# Dunbar council faces backlash over proposed town centre parking charges



A proposal is poised to spark significant controversy in Dunbar, a charming coastal town in Scotland, which lies less than an hour away from Edinburgh. Local councils are considering the implementation of parking charges in the town centre, particularly targeting short-stay parking on the bustling High Street. This initiative has already incited considerable backlash from residents and business owners alike, who argue that the additional fees would unfairly penalise the very community that sustains local commerce.

Currently, parking on the High Street is free for up to 90 minutes, a provision that many locals appreciate, especially those who frequent the shops and services integral to the town's character. The proposal suggests a change in this dynamic: after the initial free time elapses, drivers would be required to pay a fee. Furthermore, the council has suggested introducing resident parking permits, allowing locals unlimited access to designated areas for an annual charge. Wendy Nicolson, a local business owner, has expressed her skepticism regarding the scheme, stating, “I don’t think the proposed charges will help... It feels like the council is penalising their own local population just for living here.” This sentiment is echoed by Allan Turnbull, a lifelong resident, who has articulated that the initiative may further harm local businesses already grappling with challenges, saying: “It’s going to cause further damage to the town.”

Concerns about the potential repercussions of such charges are not isolated. More than 2,000 residents have signed a petition opposing the parking fees, indicating substantial community resistance. The Dunbar Trades’ Association has also voiced its discontent, arguing that the current parking enforcement measures sufficiently address issues without the need for a formal charging system. The Association fears that introducing fees would deter customers, pushing them towards out-of-town shopping centres and undermining the viability of local businesses.

Despite local outcry, the East Lothian Council maintains that the rationale behind the proposed fees is to manage parking more effectively, alleviate congestion, and ultimately support the local economy. They argue that such measures would encourage a better turnover of parking spaces, thus potentially benefiting businesses by allowing greater access for visitors. An ongoing consultation process aims to collect public opinion on not just the parking charges but also a broader spectrum of parking management issues. Residents have highlighted various concerns, including inadequate enforcement, insufficient disabled parking, and congestion around key areas like the train station.

Interestingly, the timeline for potential implementation appears longer than initially expected, with indications that any introduction of parking charges in Dunbar may not transpire before 2026. The council is prioritising consultations and modifications in other towns, signalling a careful approach to understanding and balancing the needs of both residents and visitors.

In the broader context, Dunbar is not alone in facing these challenges. It follows North Berwick, where similar plans were approved late last year, and Tranent, which has unveiled its early proposals. The ongoing public discourse around these proposals reflects a growing tension in many seaside towns grappling with balancing tourism, local economic interests, and the demands of their residents. As discussions continue, the community remains vigilant, with many residents questioning whether the proposals will genuinely enhance the local economy or simply add another layer of inconvenience to daily life in Dunbar.

## 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2061850/fury-uk-seaside-town-parking-charges-dunbar), [[4]](https://www.midlothianview.com/news/dunbar-parking-consultation-launched)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2061850/fury-uk-seaside-town-parking-charges-dunbar), [[2]](https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/23836503.parking-charges-dunbar-unlikely-introduced-2026/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/16278875.thousands-oppose-dunbar-town-centre-parking-charge-plans/), [[5]](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/news/article/14506/dunbar_parking_consultation_launched)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.midlothianview.com/news/dunbar-parking-consultation-launched), [[5]](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/news/article/14506/dunbar_parking_consultation_launched)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/23836503.parking-charges-dunbar-unlikely-introduced-2026/), [[3]](https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/16278875.thousands-oppose-dunbar-town-centre-parking-charge-plans/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/news/article/14506/dunbar_parking_consultation_launched), [[6]](https://www.midlothianview.com/news/dunbar-overnight-bays-to-be-scrapped)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2061850/fury-uk-seaside-town-parking-charges-dunbar), [[2]](https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/23836503.parking-charges-dunbar-unlikely-introduced-2026/), [[3]](https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/16278875.thousands-oppose-dunbar-town-centre-parking-charge-plans/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2061850/fury-uk-seaside-town-parking-charges-dunbar> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/23836503.parking-charges-dunbar-unlikely-introduced-2026/> - East Lothian Council has indicated that the introduction of parking charges in Dunbar's town centre is unlikely before 2026. The council is currently reviewing parking provisions across major towns in the county, with Dunbar being considered in 2025. The focus is on managing increased vehicle access to town centres, especially for local residents, and addressing parking challenges in other towns like Musselburgh first. The council aims to balance the needs of residents and visitors while supporting the local economy.
3. <https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/16278875.thousands-oppose-dunbar-town-centre-parking-charge-plans/> - Over 2,000 people have signed a petition opposing the introduction of parking charges on Dunbar High Street. The Dunbar Trades’ Association (DTA) strongly opposes the plan, expressing concerns that it would negatively impact the High Street and local economy. The DTA believes that the current system, which includes traffic wardens, has already addressed parking concerns, and introducing charges would drive customers away to out-of-town developments. The council has stated that all responses will be considered in developing a strategy.
4. <https://www.midlothianview.com/news/dunbar-parking-consultation-launched> - A consultation has been launched to gather public opinion on proposals to improve parking management in Dunbar. The focus is on making parking easier for residents and visitors and encouraging greater turnover of parking spaces to benefit local businesses and services. Issues identified include insufficient parking enforcement, low turnover of spaces on the High Street, parking congestion around the train station, lack of designated disabled parking, inadequate signage, limited bicycle parking, and residents struggling to park near their homes.
5. <https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/news/article/14506/dunbar_parking_consultation_launched> - East Lothian Council has launched a consultation to improve parking management in Dunbar. Proposals include controlled parking zones with limited free parking periods, resident parking permits, healthcare worker permits, and enhanced enforcement to increase parking turnover and boost the local economy. The consultation runs until 16 June, with a drop-in event scheduled for 22 May. The council aims to address current parking challenges while supporting the local economy and enhancing the environment.
6. <https://www.midlothianview.com/news/dunbar-overnight-bays-to-be-scrapped> - Overnight parking bays for motorhomes at Shore Road Car Park in Belhaven, Dunbar, are set to be removed due to complaints from local residents. Issues include misuse of the area as a toilet, littering, and rule violations. The bays generated over £3,500 in revenue last year but have led to significant community concerns. A report recommends removing the bays and returning the car park to its previous use, with overnight parking banned.
7. <https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/18109301.parking-plans-dunbar-unveiled/> - East Lothian Council is considering changes to parking in Dunbar town centre, including creating a new 25-space car park between Woodbush and Church Street and extending parking at the railway station. The proposed car park aims to meet demand and compensate for future road space enhancements. The council is also negotiating with Transport Scotland and Network Rail to increase the capacity of the rail station car park to prevent indiscriminate parking on local streets.