

LANCASHIRE Telegraph

News

25th February 2016

'Another reason to not shop in Accrington' - Arndale Centre car park charge plans anger residents

By Fiona Pendlebury

 [See both photos](#)

RESIDENTS have expressed anger at plans for a shopping centre car park to begin charging customers to park.







A sign went up recently at Accrington's Arndale Centre which announced from March 21 parking would be limited to three hours maximum with no return within 90 minutes on levels one to three.

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Levels four to five are set to be for permit season ticket holders only with season tickets on sale for £40 a month.

Civic figures are questioning whether the town's Arndale Centre is allowed to charge for parking at all because of the terms written into a lease between the centre owners and Hyndburn Council.

Cllr Peter Britcliffe, former council leader, said: "As far as I'm aware there is a Covenant (lease) on the Arndale which prevents them from making charges for parking.

"During my years when I was leader of the council the Arndale made repeated offers to buy this out which I always turned down on the basis that we'd always maintained there would be no car parking charges in Accrington town centre.

"Accrington town centre is struggling as it is."

Hyndburn Council leader, Cllr Miles Parkinson, said the centre was not allowed to start charging for parking until it had demonstrated to the council to "reasonable satisfaction" that all or part of the car park is not required for short term parking for the Arndale and Accrington town centre.

He said: "All I can say is that the Arndale has done this unilaterally and not approached the council.

"They need to contact the council or look again at the lease if they want to change it."

"I am perplexed why the Arndale is doing this because I don't envisage it as increasing footfall but putting off shoppers."

Shoppers took to social media site **Facebook** to share their views.

On Real Rishton, Sally Stinson, said: "Another reason to not shop in Accrington".

Lindsay Jayne Riley said: "What if there's no room to park on levels one to three? Where do you park then? They're just turning business away."

Lesley Smith, manager of Oddies in the Arndale, said she did not think parking charges in the centre would work, adding: "There is not the footfall in the Arndale.

A spokesman for Lee Baron, centre property managers, said the car park was currently being abused by commuters who occupy shoppers spaces.

The spokesman added: "In order that shoppers can be prioritised it is now the intention to introduce parking control in which respect a contract has been entered into with national operator UKPC.

"For the sake of clarity, The intention is to maintain three hours free parking, and prioritise the available spaces for shoppers, and to continue to provide retailers with complimentary parking. There will however be a dedicated area for 'commuters' looking to park in excess of three hours. "

"The purpose of this exercise is to maintain ease of parking for shoppers and all revenue generated will utilised towards the running and servicing of the car park and for the benefit of the retailers who currently fund this through the service charge."



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