

Drop-off Charge at Edinburgh Airport starts on 29th October

☒ If you choose to go to the airport and pick up or drop off a loved one by car, then you are from 29th October 2010 being asked by [BAA](#) to pay a £1 fee.

You will be pulling into one of 52 dedicated bays on the ground floor of the multi-storey car park, where you will be shielded from the weather and you can stay for 10 minutes. (Beware though as the next 10 -20 minutes will cost £5 and the charge increases incrementally from there! If you want to park for longer than 10 minutes then you should probably opt for the short stay car park.) It is hoped that this will be safer than the current arrangement, which often involves dangerous double parking and constantly being moved on by the traffic attendants who patrol the area.

The airport management say that 15p from every £1 will be invested in environmental and community projects in and around the airport. (No real explanation is given as to what that actually means.)

There is an alternative. You can drop someone off in the new drop-off facility at the long-stay car park where they can jump on the bus to the airport terminal and that will cost you (and them) nothing. The free buses run every 10 minutes, 24 hours a day, and the journey takes about five minutes.

The move has been introduced by the Airport management, BAA, and has caused much controversy in recent months. The Edinburgh Evening News in particular has provided a platform for those who object to the introduction of the charge. Gavin Brown MSP has gathered support from those objecting to it. 9,000 people have signed his petition. You can read about his

campaign on his [website](#). He said:-

“My constituents are deeply unhappy about BAA’s decision to charge drivers £1 to simply drop someone off at the airport. This drop-off tax is ridiculous and an unfair charge to airport users. I would be very interested to know what consultation, if any, actually took place with passengers. For a lot of people getting public transport to the airport is not a viable option. I have been contacted by elderly residents and constituents with young children who don’t have an alternative to getting to the airport. I would urge Edinburgh Airport to listen to their passengers and reverse their decision as soon as possible.” Brown’s campaign is called “Stop the Drop off Rip Off” and you can access that website [here](#).

If you live in the city centre then there is little excuse for you driving to the airport. There is a very good bus service provided by Lothian Buses which takes you from Waverley Bridge to the front door of the terminal building. It is the greener option all round – at least until we have the trams going all the way to the airport.

But what is the other side of this arrangement? What are the airport doing to make allowances for disabled drivers and passengers who would not be able to use the bus facility from the long term car park? Their information leaflet which you can access here is silent on this aspect.

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However, it was covered in the open letter which is available below. We would particularly point you in the direction of the paragraph where the letter says:-

“More than 9 million passengers travel through Edinburgh Airport each year. We are investing £42 million in providing infrastructure to support our forecasted growth to 13 million

passengers over the coming years – including relocating and expanding our drop off facility which is currently at capacity.

As a commercial business that receives no funding from the Public Sector, we are introducing a premium drop off facility from 1 October 2010 that will charge users £1 for 10 minutes as well as maintaining a free drop off facility. We envisage the nominal fee of £1 will contribute to reducing ‘kiss and fly’ journeys to and from the airport and encouraging a greater use of public transport, leading to a reduction in emissions as well as contributing to the construction costs. There will be no change to the free 15 minutes that blue badge holders currently receive and we believe they and the elderly will benefit from the increased facilities in new drop off areas.”

Read the whole letter here...

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What about those people who live outwith the city? Those living in West Lothian, for example, who have no direct transport to the airport? If they are travelling to catch an early flight what choice do they have except to use a car, either by driving themselves or having someone drop them off. Yes, they can, if able-bodied, use the alternative free drop off point, but it will mean allowing at least another ten minutes or so for the journey.

There have been plenty of column inches devoted to the controversy such as the articles in The Guardian [blog](#), the Edinburgh Evening News and The Scotsman, including this article today, promising a fight ‘if the change is not smooth’ in The [Edinburgh Evening News](#)

BAA is responsible for the running of Heathrow, Stansted,

Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Southampton airports. Gatwick was sold in December 2009 and Naples Airport earlier this summer. They are regulated on prices by the Civil Aviation Authority, the Competition Commission, and on matters of airport safety and security by the CAA and the UK Government. Owned by a consortium led by Spanish construction company, [Ferrovial](#), they clearly have to make a profit.

Managing Director of Edinburgh Airport, appointed earlier this year, Kevin Brown joined BAA in October 2002. He was appointed after holding the position of Managing Director for both Aberdeen and Southampton Airports since 2008. As a Chartered Electrical Engineer, Kevin has held a number of senior management positions in operations, customer service, IT and engineering projects both in the UK and overseas. He gained experience in change management whilst working in the utility industry and BAA's Engineering Group.

BAA is currently the subject of an investigation by The Competition Commission which is not yet complete. BAA believe that their ownership of seven of the UK's airports is not something which distorts competition, although the Competition Commission do not necessarily agree. BAA are about to appeal the latest decision of the commission to the Supreme Court. They do however consider themselves bound by the regulator in the following manner:-

Our conduct in relation to customers, business partners and suppliers. The regulator is required to ensure that the company does not act in a way that might work against the public interest.

Whether or not their apparent lack of consultation with the Edinburgh public has resulted in a decision which is against the public interest is now of little consequence as the new arrangement is now in place and will be in use from tomorrow Friday 29th October 2010.

As an aside, Ferrovial itself seems to be in a good financial position, reporting profits today of 315 million euro in the first 10 months of 2010. Their report goes on to say:-“BAA reported growth of 4.6% in revenues (1.785 billion) and 7% in EBITDA (810 million). UK airport activity was affected during the period by the eruption of the Icelandic volcano, which closed UK airspace from 15 to 20 April, and by the 34-day strike by British Airways employees. Heathrow’s traffic totaled 49.6 million passengers, practically flat (-0.6%).

Traffic increased by 4.4% in the third quarter, reaching record numbers in July and August. A total of 83.4 million passengers used BAA’s airports. European flights gained ground at UK airports, accounting for 45% of the total, compared with 21% in the case of domestic UK flights and 34% for long-haul flights.”

What is your position regarding the drop-off charge? Are you going to pay it or use the alternative options? Are you someone who will find it difficult to do so? Do tell us!