

DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL



PARKING SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2013 – 2014

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INTRODUCTION

Dover District Council took on responsibility for the enforcement of on-street parking regulations from Kent Police on 23rd January 2001. This document reports on the performance of Dover District Council's Parking Services between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014.

Whilst parking in contravention of the parking regulations is no longer a criminal act, it remains nonetheless an illegal act. The legislation under which Dover District Council operates its parking services are:

- Kent County Council (various roads, Dover District) (waiting restrictions and street parking places) Order March 2005 (with amendments); and
- Dover District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2010.

A copy of the KCC Order is available via: -

www.kent.gov.uk/roads_and_transport/highway_maintenance/traffic_regulation_orders/made_tros/dover_made.aspx

A copy of the DDC off-street order is available on our website via:-

www.dover.gov.uk/parking/documents_policies/off-street_parking.aspx

Dover District Council acts as an agent on behalf of Kent County Council for enforcement of parking restrictions on the roads throughout the district. Any surplus made from this part of our service is ring-fenced and must be used for transport or environmental projects. A surplus of £31,084 was made on-street during 2013 – 2014.

On 31st March 2008, new parking enforcement related legislation was introduced, known as the Traffic Management Act 2004. Under this legislation, parking wardens became known as Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO), higher and lower bands of penalty charges were introduced and it became possible to post a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) to the registered owner or keeper of a vehicle if a CEO had been prevented from issuing it at the time, e.g. if the motorist had driven away before the CEO was able to serve the PCN, or the CEO had been threatened with violence. More information on this legislation is available from our website at:

www.dover.gov.uk/parking/documents_policies/traffic_management_act.aspx, or

The Department for Transport at www.dft.gov.uk

CAR PARKS

Dover District Council operates the majority of public car parks throughout the district. However, the following car parks, whilst available to the public, are managed by Dover District Council on behalf of the landowner:

- Park Street and St. Ethelburga's, Deal: The Co-operative Group Limited;
- West Street, Deal: Sainsbury's Supermarkets Limited; and
- Samphire Hoe: Euro Tunnel.

A full list of all the car parks operated by Dover District Council can be found at:

www.dover.gov.uk/parking.aspx

Most car parks and roads in Dover district are free of charge to users on Sundays, apart from the following areas, which are "Pay and Display" seven days per week:

- Camden Crescent car park, Dover;
- The Seafront, Dover;
- Beach Street car park, Deal;
- Beach Street on-street (the section between Oak Street and Dolphin Street), Deal; and
- The Quay car park, Sandwich.

Linear charging is available in most Dover district public car parks and on-street. Linear charging is recognised as a fairer system for paying for parking as after a minimum charge (typically 30 minutes) customers are able to pay by the minute for any additional time they require. This eliminates the need to purchase parking by the hour when less time is required.

We continue to offer payment for parking by mobile telephone, using a system operated by RingGo. Details of this service are available on our website at: -

www.dover.gov.uk/parking/pay_by_phone.aspx

CURRENT OPERATION

Parking Services operates from bases in Dover and Deal, with enforcement carried out seven days a week including the evenings. The district is split into seven beats, four in Dover, two in Deal and one covering Sandwich and the rural areas. Two Civil Enforcement Officers are on duty most evenings and three are on duty on Sundays throughout the district subject to the availability of staff.

The Parking Administration section is operational from 9am until 5pm Monday to Friday. This section does not deal with personal callers although enquiries can be made in person at any of the Council's public offices. Addresses and opening hours of these offices are available on our web site at www.dover.gov.uk

Drivers who have been issued with a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) are able to pay the charge or appeal on-line. A person appealing on-line is able to access photographs of their vehicle taken at the time of the alleged contravention to help them make an informed decision as to whether or not to continue with the appeal. Details on how to do this are shown on the PCN.

Parking Administration can be contacted on parking@dover.gov.uk

ITEMS OF NOTE

In October 2013, we introduced enforcement of three further parking regulations as follows:

- Double parking: this applies when a vehicle is parked on a carriageway (road) and no part of that vehicle is within 50 cm of the edge of the carriageway (the kerb line) unless the vehicle is wholly within a marked parking bay. The penalty charge for this contravention is set at the higher level of £70, discounted by 50% if paid within 14 days.
- Dropped Crossings: dropped kerbs are there to assist those who wish to cross the road do so safely. Blocking this access causes obstruction and is a nuisance for other road users. Both the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Highway Code state that a driver must not park or wait where a kerb has been lowered. The penalty charge for this contravention is set at the higher level of £70, discounted by 50% if paid within 14 days. This action will not be taken at residential properties as it is the role of your local police service to enforce this under their powers as an offence of obstruction.
- Service of Penalty Charge Notice by post; should a parking contravention occur and a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) be prevented from issuing a Penalty Charge Notice to the driver or vehicle (e.g. by the motorist driving away or the CEO being abused), then the registered keeper details will be obtained from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and a Penalty Charge Notice will be issued through the post.

PENALTY CHARGE NOTICES (PCN's)

In the financial year 2013-2014, 10,767 PCN's were issued; 6,722 on-street and 3,995 in car parks. This was 3,076 fewer than in 2012-2013.

The table below gives a breakdown of reasons for issuing PCN's, and whether they were on or off-street for 2013-2014:

	On-Street	Off-Street	Total
All contraventions	6,722	3,995	10,767
On Street			
Lower level	2,901	0	2,901
05 Parked after expiry of paid time	282	0	282
06 Parked without displaying valid pay and display ticket	1,058	0	1,058
07 Parked beyond expired time	2	0	2
22 Reparked in parking place before return time expired	42	0	42
24 Not parked within the markings of a bay or space	6	0	6
30 Parked longer than permitted in free parking place	1,511	0	1,511
Higher level	3,871	0	3,871
01 Parked in a restricted street during prescribed hours	2,382	0	2,382
02 No waiting/loading	476	0	476
16 Parked in a permit bay without a valid permit	8	0	8
21 Parked in a suspended bay/space	25	0	25
23 Parked in an area not designated for that vehicle	99	0	99
25 Parked in loading space during prescribed hours	187	0	187
26 Double parked	27	0	27
27 Dropped footway	10	0	10
40 Parked in a disabled bay without displaying badge	165	0	165
45 Parked in a taxi rank	333	0	333
47 Parked in a restricted bus stop/stand	57	0	57
48 Stopped in a restricted area outside a school	19	0	19
61 Commercial vehicle	67	0	67
99 Pedestrian crossing	16	0	16
Off-Street			
Lower level	0	3,589	3,589
80 Parked for longer than maximum period permitted	0	23	23
82 Pay and Display ticket expired	0	1,245	1,245
83 No ticket displayed	0	2,103	2,103
86 Parked beyond the bay markings	0	202	202
93 Parked in a car park when closed	0	16	16
Higher level	0	406	406
70 Parked in a loading area without reasonable excuse	0	27	27
81 Parked in a restricted area in a car park	0	16	16
85 Parked in permit bay without valid permit	0	115	115
87 Parked in a disabled bay without displaying badge	0	166	166
91 Parked in an area not designated for that vehicle	0	82	82

When all reasonable attempts to recover outstanding charges have failed, Dover District Council utilises the services of three bailiff companies to recover this money owed to the public purse. This is at no cost to the Council and so is not a demand upon public money. 780 cases were passed to three bailiff companies in 2013 – 2014, 2 fewer than the previous financial year.

It should be noted that prior to passing any cases to bailiffs, where possible we will endeavour to reach a compromise on payment, which may include accepting payment by instalments.

Penalty Charge Notices are issued to foreign registered vehicles parked in contravention of the regulations within Dover district. Many of these are paid. However, in cases where payment is not made, Dover District Council utilises the services of a company specialising in the recovery of debts from abroad. In 2013 – 2014, 808 cases were passed to this collection agency, resulting in 99 payments being recovered.

STATISTICS

2,130 items of mail (excluding e-mails) were received by the Parking Services team during the year. Whilst this is a decrease of 1,503 items of postal mail received compared with 2012 – 2013, e-mail traffic has increased correspondingly, indicating that more people are using e-mail as a preferred method of communication.

Civil Enforcement Officers experienced 9 cases of violence that were serious enough to record using the Council's violence at work procedures for the period 2013 – 2014. This was an increase of 8 on the previous year.

Of the 10,767 Penalty Charge Notices issued during 2013 – 2014, 1,026 were subsequently cancelled or written off for a variety of reasons. It is important to stress that every case is treated individually and on its own merits and mitigating circumstances will always be considered. Along with other local authorities in Kent, Dover District Council has agreed and published its cancellation policy. This is in line with our aim to be open and transparent in parking matters. This policy and other parking related documents could be found at:

www.dover.gov.uk/parking/documents_policies.aspx

Civil Enforcement Officers report to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) all untaxed vehicles that are seen during the course of their patrols. During 2013 – 2014, 56 vehicles were reported in Dover, 29 in Deal and 2 in Sandwich and the rural areas of the district. The DVLA will then take enforcement action in all cases reported to them.

The table below shows a breakdown of where PCNs were issued during 2013 – 2014:

	On-Street	Off-Street	Total
Dover	4,009	1,431	5,440
Deal	2,224	2,254	4,478
Sandwich	495	306	801
Rural	44	4	48
Total	6,772	3,995	10,767

APPEALS AND CHALLENGES

Following the issue of a PCN, the vehicle owner may dispute its issue at three stages:

- An “informal challenge/representation” to the Local Authority prior to the issue of a Notice to Owner;
- Once a Notice to Owner has been issued, a formal representation to the Local Authority may be made; and
- If a formal representation is rejected the owner may appeal to an independent adjudicator at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

The process of considering challenges, representations and the defence of appeals is a legal process that requires officers dealing with these aspects to be trained in the relevant legislation and how to apply it. There must be a clear separation between the staff that decide on the issuing of PCN's and the staff that decide on representations. Within DDC, the issuing of PCN's is carried out by our own Civil Enforcement Officers, managed by a Team Leader. Representations are considered by the Parking Administration staff managed by their own separate Team Leader to ensure that the required separation is in place.

13 formal representations were made to an independent adjudicator at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal during 2013 – 2014. Of these, 6 were found in favour of DDC, 6 were found in favour of the appellant and 1 was not contested.

As referred to above, not all appeals go to an Adjudicator. During the year, 2,086 appeals and challenges were received by Parking Services. Of these, 930 resulted in the cancellation of the charge and the remainder were pursued for payment.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Expenditure and Income in surface-paying car parks

	2013 – 2014
	£
Parking services administration	51,736.14
Parking operations and enforcement	101,743.74
Corporate repair and maintenance	15,109.17
Vandalism of plant	561.00
Grounds maintenance-routine	3,300.10
Grounds maintenance – non-corporate	5,864.20
Electricity	2,715.70
Sewerage and environmental services	335.19
Rents payable	23,310.07
Business rates	153,399.11
Equipment-maintenance	22,338.41
Equipment-purchase	22.75
Printing from external printer	12,645.12
Land Registry Fees	5.00
Computer software maintenance	10,362.80
Computer link telephones	5,280.64
Subscriptions	2,631.00
Insurance-not vehicles or building	885.42
Compensation payments	1,040.00
Agency payments	674.20
Publicity advert(not recruit)	0
Reimburse 3rd party car parks	31,452.50
Reimburse RingGo fees collected	3,811.47
Central support-design studio	3,534.45
Central support-Dover District Council @ your service	19,505.12
Central support-accountancy	4,157.37
Central support-legal	2,012.18
Central support-property services	10,541.19
Central support-procurement and creditors	4,857.57
Central support-corporate income collection	2,311.52
Divisional overhead-parking services administration	33,097.54
Divisional overhead-parking operations and enforcement	44,238.88
Loss on revaluation	13,131.00
Miscellaneous licence income	-2,023.07
Car park fee income	-1,217,372.10
Car park season tickets	-71,523.40
Penalty charge notices	-78,990.14
Builders permits	-1,096.24
Residents permits	-38,326.37
Wayleave rent income	-53,057.44
	-893,494.71
Income	-1,465,138.76
Expenditure	295,744.35
Capital	-1,836.00
Parking Services Administration	230,816.30
Central Service Administration	46,919.40
	-893,494.71

Expenditure in free car parks

	2013 - 2014
	£
Parking operations and enforcement	14,130.50
Corporate repair and maintenance	5,052.16
Grounds maintenance-routine	1,544.45
Grounds maintenance – non-corporate	533.31
Rents payable	1.00
Business rates	6,086.85
Subscriptions	2,631.00
Compensation payments	185.80
Central support-accountancy	1,215.23
Central support-property services	7,005.65
Central support-procurement and creditors	325.17
Div overhead-parking operations and enforcement	6,144.04
	<u>44,855.16</u>
Expenditure	16,034.57
Parking Services Administration	20,274.54
Central Service Administration	8,546.05
	<u>44,855.16</u>

Expenditure in multi-storey car park

	2013 - 2014
	£
Corporate repair and maintenance	50.00
Water charges-metered	0.00
Rents payable	28,125.00
Business rates	4,097.70
Premises insurance	7,609.27
Central support-accountancy	575.64
Central support – property services	598.93
Central sup-procurement and creditors	162.58
	<u>41,219.12</u>
Expenditure	39,881.97
Parking Services Administration	0
Central Service Administration	1,337.15
	<u>41,219.12</u>

CIVIL ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Weekly briefings are held with all Civil Enforcement Officers during which they are updated with current legislation and regulations and informed of any particular issues. This ensures accurate, fair, transparent and consistent enforcement across the district.

In 2013 – 2014 DDC had an establishment of 2 CEO supervisors and 11 Civil Enforcement Officers. We also employ three part-time Parking Assistants whose role is to collect cash and undertake minor maintenance issues, freeing up the CEOs to undertake their enforcement role.

SAFER PARKING

This is an award scheme known as Park Mark® run by the British Parking Association (BPA) with the support of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). The award is given to those car parks that have a low crime rate and which demonstrate good management practices. Independent assessors from the police and the BPA inspect the car parks and decide whether or not each car park meets the necessary criteria for the award.

More information on the scheme is available on the BPA's website at www.britishparking.co.uk and a list of all car parks that have been accredited with the Park Mark® are listed on the Safer Parking website at www.saferparking.com

93% of the DDC car parks have the Park Mark® award.

If you have any questions relating to any part of this report, please do not hesitate to contact Christopher Allen, Head of Community Safety, CCTV and Parking, via e-mail at christopherallen@dover.gov.uk