

Car club...the way to drive down emissions?

by Susannah Wright

A CAR club scheme aimed at reducing the demand for permanent car ownership has been launched in Chorlton.

An allocated parking bay has been set up on Nicolas Road and is the first of its kind outside the city centre.

Members of City Car Club can hire a vehicle to be picked up or dropped off there, for as little as half an hour, and the scheme is backed by Manchester City Council.

Councillor Nigel Murphy, executive member for environment, said: "The extension of this scheme outside the city centre offers people the opportunity and flexibility to use a car for a few hours without the expense of owning one.

"It is a green, cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternative to car ownership. It is also an important tool in tackling congestion by offering access to a car only when required.

"And as parking spaces are often at a premium,



IN THE CLUB: City Car Club member James Tate with councillor Nigel Murphy

particularly in places like Chorlton, it helps reduce the demand for spaces that private car ownership requires."

James Tate, 26, a transport planner who lives on Kings Hill Road in Chorlton with his partner, is a member of the club. He said: "I can book a car

at a minute's notice for just the time I actually need it, so it doesn't end up costing me money when it's sitting there doing nothing.

"It's also good to feel that I am doing something positive for the environment by sharing a car with other like-minded

people." Charlotte Martin lives on Nicolas Road with her husband Graham and children, Finlay, four, and Hamish, two. She said: "It could be quite handy. We've gone down to one car and I've been looking at the possibility of hiring sometimes."

If the scheme is suc-

cessful, a further bay may be allocated in Chorlton.

A consultation process is being conducted by the council to identify suitable locations for two City Car Club bays at each of three locations in Didsbury and Withington.

Sites already suggested are Egerton Crescent in Withington, Wilmslow Road in Didsbury village, and the station approach at East Didsbury train station.

But the idea was criticised by some groups who said it would take away vital parking spaces from residents.

Roger Smith, chairman of Withington Civic Society, said: "We are so short of parking spaces around here and if they claim two it will make it even more difficult for drivers.

"I think this is totally unfair and unjust. It's disgraceful. It's a small tight road and it's very congested."

Membership of City Car Club costs £50 and prices for hiring a car start at £4.95 per hour or £49.50 per day.