

Estate wants permits to end parking chaos

PARKING permits for residents and more yellow lines were just two of the options brought up at a meeting of more than 100 residents called to discuss inconsiderate parking in Rodmill.

Victoria Baptist Church in Eldon Road was crowded with people eager to share their concerns about the dangers of cars parked in the estate by students at Sussex Downs College and staff and visitors at the DGH.

David Tomlinson, a Rodmill resident and president of Ratton Neighbourhood Panel, stood up to say he had walked along Selmeston Road before and counted 37 cars parked, each with hospital staff passes, left by people he believed 'unable or unwilling' to pay the 50p a day for full-time staff and 30p for part-time staff to use the DGH car park.

But no-one was available to comment at the meeting as, despite representatives from Sussex Downs College, Sussex Police, Eastbourne Borough Council and East Sussex County Council showing up, East Sussex Hospitals Trust declined to attend.

Sussex Downs executive director Tim Whitmore was there, and told the meeting parking problems were caused by the college having just 500 spaces for the 3,000 students usually on campus in Eastbourne at any one time.

More spaces, he said, could simply not be found on campus, but a green travel scheme was being used to try to encourage public transport use.

He added that a bus route was needed for the east of Eastbourne, taking in the hospital and college.

The many residents who spoke said cars left all day in Selmeston Road, Burton

Road, Rangemore Drive and Westfield Road, among others, were blocking residents' cars in driveways, emergency vehicles, and the 126 bus, which it was said had become trapped in Westfield Road and had to stop or back out onto Selmeston Road on several occasions.

Drivers pulling out of junctions and children crossing the road are faced with cars on both sides of the road, which is 'an accident waiting to happen'.

In response, Dave Weeks, county council parking manager, said Rodmill roads had recently been patrolled to find where cars were parking illegally and chief inspector Dick Coates promised if details of cars blocking driveways were given to Sussex Police the drivers could be tracked and sent written advice.

David Tutt, leader of the borough council, suggested limits on parking in Rodmill, such as four hours or less, which were met with a mixed response.

Some felt it would target residents without driveways who parked on the road, others that it would not tackle the student parking problem, with few staying for longer than four hours anyway, travelling back and forth to lectures.

The suggestion of paid-for parking permits was unanimously vetoed in an informal show of hands.

Speaking after the one-and-half hour meeting, Nicola Grover, the Rodmill resident who organised it, said she had received hundreds of suggestion slips.

"My main objective was to let the residents have their say and they definitely have done that," she said.

An exhibition of proposed regulations will be displayed in Rodmill in the coming weeks.

Public meeting called over Rodmill parking

A PUBLIC meeting is being held to tackle parking problems in Rodmill.

David Tutt, leader of Eastbourne Borough Council, is attending, as well as the parking manager of East Sussex County Council and Chief Inspector Dick Coates.

Local residents have become increasingly frustrated by the overspill from the DGH car park and Sussex Downs College parking in the estate.

The meeting has been organised by local resident Nicola Grover, who is standing as LibDem candidate for Rodmill in this year's county council elections. It will take place next Tuesday (January 20) at 2.30pm at Victoria Baptist Church in Eldon Road.

Nicola said, "Sussex Downs College has indicated its support for the meeting and its executive director of corporate services will hopefully be attending.

"Unfortunately bosses from the DGH have not been as supportive and have refused to participate.

"The chief executive of East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust hasn't even bothered to make a statement to residents.

"This is a great shame and many people living around the Rodmill area will no doubt be hugely disappointed.

"Many residents feel strongly that the DGH is largely to blame for the majority of the parking congestion around this area with staff and visitors trying to avoid the parking charges in the

hospital's car park.

"A lot of the hospital staff are very unhappy at having to pay to park before starting their shifts otherwise they wouldn't be parking in our roads.

"As their bosses don't seem to be bothered to address the situation directly with the local residents, I would be interested to hear from the staff what they feel about the situation.

"I am, however, very pleased that the residents will now at long last get a chance to voice their views and opinions to the various authorities at the meeting on January 20."

A DGH spokesperson said, "We have indicated our support for the meeting and appreciate that by holding the event the Liberal Democrats will be able to consider residents' views, and that the Trust would be happy to receive constructive feedback from this meeting.

"We have also noted that the meeting is supported by Eastbourne Borough Council and Sussex Police.

"As both these organisations have responsibility for overseeing the public highways in the Rodmill area, we would expect that they will be in the best position to respond to any issues raised by the residents, as the Trust is not able to control individuals who choose not to park on the hospital site and instead in neighbouring residential areas.

"In addition the Trust is working with local agencies and through our healthy transport initiatives to manage traffic flow to the site and to ensure travel alternatives are available."