

DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL



PARKING SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2015 – 2016

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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 2015 and 31st March 2016.

Whilst parking in contravention of the parking regulations is no longer a criminal act, it nonetheless remains 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 2014.

A copy of the KCC On-Street 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 £71,086 was made on-street during 2015 – 2016.

On 31st March 2008, new parking enforcement related legislation was introduced, known as the Traffic Management Act 2004. More information on this legislation is available from previous annual reports or our website at:-

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

or the Government Services website at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving>

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, 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 customers are able to pay by the minute for the time they require. This eliminates the need for the correct change and the need to purchase parking by the hour when less time is required. In the past, this minimum charge period was typically 30 minutes. However, on 8th February 2016 this minimum period charge was reduced to 40p except in car parks where minimum charge was already less.

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 Support 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 any evidence obtained at the time, including photographs, 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 Support can be contacted on parking@dover.gov.uk

ITEMS OF NOTE

- With effect from 8th February 2016, there was an increase in parking charges for both on and off-street parking including permit charges.
- On 11th June 2015, Bench Street car park, Dover, with 47 Pay and Display bays, opened.
- On 30th September 2015, Russell Street car park was closed as part of the regeneration plans for the Dover district. This resulted in the loss of 237 parking bays.
- This financial year also saw the demolition of the multi-storey car park in Dover as part of the regeneration plans. It should be noted that this building had not been used as a car park for some considerable time, and therefore its demolition did not result in the loss of any further parking spaces.

PENALTY CHARGE NOTICES (PCN's)

In the financial year 2015-2016, 12,132 PCN's were issued; 8,252 on-street and 3,880 in car parks. This was 944 more than in 2014-2015.

The table below gives a breakdown of reasons for issuing PCN's, and whether they were on or off-street for 2015-2016: -

	On-Street	Off-Street	Total
All contraventions	8252	3880	12132
On Street			
Lower level	3072	0	3072
05 Parked after expiry of paid time	192	0	192
06 Parked without displaying valid pay and display ticket	875	0	875
07 Parked beyond expired time	0	0	0
22 Reparked in parking place before return time expired	12	0	12
24 Not parked within the markings of a bay or space	0	0	0
30 Parked longer than permitted in free parking place	1993	0	1993
Higher level	5180	0	5180
01 Parked in a restricted street during prescribed hours	3228	0	3228
02 No waiting/loading	626	0	626
16 Parked in a permit bay without a valid permit	12	0	12
21 Parked in a suspended bay/space	35	0	35
23 Parked in an area not designated for that vehicle	143	0	143
25 Parked in loading space during prescribed hours	198	0	198
26 Double parked	26	0	26
27 Dropped footway	16	0	16
40 Parked in a disabled bay without displaying badge	158	0	158
45 Parked in a taxi rank	351	0	351
47 Parked in a restricted bus stop/stand	70	0	70
48 Stopped in a restricted area outside a school	39	0	39
61 Commercial vehicle	263	0	263
99 Pedestrian crossing	15	0	15
Off-Street			
Lower level	0	3567	3567
80 Parked for longer than maximum period permitted	0	98	98
82 Pay and Display ticket expired	0	951	951
83 No ticket displayed	0	2272	2272
86 Parked beyond the bay markings	0	226	226
93 Parked in a car park when closed	0	20	20
Higher level	0	313	313
70 Parked in a loading area without reasonable excuse	0	26	26
81 Parked in a restricted area in a car park	0	15	15
85 Parked in permit bay without valid permit	0	49	49
87 Parked in a disabled bay without displaying badge	0	138	138
91 Parked in an area not designated for that vehicle	0	85	85

When all attempts by Parking Services to recover outstanding charges have failed, Dover District Council utilises the services of three Enforcement Agencies (previously referred to as bailiffs) to recover this money. This is at no cost to the Council and so is not a demand upon public money. 687 cases were passed to the Enforcement Agencies in 2015 – 2016, 109 fewer than the previous financial year. Prior to passing any cases to Enforcement Agencies, where possible we will endeavour to reach a compromise on payment, including accepting payment by instalments. However, where all reasonable attempts to seek repayment have failed, we will have no hesitation in passing cases on in order that we can properly recover money owing to the public purse.

The Enforcement Agencies utilised by Parking Services do not operate under contract, but under a Service Level Agreement, which is renewed annually.

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 2015 – 2016, 965 cases were passed to this collection agency, an increase of 117 on the previous reporting year. Of these, 68 payments were recovered, an increase of 8 on the previous year.

STATISTICS

There were no cases of violence reported by Civil Enforcement Officers this reporting year compared to two the previous year. This continued decline in such incidents is clearly welcomed, and may well be accounted for by the introduction of Body Worn Video cameras.

Of the 12,132 Penalty Charge Notices issued during 2015 – 2016, 744 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

The table below shows a breakdown of where PCNs were issued during 2015 – 2016:

	On-Street	Off-Street	Total
Dover	5339	1369	6708
Deal	2313	2158	4471
Sandwich	485	316	801
Rural	115	37	152
Total	8252	3880	12132

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 Parking Operations Manager and representations are considered by the Parking Administration staff managed by their own Manager to ensure that the required separation is in place.

4 formal representations were made to an independent adjudicator at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal during 2015 – 2016. Of these, 1 was found in favour of DDC, 1 was found in favour of the appellant and 1 was not contested. The other case was not heard during this reporting year.

As referred to above, not all appeals go to an Adjudicator. During the year, 1,066 appeals and challenges were received by Parking Services. Of these, 300 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

	2015 - 2016
	£
Parking services administration	252,547.12
Repair and maintenance	32,145.19
Utilities	3,606.55
Rents payable	31,787.32
Business rates	160,624.46
Equipment	24,135.28
Printing	7,172.97
Computer software maintenance	10,861.12
Computer link telephones	4,969.00
Subscriptions	2,699.92
Insurance	1,124.96
Bank charges	4,754.97
Agency payments	3,018.92
Publicity advert (not recruit)	1,654.80
Reimburse third party car parks	37,411.84
Reimburse RingGo fees collected	6,670.51
Central support costs	43,275.12
Miscellaneous licence income	-14,427.78
Car park fee income	-1,286,969.57
Car park season tickets	-97,125.36
Penalty charge notices	-66,390.23
Builders permits	-1,796.31
Residents permits	-26,362.17
Rent income	-4,450.00
Wayleave rent income	-60,519.79
	-913,328.16
	<hr/>
Income	-1,558,041.21
Expenditure	332,637.81
Capital	16,253.00
Parking Services Administration	252,547.12
Central Service Administration	43,275.12
	-913,328.16
	<hr/>

Expenditure in free car parks

	2015 - 2016
	£
Parking operations and enforcement	31,693.98
Repair and maintenance	4,095.47
Rents payable	1.00
Business rates	6,324.00
Subscriptions	2,699.92
Central support	10,072.14
Wayleave rent income	-95.83
	<u>54,790.68</u>
Expenditure	13,120.39
Parking Services Administration	31,693.98
Central Service Administration	10,072.14
Income	-95.83
	<u>54,790.68</u>

Expenditure in multi-storey car park

	2015 - 2016
	£
Repair and maintenance	2.27
Rents payable	0.00
Business rates	4,289.10
Premises insurance	0.00
Central support	5,875.81
	<u>10,167.18</u>
Expenditure	4,291.37
Parking Services Administration	0
Central Service Administration	5,875.81
	<u>10,167.18</u>

Additional financial information, particularly in relation to on-street, can be found at

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/Transport,-Streets--Parking/Parking/Documents--Policies/Home.aspx>

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 2015 – 2016 DDC had an establishment of 2 CEO supervisors and 11 Civil Enforcement Officer's. We also employ two part-time Parking Assistants, whose role is to collect cash and undertake minor maintenance issues, freeing up the CEOs to undertake their enforcement role.

During this reporting year, we recruited to our full strength and for the majority of the year had few absences other than annual leave.

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.

TRANSPARENCY

Councils are required to publish annually the number of controlled parking spaces within their area. The table provides that information:

CONTROLLED OFF-STREET SPACES			
TOWN	P&D SPACES	DIS. SPACES	TOTAL
Dover	691	26	717
Deal	960	46	1006
Sandwich	427	12	439
Total	2078	84	2162

ESTIMATED CONTROLLED OFF-STREET SPACES	
TOWN	ESTIMATED SPACES
Dover	352
Deal	1073
Sandwich	191
Total	1616

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