



**Waterford
Chamber**
Advancing business together

Submission

Parking issues in Tramore Town Centre

April 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Waterford Chamber welcomes the Proposed Town Centre Public Realm Works for Tramore and are largely supportive of the proposed plans.

In particular, we welcome any investment into Tramore, which we see as a tourist hub for Waterford and sadly a town that has been largely forgotten in terms of funding for many years.

While the draft does correctly identify areas in need of regeneration, concerns remain even after an extensive consultation period, particularly among our members who are trading with the town centre.

The purpose of this submission is not to address every point outlined in the Chief Executive's Report, but to focus on the primary concerns of the Town Centre Traders that still exist, namely parking and consultation with the traders.

OVERVIEW

According to the proposed plan, there will be a loss of existing car parking spaces along Main Street and the proposed new replacement spaces are not as conveniently located.

There is a fundamental fear, as evidenced in various traders' submissions, that the lack of parking will result in some businesses closing, particularly when coupled with extensive works and road closures.

The traders are anxious to address the parking issue before the works commence.

Waterford Chamber sees this as a positive move, as it could certainly alleviate the 'fear factor' that exists at the moment and will go a long way towards building relationships with those who fear their livelihoods are in jeopardy.

At present there are 35 parking spaces along Main Street, which unfortunately are predominately taken up by traders parking outside their premises. This is not something Waterford Chamber is supportive of and as such, we see it as much the responsibility of the traders to play their part, as it is the Councils.

THE PROPOSAL

At this juncture, in consultation with a number of our members, and based on a survey conducted in September 2016, we are recommending the implementation of paid parking for the town centre.

Similar to Dungarvan, and as outlined in the response to the parking issue in the CE's report, we recommend that 30 mins free parking be allowed, with a charge per hour thereafter.

We see this as a viable solution to the lack of turnover of parking spaces and according to the survey 68% of traders are in agreement.

We have made an approach to Mr Sean Quish of Quish's SuperValu to ask if he would be open to the idea of traders parking in the lower car park of his supermarket and he has kindly agreed to consider the proposal once the new road works have been completed, providing it isn't abused in any way. There is also ample free parking at the Church Car Park.

We recommend printing parking discs for a trial period to avoid the larger cost of implementing parking meters. Michael Clarke of Cahill's Newsagents has committed to selling the parking disc at 0% commission during the trial period.

GOING FORWARD

As mentioned previously, there are a variety of issues of growing concern among the traders in relation to the proposed town centre public realm works which will ultimately have a negative effect on what is generally seen as a positive development for Tramore.

It is our recommendation, that a public meeting be held to inform the traders as to where the process is at, what are the definitive plans, what is still up for discussion and ultimately offer the traders a chance to be heard and come on board with the works.

We are also working with An Garda Siochana on creating a Business Watch text service, where we will also need engagement, so Waterford Chamber is happy to be the facilitators of the meeting, where both issues can be covered.

CONCLUSION

As a membership organisation, Waterford Chamber has to take the concerns of our members seriously and act in earnest on their behalf. We see this as a genuine concern and we are committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of businesses in Tramore.

Parking is an issue that has been raised many times and there is an opportunity now to address it once and for all. We are happy to work with the Council to liaise with the traders to alleviate any additional stress they may be under and with everyone collaborating together, we can work towards a brighter future for Tramore. A joint meeting would be most welcome in this regard.

We look forward to a favourable response from Waterford City and County Council and again reiterate our commitment to working in partnership with all concerned.