centre would not be entitled to books of visitor permits [visitor scratch cards], (visitors would have been prepared to purchase these short-term visitor permits, and the scheme appeared suitable to York Spiritualist Centre's requirements of short term parking). When requesting these from the York City Council after the ResPark scheme was active, we were advised the York Spiritualist Centre was deemed ineligible for visitor scratch cards, because our building is not a residential property (why were we included in the Residents Parking Scheme, and not informed of this policy that adversely affects our operations?). Apparently, we have to be treated exactly like a business, even though we are not a business, furthermore we have no paid staff; the centre is run by a committee of volunteers.

York Spiritualist Centre have been offered some form of parking permits/s based on parking per vehicle, or allocated parking spaces, the cost of which is unjustifiable to the church, considering our parking usage requirements are only during event running times. This permit allocation or may have been appropriate if we had been a business.

Unfortunately, York Spiritualist Centre is not a business and we do not usually operate during standard business hours (see: *table1*). York Spiritualist Centre can expect (depending on event type, between 10 visitors to 100 visitors during one event), this means that the current parking model offered by York City Council disallows parking in the ResPark area other than for disabled persons and on Sundays. The ResPark consultation was fully aware that the York Spiritualist Centre required parking in the ResPark restricted area to allow us to operate our events; funds to cover our operational costs are raised from 75% of infrequent special events! Without easy short-term parking opportunities, maintaining adequate visitor numbers to sustain the church will become more & more of an uphill battle.

We are very disappointed at York City Council for not allowing flexibility in the scheme parking permits, to allow short-term flexible parking for our visitors. We are aware that York City Council has the ability to relax restrictions.

The impact on York Spiritualist Centre's events and operations are being adversely affected, we previously managed to host events, and accommodate visitor parking with minimal fuss. The recent implemented restrictions have already stopped many visitors attending because of the fear of receiving a parking fine, or fear of not locating a parking space. We have already noticed a decline in visitor numbers, which affects our income negatively, if this trend continues, we will be forced to close the church doors.

We request a viable parking solution, parking time adjustment, or regulation amendment that will benefit visitor-parking opportunities to York Spiritualist Centre; we fall into a black hole of being non-business and non-residential property, and no one seems to have an answer for us. We do hope that locally elected councillors, and people with decision powers, can address the recently introduced problem positively, thus serving the people of York and surrounding area to access a place of worship and learning.

York City Council does not appear to have provided viable alternatives for parking which coincides with our event times.

How was York City Council planning to allow York Spiritualist Centre to operate its events successfully, given York City Councils restrictive ResPark scheme, and given our requirement for short-term visitor parking?

Would allowing York Spiritualist Centre to obtain visitor scratch cards, be a viable solution until you can revise the restrictions?

<b>Suggested alteration to allow parking in the restricted zones</b>	
Weekdays	18:30 – 22:00
Saturdays	18:30 – 22:00 or all day similar to Sunday
Sundays	No change

I feel the above revision to the current parking restrictions would not jeopardize most of the local residents and other community needs. This however would eliminate commuter, city working and shopping parking.

We have a further request, that signage be made clearer for vehicle owners with a Disabled Blue Badges, that they can park without penalty in the restricted zone. We have had vehicle/wheelchair visitors go home without entering the building because they were unable to determine if or where they could park.

York Spiritualist Centre's position on the parking restrictions has always been to allow the church and community centre to operate as it has prior to the ResPark scheme. I wholly object to the current parking restrictions, without having adequate alternative provisions for parking.

I hope you can be of assistance in helping us find a solution to this restrictive scheme affecting our church and community.

Yours faithfully,