



NEWS RELEASE

## **The price commuters are paying for lack of parking at Fleet Station...**

Mark Smith, a resident of Crookham Village commuted to London from Fleet for 11 years and in that time has seen the effect of all the additional homes and people in Hart without the significant infrastructural improvement to go with it. Parking capacity at Fleet Station is a prime example. After hanging up his 'commuter boots' from Fleet Station four years ago, Mark recently donned them again for a week and could not believe how bad things have got for today's Fleet commuters, "If you ignore the fact that the trains are mostly overcrowded, parking is now impossible and getting a space after 8.30am at the beginning of the week is asking for a small miracle". Mark continued "as such, this inspired me to undertake some research with FACE-IT's resident train expert into car parking and this is what we found:

Fleet Station car park has about 420 parking places. In 2006 it was the 5<sup>th</sup> highest priority on the route for extension by Network Rail and South West trains. Only about 10 places have been added since then. The car park is normally full by the end of the rush hour and those wishing to travel off peak are unable to park. The car park is surrounded by Fleet pond to the south and east, housing to the north and roads to the west. There is little option for extension outwards, only upwards. The lack of parking is arguably the largest obstacle to increasing capacity at Fleet station. There is an outline design for a two-storey car park on the Northern single storey car park that could add about 100 places. It is

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unlikely this would resolve the constraint and only significant increase would meet current and an expanded Fleet and Crookham market. It is estimated that Fleet station needs between a 30-50 % increase in parking capacity. Are there any plans in the pipeline? We don't think so."

Over the last 20 years Hart has endured five massive housing developments with another two currently under construction. In this time the population has swelled from 81,000 in 1991 to 89,700 in 2012. And unfortunately for the Hart residents, the Council has been proactively seeking more residential development in its LDF. Can you imagine what life will be like if they continue to pursue this aggressive development strategy? Can you imagine what it will be like to commute from Fleet Station and compete with more and more new commuters who are flooding into our area because they have read that Hart is the most desirable place to live?

Mark was also staggered when he found out what the daily charge is now £7.50! The law of scarcity applies here and Network Rail has applied this to maximum effect - when a product is in short supply the price increases. The price of parking at Fleet station has risen by 60% since 2004. That is one and half times the rate of inflation in the same period.

Mark finished "I count my blessings that I no longer have to suffer the daily grind and ritual (and cost) of being a Fleet Station commuter; car parking issues, the overcrowded trains and then queuing for fifteen minutes to get out of the station car park in the evening because of the gridlocked traffic". But that's another story.

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