# Monmouthshire confirms free parking retention in four towns amid review



The ongoing debate over parking policies in Monmouthshire has garnered considerable attention, particularly regarding the council's decision to retain free parking in certain towns. Paul Griffiths, the cabinet member for the council, has confirmed that no changes will be implemented in towns such as Usk, Caldicot, Magor, and Raglan, all of which currently benefit from free parking. The decision comes in light of a recent review conducted by a consultant appointed to assess the county's parking policies, a response to previous increases in parking charges that came into effect in January 2023.

During a council meeting in May, independent councillor Meirion Howells sought clarification on the review, specifically concerning Usk. Griffiths expressed optimism regarding the draft report, which he anticipates will encourage further engagement with local businesses and communities on the topic. This collaborative approach aims to gauge public sentiment and potentially explore future adjustments, reinforcing the council's commitment to seeking input from towns before considering any systemic changes.

Cllr Howells, representing Usk and Llanbadoc, highlighted the substantial support within the community for maintaining free parking. His survey, which drew responses from approximately 1,600 residents—around 61% of Usk's population—demonstrated a resounding 93% in favour of free parking. This strong backing underscored the significant concern among residents regarding potential parking charges.

However, despite the emphasis on maintaining free parking, Griffiths acknowledged the challenges of enforcing parking regulations without corresponding revenue from charges. He noted that the transition of parking enforcement responsibilities from police to local authorities did not come with increased funding, complicating the council's ability to manage parking effectively. There is ongoing exploration to enhance the recruitment and retention of enforcement officers, a step crucial for ensuring compliance with parking regulations.

The review process comes at a time of heightened scrutiny following the council's earlier decision to introduce Sunday parking charges across various locations, with the first two hours free but fees applied thereafter. This initiative was part of a broader strategy to improve local infrastructure funding and address financial pressures faced by the council. The revenue generated is intended to support essential services, yet it has sparked debates regarding its impact on local businesses and the community.

In an effort to support local commerce, the council has occasionally initiated free parking periods, especially during festive occasions. Although the initiative has drawn both support and criticism, particularly regarding its discontinuation last year, it remains a point of discussion among stakeholders. The council’s balancing act between maintaining community support through free parking and generating revenue for public services continues to be a complex issue.

As the council prepares to engage further with residents and businesses on how to optimise its parking policies, it faces the ongoing challenge of aligning community needs with fiscal responsibilities. The outcomes of these engagements could set the stage for significant changes in the way parking is managed across Monmouthshire, reflecting both the commitment to local interests and the practicalities of budget constraints.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25182307.four-monmouthshire-towns-can-keep-free-use-car-parks/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://www.herald.wales/south-wales/monmouthshire/monmouthshire-appoints-consultant-to-review-car-parking-charges/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25182307.four-monmouthshire-towns-can-keep-free-use-car-parks/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/car-parks/parking/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25182307.four-monmouthshire-towns-can-keep-free-use-car-parks/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/18137022.monmouthshire-council-raise-car-park-prices/), [[5]](https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/car-parks/notice-of-variation-car-park-charges-2023-english/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/monmouthshire-council-free-parking-christmas-25351927), [[7]](https://www.abergavennychronicle.com/news/scrooge-mcc-ends-free-christmas-parking-in-countys-town-centres-652663)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25182307.four-monmouthshire-towns-can-keep-free-use-car-parks/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://www.herald.wales/south-wales/monmouthshire/monmouthshire-appoints-consultant-to-review-car-parking-charges/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25182307.four-monmouthshire-towns-can-keep-free-use-car-parks/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/car-parks/parking/> - Monmouthshire County Council operates pay-and-display car parks in Abergavenny, Chepstow, and Monmouth. These car parks are open Monday to Sunday, 8 am to 6 pm, including Bank Holidays. Payment options include cash, card/contactless, and the PayByPhone App. Disabled bays are available and free for blue badge holders. EV charging bays are present in several car parks, including Monmouth, Abergavenny, Chepstow, Caldicot, and Usk. Parking tariffs vary for short and long stays, with the first two hours on Sundays being free.
3. <https://www.herald.wales/south-wales/monmouthshire/monmouthshire-appoints-consultant-to-review-car-parking-charges/> - Monmouthshire County Council has appointed a consultant to review car parking charges. The review was initiated following an increase in parking charges in April 2023 but was delayed due to staffing and funding constraints. The consultant is collecting data on current and historic usage of the council’s car parks. Engagement with communities, businesses, town and community councils, and county councillors is planned. If proposals for change emerge, a public consultation will be conducted to gather a broad range of views on the current provision.
4. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/18137022.monmouthshire-council-raise-car-park-prices/> - Monmouthshire County Council announced an increase in car parking charges effective from January 8. The new rates are £1.50 for up to two hours, £1.90 for up to three hours, and £2.40 for up to four hours. Additionally, Sunday parking charges have been introduced in over 20 council-run car parks, with the first two hours free and £1 for the remainder of the day. Four previously free car parks—Station Road and The Station in Chepstow, and Cinderhill Street and Rowing Club in Monmouth—will now charge £1.50 for all-day parking from Monday to Saturday.
5. <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/car-parks/notice-of-variation-car-park-charges-2023-english/> - Monmouthshire County Council issued a notice regarding variations in car park charges for 2023. The notice outlines the updated tariffs and operational details for council-run car parks, including the introduction of Sunday parking charges and the conversion of previously free car parks into pay-and-display facilities. The council emphasizes the importance of these changes in supporting local services and infrastructure.
6. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/monmouthshire-council-free-parking-christmas-25351927> - Monmouthshire County Council announced it will offer free parking in council-owned car parks every weekend in December to support local businesses and encourage shopping in the county. The initiative, which has been implemented in previous years, applies to car parks in Abergavenny, Chepstow, and Monmouth. The council also plans to offer free bus journeys on weekends throughout December to promote public transport use during the festive period.
7. <https://www.abergavennychronicle.com/news/scrooge-mcc-ends-free-christmas-parking-in-countys-town-centres-652663> - Monmouthshire County Council has decided to end its long-standing scheme of offering free parking and free bus travel in town centres during the Christmas period. The decision, which will save the council £20,000, was made by the council’s cabinet without engagement with town centre businesses. The move has attracted criticism from Conservative county councillors, who argue that it could negatively impact local traders and high street footfall during the festive season.