

My name is Sarah Ford and I run a hairdresser's outlet in Midsomer Norton High Street.

Shoppers and retailers in the High Street have reacted with consternation to the suggestion that the Council may consider charging for parking in Midsomer Norton. It was very easy to collect the large number of signatures for the petition which I have just handed in.

The pattern of shopping in our area, as in most comparable rural areas, means that people drop in to the High Street for small purchases and services. They go to the large free car parks always available at supermarkets for their main shop.

If the Council decides to burden local centres like Midsomer Norton with parking charges, it will deliver another blow to an industry already under severe pressure. We have more than enough empty shops in the High Street as it is.

A pensioner coming to town for a six pound hair cut does not need deterring with another pound collected by the Council. He will keep his hair longer or go elsewhere. Any parking charge is much too big when you are only making a small purchase.

Please drop this idea completely, and do not look to hard-pressed council tax payers to pay still more to go about their daily business. I hope the Council will continue to support local communities, and not add to their problems.