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PRESS RELEASE MANOR HOUSE CAR PARK

A Parish Poll was held in 2010 where a majority of parishioners wanted the Town Council to keep the Manor House as a building for community use. One of the main advantages to hirers is the offer of free parking for users of the building. There are several notices at the entrance and in the car park advising it is a private car park only for authorised users of the building.

In 2013 a decision of the full Town Council confirmed the car park should only be used by authorised users and this was reiterated in 2016 (see background notes). In 2017 the Town Council also considered measures it could take to prevent unauthorised parking.

Over recent months the Manor House Car Park has been increasingly used by a small number of residents who are not hiring or participating in activities at the Manor House or Riverside Centre. These cars have been issued with repeated notices under their windscreen wipers advising them not to use the car park for private use. Cars have occasionally been locked in behind the gates as a result. The same vehicles continued to park in the area.

Yesterday, reluctantly a washable water-based adhesive was used to affix a notice to a car (which has been parked on numerous occasions whilst not using the building) which had already received several non-affixed notices under their windscreen wipers. In addition, there was a shortage of spaces due to bookings in the building, as a result a member of staff parked their car in front of the container and partially blocked the vehicle's exit from the space.

The car owner subsequently came into the Town Council offices asking for the vehicle to be moved and requesting to know who had posted the notice to their windscreen. The vehicle owner acknowledged they should not have been parked in the car park but stated they had done so on numerous occasions. When the member of staff moved their car as requested, the person used expletive language to verbally berate staff. At this point staff declined to engage with the person any further.

Background:

At the Town Council meeting in March 2013 (Minute 107) after an earlier long public discussion following consultation the following was recorded:

107 The Manor House Car Park *(The Mayor agreed to move this item up the agenda so it was heard after Item 5.)*

Councillors sympathised with local residents who did not have parking at their properties but agreed that authorised users who paid to use The Manor House should be able to find a space in the car park, this was particularly important now the building was so well used and bookings were being taken for weddings. Leasing spaces to residents would only make the problem worse and they could use Barton Hill Car Park. The building is listed so walls could

not be demolished but the plans did include additional spaces. Demolition of the toilet block was long overdue and widening the entrance would make it safer. Previous attempts to solve the problem had been unsuccessful as barriers and the chain dividing sections for authorised users and residents parking had been vandalised and the system had been abused. It is not a public car park and parking problems were having a negative impact on the number of people using the building, which could have an adverse effect on its long-term viability.

RESOLVED (Councillor Alison Foden did not vote in accordance with the dispensation agreed in item 97) that the following improvements to the car park should be made: demolish the toilet block and widen the entrance, resurface, increase the number of parking bays, mark them, introduce a one-way system, install a bicycle rack, and lockable gates to ensure parking is available to authorised users in all areas of the car park.

At the Town Council Meeting in December 2016

Minute 114 Manor House Car Park

Consideration was given to allowing public parking in The Manor House car park between Christmas and New Year. Many members had been in favour of this gesture of goodwill but some had changed their minds because of the comments made by one of the speakers in the public forum which had made them question if there was goodwill from local residents and if they would co-operate and leave the car park after the Christmas holiday. Members commented on local residents' whose cars repeatedly blocked the driveway obstructing access for emergency services, putting lives in danger and making it difficult for authorised vehicles to enter and exit the car park safely. They acknowledged that it was essential for users of The Manor House to be able to park or the building would not be financially viable and have to be sold. It was noted that the Town Clerk had suggested leaving the gates open for public parking between Christmas and New because there had been no bookings for the Manor House that week but the situation had changed and there were now four bookings during the week and two on Christmas Day.

RESOLVED not to allow public parking in The Manor House car park between Christmas and New Year.

ENDS