

# Change of Cashless Parking Supplier

## Case Study on Oxford



### Background

The beautiful City of Oxford is renowned worldwide for its historic University, amazing architecture and dreaming spires.

Oxford City Council has the challenge of managing the travel needs of the 150,000 population (inc. 30,000 students), those that come to work in the city each day, as well as providing a quality service to tourists who make over 18 million day trips to the city each year.

Given the large numbers of people coming into the city every day, the Council wants to minimise the number of people travelling into the city centre by car. Measures include:

- Five Park and Ride sites on the city outskirts with free parking.
- Measures to encourage cycling and walking.
- Access restrictions for cars.
- Relatively high parking charges in the city centre car parks.



### Why Pay by Phone?

Although the Council encourages motorists to park on the outskirts of the city and use the Park and Ride system, they still wanted to provide the best quality service possible to those choosing to drive into the centre to use the Council's car parks.

- Given relatively high daily rates for parking, paying by phone seemed a good solution.
- The scheme is part of Oxford City Council's wider Transformation agenda, using modern technology to give customers the best possible service, and building a world-class city for everyone.
- The system puts an end to people worrying about having the correct change for car parking.
- Unlike normal parking sessions, customers can remotely top-up their parking fee when paying by phone, so there is no need to hurry back to the car park before the ticket expires.



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*Andrew Bradfield-Barnes, Car Parks Manager at Oxford City Council*

## Which Solution?

In 2007, Oxford City Council set up a 12 month trial with a different company, rolling out the pay by phone solution in six of the City's car parks.

At the end of the trial, Oxford City Council decided to change supplier, moving to RingGo. Some of the reasons for this included:

- RingGo uses a local (01865) number for calls, lowering the service cost for motorists.
- RingGo offers a 24 x 7 x 365 Customer help desk for frontline support, as well as a technical help desk for technical and service issues.
- Locally, RingGo was already offered at Oxford and Didcot Railway Stations and take up there had been good. The solution was also to be offered in Cherwell District, providing consistency and coverage of a single solution across the County.



## Implementing the solution

The implementation of RingGo was potentially complicated due to having to co-ordinate the changeover between services – a first within the cashless parking market.

A pre-launch marketing campaign was carried out, consisting of PR, Council website announcement, posters and leaflets to inform existing users of the changeover of systems and the need to use a new number. Signage went up on a chosen Sunday to minimise disruption, and new users were able to use the system straightaway in conjunction with existing customers from the other provider. The previous provider turned off their system the following day.

On the day, Car Park Staff were stationed in Oxford's car parks to talk through the change. Andrew Bradfield-Barnes, Car Parks Manager at Oxford City Council, commented:

**"The pre-launch programme went extremely smoothly. Car Park Staff were thoroughly briefed and trained so they knew what to do and the marketing and TV coverage prior to launch meant many people already knew of the change."**

**"On the day, people registered and used RingGo without a problem."**

**"That evening we realised there was a slight issue with an overnight tariff - but this was quickly resolved."**

*Andrew Bradfield-Barnes, Car Parks Manager at Oxford City Council*

**For more information on RingGo, please visit [www.RingGo.co.uk](http://www.RingGo.co.uk), phone 01256 339195 or e-mail [info@RingGo.co.uk](mailto:info@RingGo.co.uk)**



## Results

The changeover to RingGo has been a success. The week of the launch, RingGo achieved double the usage seen previously – a level which has continued and grown ever since.

The level of calls into Oxford City Council, too, has changed. Under the initial system, Oxford City Council parking staff handled several queries.

With RingGo, calls are answered, managed and resolved directly by the RingGo customer service centre, meaning it's rare for Council staff to be involved.

Andrew Bradfield-Barnes comments:

**"We're very happy with RingGo. Our customers like the service, we've got good usage and it's increasing all the time."**

**"Before RingGo, two separate pay by phone solutions operated half a mile apart – causing a great deal of confusion, particularly for local residents who tried to use the two systems interchangeably. Now, we have a single solution offered across Oxford and in neighbouring towns like Banbury and Bicester."**

**"Cashless parking has definitely been good for Oxford and I would recommend it to anyone else thinking of introducing it."**

*Andrew Bradfield-Barnes, Car Parks Manager at Oxford City Council*