

My name is Neil Holdstock and I chair Business Headington. I am here to talk to you about the future of Headington car park.

Headington Car Park is the main car park for shoppers using our retail outlets, and for clients of Headington businesses. It is located centrally next to the Park and the conservation area.

It's in everyone's interests to have a thriving district centre. It's a critical time for businesses in Headington and several shops have closed down. We need all the help we can get to attract customers into our centre

But we feel the council is letting us down.

The huge rise in car park charges has had a bad effect on trade but the council has now issued a preferred options document that says it wants to see flats built over the car park. That would mean we'll lose even more parking spaces – and customers - in our main shopping area. Headington's biggest car park would have to be closed while this happens. There's nowhere else in Headington suitable for customer parking while all this is done, so they'll take their business elsewhere...and never come back.

Headington Car Park is in an attractive location next to the park and play area, the Library and the Conservation Area – putting up flats will make the place look an eyesore

Local people and local businesses are totally opposed to this, it just doesn't make sense to anybody. We've been out collecting signatures on a petition to make 'No development' a preferred option and we've got thousands of signatures. People can't wait to sign it. They are really angry about this.

Surely the Council should be supporting businesses at times like this, not closing us down? It has already lost a battle over St Clements car-park, so why take on another one?

The only sensible way to stop people getting so fed up with the Council about this is to come straight out and say there's been a re-think. The officers are writing their report on the Sites document right now, and they know how much strength of feeling there is around this. I call on councillors to advise those officers to respect public opinion, support our District Centre businesses, and recommend there should be no building on this site.

This page is intentionally left blank