

Rent out your car for holiday cash

Graeme Paton Transport Correspondent

Motorists will be able to profit from their holidays by renting out their cars for up to £160 a week after leaving the country.

For the first time, a peer-to-peer car rental service has been introduced under which drivers charge other people to use their vehicles instead of leaving them to sit in airport car parks.

Gatwick will be the first airport in the country to try out the scheme, enabling passengers to park free of charge and often make a small profit.

Under the service, motorists can choose a “rent and earn” option when they leave a vehicle in the airport’s long-stay car park. The vehicle is valeted and checked by mechanics before

being offered for rental to passengers making their way through the airport in the opposite direction, such as European travellers taking a short break in London.

Passengers are still expected to pay parking charges — about £85 for two weeks in the long stay car park — but if a car is rented out the income will be deducted from the parking cost.

The initiative — billed as part of the “sharing economy” to tackle waste and make the most of resources — may help to alleviate anger over the price of airport parking, which can often cost more than the price of an air ticket. A study last year revealed that holiday-makers were being charged almost £200 to park for a fortnight at some British airports.

Gary Wallace, head of car parking at Gatwick, the country’s second biggest airport, said: “The new service offers passengers an alternative option when it comes to renting vehicles from the airport and gives them a chance to offset their parking costs.

“Our goal is to help as many people as possible to travel for less, in a convenient way.”

The scheme is being run by Car & Away, a peer-to-peer rental service. Every vehicle left with the company is valeted, irrespective of whether it is booked for hire, before being photographed and its details uploaded to a

website.

Vehicles are subjected to RAC checks to ensure that they are roadworthy and black box-style technology is installed

to monitor driving during the rental period. If a vehicle is chosen for rental, usually by an inbound traveller at the airport, it is moved to the valet arrivals area of the south terminal for collection.

Owners of small vehicles can expect to earn up to £80 per week in rental income, the company said, although those with larger cars could earn up to £160.

Andy Hibbert, the founder of Car & Away, said: “We’re all used to, and comfortable with, the sharing economy. So, sharing a car while people go away isn’t such a big step. Especially when owners not only make money out of it, but benefit from dropping the car right next to the terminal and get a professional valet.”