

Richmond Park – Car Parking Charges
Statement from MCRA
21st October 2020

(Letter posted to Sarah Olney MP, Councillors Rowena Bass, Ian George, Ed Fram and Royal Parks)

We understand that charges for parking in Richmond Park are being proposed. This at a time when walking, cycling, running, walking with dogs, taking the kids out for fresh air are all being encouraged by the Government during this time of a national emergency.

There is no right time to impose these charges but right now when indoor meetings are not allowed pensioners and others living on their own, rely on meeting up with friends and family outside. Richmond Park has provided thousands of them the most wonderful life enhancing facility. The park is also much needed for those who live in flats or rooms where access to outside green space is not possible in their immediate vicinity. These people tend to be those with limited financial resources so it seems inconceivable to us that you should be charging them to access the park.

Walkers can safely distance in Richmond Park whilst enjoying the wild life, ponds and woodland, but the very people who most need help, such as young families stuck at the top of a high-rise apartment on a low income, will be put off coming into the park and end up walking on pavements, inhaling traffic fumes. Even when the country returns to some kind of normality, poverty will still remain a huge issue, making these important spaces assets that should be free for all to enjoy regardless of income.

Mental health is a huge issue and anything to promote good mental wellbeing should be supported not endangered by making charges to prospective park visitors. Both exercise and the beautiful scenery combine to promote wellbeing and many people with mental health problems can't work and thus have very limited budgets.

The roads around the park are already full of parked cars and residents are going to find it more difficult to find a legitimate space for themselves. When the park was closed to traffic earlier in the year, Warren Road (a private road and part of the Coombe Estate) was used as a parking lot with 30 -40 cars parked at the Kingston Hill end of the road on a daily basis, causing a dangerous obstruction at the Kingston Hill /Warren Rd junction and making it extremely hazardous for residents exiting their properties at that end of the road. We anticipate the same will happen again if cars are charged to park inside Richmond Park

We deplore this proposal and wish to strongly oppose its imposition both now and in the future.