**Charged Parking at Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Kilbroney Park and Delamont Country Park**

The Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area is well recognised for the quality of our outdoor environment. Across the district local residents and visitors have the benefit of being able to access high-quality forest parks, country park and green spaces. There is increasing public awareness of the value of good-quality forests, parks and green spaces in improving the quality of life for our residents and visitors. Forests and country parks have many uses, including appreciating wildlife; natural and cultural heritage; relaxation, peace and quiet; opportunities to take part in both exhilarating and gentle outdoor recreation activities, enjoying the company of family and friends, or enjoying solitude. With a growing emphasis on recreation and leisure, forests and parks are now playing an ever more important role in providing amenities and enhancing people’s quality of life.

Within the district, the Council manages the recreation and tourism provision at three Forest and Country Parks (Kilbroney Forest Park, Delamont Country Park and Slieve Gullion Forest Park) which collectively attract in excess of one million visitors per annum and an increasing number of visitors from outside the district. All three parks play an increasingly important role in driving economic development through tourism and of supporting local communities and businesses. The parks have received significant investment in recent years with circa £3 million invested to improve the quality of product and service on offer. The annual running cost of the three parks is in the region of £420,000 per annum.

As the number of residents and visitors using our Forest and Country Parks continue to increase, the Council is committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of these spaces.

To ensure the ongoing provision of quality Forest and Country Parks, Council is gathering information that will be used to consider the option of introducing a charge for car parking at Kilbroney and Slieve Gullion Forest Parks, in addition to maintaining the car parking charge that is currently collected at Delamont Country Park.

Options are also being considered for providing season passes for all residents of the district to access our Forest and Country Parks at a discounted affordable price, and to maintain free-entry to all cyclists and pedestrians to our parks. Consideration is also being given to the current problems associated with illegal parking outside of all Forest and Country Parks in our district, which can have a hugely negative impact on our local residents and communities.

We would welcome your input to this consultation and invite you to complete this short questionnaire by clicking on the Survey Monkey link below. All information gathered will be used to inform the Council’s considerations on all aspects of introducing car park charging at Forest and Country Parks, including the provision of discounted season passes for residents of the district. Please click on the following link to provide feedback in relation to this consultation:

[**https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NMDDC\_Parking**](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NMDDC_Parking)

A paper copy of the questionnaire can be obtained at either Delamont Country Park, Kilbroney Park or Slieve Gullion Forest Park.

For further information please contact Michelle Boyle, Visitor Services and Attraction Information via the details below:

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