

A fine sight of handlers and dogs who gathered at Blore for the English National Sheep Dog Trials



Sergio makes sheep trials history ...with a little help from his dog



Winner Sergio Perello Galdron from Lancashire with Murguia Jim.

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Rural Pictures

DESPITE challenging weather conditions and the difficulties encountered due to Covid 19 restrictions in the run-up to the event, the English National Sheep Dog Trials went ahead at Blore, the home of Dovedale Sheep Dog Trials. An appreciative crowd attended the three-day trials, often in waterproofs or huddled under umbrellas, and while numbers were understandably down on the last national trial held on the same field



Action from the sheep trials in Blore.



By Gareth Butterfield

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ASHBOURNE'S shoppers will be offered free parking after 2pm for the entire month of September in a bid to boost trade after lockdown.

Derbyshire Dales District Council approved the plans during a brief discussion at the end of a four-and-a-half hour meeting last week.

The scheme, which responds to a plea by Ashbourne Town Team, will see the charges at the council's town centre car parks in Ashbourne, Bakewell, Matlock and Wirksworth - along with Matlock Bath - scrapped after 2pm through September.

The council says it will be relying on feedback from businesses to see if the venture is a success in boosting the local economy.

It will see the authority miss out on £45,000 in charges.

Other options had included free parking on Saturdays in September (£56,000 in lost income); free parking on weekends in September (£107,000); and free parking for the whole of September (£201,000).

Paul Wilson, the council's chief executive, said free parking is not the solution to all of the



The meters will be off in Ashbourne and elsewhere in the afternoons for the whole of September

Charges to be waived after 2pm in September to boost trade

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Paul Wilson

problems being experienced in the area's town centres. He also warned

that long-term free parking, considering the authority's own financial position and its need for all the income it gets, has significant risks. Income from parking is used

for maintenance of the car parks, the district's public gardens, open spaces and play areas, along with other services. It is one of very few income sources left for local councils,

which it uses to prop up other essential services. Mr Wilson wrote in a report on the issue: "The impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the three national lock-

downs on the Derbyshire Dales has been widespread and ongoing.

"In the Derbyshire Dales, it has affected jobs, health, incomes, communities, environment, public services and more.

"Despite the plethora of financial support packages that have been put in place by the district council to support businesses, it is likely that many businesses will not survive and if they do, it is likely to be some considerable time before they will recover to their pre-March 2020 state, if at all.

"Irrespective of the level of car parking charges, the national restructuring of the retail sector, influenced by the rise in online sales, means every town faces the challenges of declining high street spend and footfall.

"It is evident that Covid-19 has added to the existing challenges town centre businesses currently face.

"Social distancing measures may impact profitability and some customers, now accustomed to online purchasing and home delivery, may not return to high street retailers.

"In order to respond to this request, consideration has been given to a series of options for a 'one-off', short term incentive for the month of September, for all town centre car parks in each of our four market towns plus Matlock Bath, which would have the benefit of extending the summer season."