

# **Midlothian Council to introduce overnight stays for motorhome users in country park**

**A cash-strapped council is to introduce overnight stays for motorhome users in one of its country parks to raise funds.**

Midlothian councillors are to open up spaces at Vogrie Country Park for a fee as part of a pilot project which could see the scheme expanded to other destinations in the county.

The move was this week welcomed by councillors who supported the 'entrepreneurial' trial which could bring much needed money in.

Councillor David Virgo welcomed the plan saying: "I view it as the first baby steps on a course of new entrepreneurial exploration within Midlothian."

A meeting of the council was told the scheme would use the overspill car park at Vogrie and offer a single overnight stay to users with a fee.

A report on the scheme said: "Midlothian has a number of award-winning destinations on its doorstep from world. The pilot project will open up new opportunities for more visitors to experience much of what is on offer within Midlothian.

“It is evident that a growing form of tourism brings not only challenges but opportunities for stakeholders who live in and visit Midlothian. The pilot project will consider the impact of establishing overnight motorhome parking on nearby residents, landowners, community councils and other visitors.”

Elected members were told that no fee had been agreed yet but other areas charged between £10 to £17 for an overnight stay. If successful the council will look for other areas to include in the scheme moving forward.

Councillor Colin Cassidy said: “I wholeheartedly welcome this, it will be a great money generator for Midlothian Council and will use land that is doing nothing at the moment.”

And Councillor Dianne Alexander said: “As someone with a motorhome, it gives an opportunity of a safe overnight park up for people to explore a local area.”

Councillor Stephen Curran said: “It is an excellent opportunity for the council to give more exposure to the fantastic facility that Vogrie Park is as well.”

The council unanimously backed the pilot project giving officers to go ahead to set a fee and introduce it at Vogrie.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter