



# Annual Parking Report

2008 - 2009



South Hams  
District Council



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## Annual Report

### South Hams District Council

### Parking Enforcement Activities 2008/9

## 1 Introduction and Overview

This report deals with **On** and **Off** -street parking within the South Hams District Council area. Devon County Council produced a report on On-street parking for the local authorities for which they are the highway authority.

This report therefore deals mainly with Off-street parking for which we are solely responsible.

**On**-street refers to the parking restrictions on the highway. **Off** street refers to the council's pay and display (P&D) car parks.

The South Hams covers an area of 350 square miles and has 60 miles of coastline. With its southerly aspect sheltered by the granite uplands of Dartmoor, the South Hams enjoys one of the mildest climates in the whole of mainland Britain.

It is a rich natural area and 130 square miles (337 sq.km.) of the district is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with 30.86 square mile coverage of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are 62 miles (100 km) of coastal path and 16 miles (26 km) of beaches. Approximately 30 miles (50 km) of coastline is owned by the National Trust and 47 miles (75 km) is designated Heritage Coast.

The South Hams has a population of about 81,000. It has six market towns and main commercial centres. These are Dartmouth, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge, Salcombe, Totnes and Modbury.

There are about 36,500 households within South Hams. 85% of which have at least one car. Most of the towns were built long before the motorcar and it follows that the streets and roads are narrow with limited parking provision. Also, most homes in the towns do not benefit from off road parking.

Thousands of visitors come to the South Hams during the holiday periods considerably expanding the population and the demand for parking spaces.

## 2 Off Street Car Parking Provision

From 1990 until May 2008 we have operated our car parks under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. We used the issue of standard charge notices to ensure users pay and display and comply with the other rules in the car parks. Enforcement was undertaken by street scene inspectors on regular patrols.

These officers were also multi-tasked with other street problems such as pannier markets, litter and fly tipping complaints.

The general overarching policy of why this council has in place Off street car parking is to broadly support Council Priority 2 - 'creating the conditions for the growth and maintenance of quality economic activity'. In doing so it endeavours:

- To develop the car and boat parking services, within the Council's core objectives, which will link to policies established within other service areas and with other stakeholders.
- To provide car parks in relation to the needs of the various groups of customers and ensure that, wherever possible, current and future requirements are met. The priority for provision will be:
  - Supporting tourism by providing sufficient off street parking and facilities.
  - Supporting businesses by providing sufficient off street parking for customers
  - Supporting local residents by providing sufficient off street parking for shopping and other facilities

To this aim South Hams District Council operates 38 pay and display (P&D) car parks and 14 free car parks.

The car parks are located within the six main towns of Dartmouth, Ivybridge Kingsbridge, Salcombe, Totnes and Modbury and the tourist coastal areas of Bigbury and Slapton

There are 3,336 spaces in the P&D car parks and 48 ticket issuing machines. There is a program to replace the worn out machines and ten are being purchased to replace the severely weathered ones on the coast.

### **Blue badge holders**

Parking concessions are granted to blue badge holders. These are similar to many other authorities. The concessions allow blue badge holders to park in the P&D car parks an extra hour free on top of what they have already paid for. Those blue badge holders who also display a disabled tax exempt disc can park free for the first three hours. In all cases the Blue Badge must be properly displayed.

### **Town centre free parking promotions**

Each year a free parking concession is provided in the six main towns, if requested by them, to assist in attracting customers to the towns shops. This usually amounts to two and one half days

## **Public events in car parks.**

Numerous public events take place in the car parks. The activities range from filming, sponsorship events youth outreach, health screening, car boot sales and so on.

Application forms can be obtained from the Street Scene office email [carparks.team@southhams.gov.uk](mailto:carparks.team@southhams.gov.uk)

General public Events 2008/9 = 67

Car Boot Sales 2008/9 = 21

When these events take place they do reduce the number of parking spaces available. The number of events for the year 2009/10 is likely to exceed those in 2008/9.

## **Dartmouth 2008 Regatta**

During the 2008 Dartmouth Regatta the Park and Ride services operated overflow areas in a neighbouring farmer's fields.

## **3 Car Parks Charging Policy**

The policy for determining the level of charges is based on the type and mix of the users plus the location of the car park.

For instance a car park predominantly used by tourists and located next to locations they wish to be and that also has good associated services provided by the Council will attract a premium charge for car parking.

There are 14 free car parks located throughout the district usually in out lying parish areas.

In addition to the pay and display machines we provide a range of parking permits which give various discounts. These are as follows:

Annual Parking Permit

Six Months Parking Permit

One Month Parking Permit

Commuter Permit (12 months)

Weekly Permit (7 days consecutive)

Annual Reserved Permit

Blue Badge Disabled book of passes

An Annual Concessionary Residents pass (pilot scheme)

Leisure permits

These are available through Customer Services 01803 861234.

Full details and charges can be found on [www.southhams.gov.uk](http://www.southhams.gov.uk)

## **4 Changes To The Enforcement Structure**

In May 2008 the Secretary of State for Transport designated the County of Devon as a Civil Enforcement Area. As Devon operates a two-tier system of local government this power therefore applies equally to the district owned **Off-street** car parks as well as the county council's **On-street** parking restrictions.

The agreement with D.C.C. provides for Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) to be employed by the district councils to carry out the enforcement duties on the roads and streets. It also provides for a back office for the processing of penalty charge notices (PCNs). This includes the consideration of challenges and appeals and the processing of PCN payments for both Off-street and On-street.

This council acts as agents for Devon County Council with regards to ON-street enforcement and we report to Devon's parking manager.

In 2008/9 a considerable amount of work has been carried out by the street scene office and the councils ICT section to make the changes required to operate a Civil Parking Enforcement regime.

Additional administration staff have been recruited along with five additional Civil Enforcements Officers (CEOs) to patrol the streets and roads covered by parking restrictions.

### **Staffing issues**

It is of concern to us, as it is across the County, that officers enforcing traffic regulations on the street have taken on the role traditionally done by the police. Unfortunately our staff are subject to continual petty insulting jibes and occasional assault from people. Parking disputes have become high profile in the local media.

### **Existing Parking Orders and signing for car parks**

To comply with the Traffic Management Act existing car parking orders were brought up to date. The signs for the car parks were altered to cater for the change in legislation.

We worked closely with Devon County Council in a publicity campaign to help the public understand that enforcement of the traffic orders which had for the most part elapsed in previous years was now returning.

## 5 Enforcement And Appeals

Prior to May 2008 many On-street areas had little effective enforcement for some time. In many locations motorists had been parking illegally for a number of years prior to the start date and the message is now filtering out amongst highway users that this is no longer permitted. There was only one police traffic warden on enforcement duties when this council took over.

### Operations

We employ twelve CEOs, five of whom are funded by the county council to enforce On street parking. Seven of our CEOs are also street scene officers who multi-task, carrying out other enforcement duties, as well as enforcing the Off-street car parks. The service operates 7 days a week.

### Administration

All On and Off street challenges to the issue of a PCN; representations when a Notice to Owner is sent and appeals to the Adjudicator are dealt with in the council's computerised office at Follaton House, Totnes.

Payments are taken for PCNs and permits by the Customer Service Team. Payments can be made, at the offices in person, by telephone, post and electronically.

It is intended to respond to all challenges from the public within ten days. Most are responded to within five days.

Members of the public whose challenge to a PCN has been refused can then appeal to the independent Adjudicators office. For further details please visit [www.patrol-uk.info](http://www.patrol-uk.info). Leaflets are also available from the council's offices.

### Complaints of illegal parking

We received 114 requests from the public to take action against illegally parked vehicles.

The main areas of complaints are Totnes (31); Ivybridge (22); Dartmouth and Kingswear (14); Kingsbridge (9) and Salcombe (8).

### Warnings issued

Recording the warnings given by CEOs began in November 2008.

142 written warnings were issued on the introduction of Totnes pay and display machines in February. 75 warnings were also given elsewhere.

### Dispensations

The Traffic Regulation Order allows certain groups of people to park where restrictions would ordinarily apply. Medical staff already have a recognisable sticker to put on their vehicles. Others do not and often receive PCNs which are later cancelled. The common problem is with builders and similar workmen's' vehicles. We advise having a formal note (a dispensation) that confirms that we are aware of their presence. When displayed on the vehicle it prevents PCNs being issued unnecessarily which only have to be cancelled later.

Since November 2008 we have been issuing dispensations to tradesmen who need to park in the street in order to access their vehicles for tools etc.

111 dispensations were issued by the office and 16 direct by CEOs. For further information on this scheme see: [www.southhams.gov.uk](http://www.southhams.gov.uk)

## 6 Changes That Have Taken Place This Year

### New tariff permits

A £10 Concessionary Resident Parking Permit was introduced for use by residents in the council owned car parks . This is a trial scheme allows residents to park free in the car parks between 4pm and 10am and is intended to encourage shoppers into the towns. Just over 3,500 were sold against a possible 40,000 sales.

There were no increases in the P&D tariff during 2008/9 due to the economic downturn. However, parking permit prices were increased.

The council continues to investigate different P&D payments systems in the car parks to make it easier for customers.

### Replacement machines

New P&D machines were ordered to replace severely weathered machines on the coast.

### No waiting cones

In the summer members of the public who need to keep an area clear to receive services such as removal vans or builder's vehicles were able borrow 'no waiting' cones from the council at no charge, only a refundable deposit. These can be obtained by contacting Customers Services on 01803 861234.

## 7 Statistical Information

### Permits sales

Permit Type	2008/9
Annual, six and one month permits	1250
Commuter permits	499
Leisure permits	3251
Weekly Permit (7 days consecutive)	37 books of 50
Annual Reserved Permit	57
Blue Badge Disabled book of passes	28 books of 20
Annual Concessionary Residents permit	3,500

<b>PENALTY CHARGE NOTICES ISSUED 2008/9</b>	<b>2008/9</b>
ON street PCNs issued at higher level	3,013
OFF street PCNs issued at higher level	571
<b>HIGHER LEVEL PCNS TOTAL</b>	<b>3,584</b>
ON street PCNs issued at lower level	2,460
OFF street PCNs issued at lower level	3,954
<b>LOWER LEVEL PCNS TOTAL</b>	<b>6,414</b>
<b>Total No of PCN issued On Street</b>	<b>5,473</b>
<b>Total No of PCN issued Off Street</b>	<b>4,525</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>9,998</b>
PCNs Paid at discount rate On Street	3,393
PCNs Paid at discount rate Off Street	2,401
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,794</b>
PCNs Paid at non-discount rate On Street	475
PCNs Paid at non-discount rate Off Street	342
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>817</b>
<b>TOTAL ON street total number of PCNs paid</b>	<b>3,868</b>
<b>TOTAL OFF street total number of PCNs paid</b>	<b>2,743</b>
<b>OVERALL NUMBER OF PCNS PAID TOTAL</b>	<b>6,611</b>
Number of registrations with Traffic Enforcement Centre	0
No Challenges to PCNs Received On Street	1482
No Challenges to PCNs Received Off Street	2017
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3499</b>
No of PCNs cancelled for statutory reasons On street	94
No of PCNs cancelled for statutory reasons Off street	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>99</b>
Total number of challenged PCNs waived On street	535
Total number of challenged PCNs waived Off street	1,147
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1682</b>
<b>TOTAL WAIVED GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1,781</b>
No of Appeals to NPAS On Street	7
No of Appeals to NPAS Off Street	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>
No of PCNs written off untraceable etc On Street	183
No of PCNs written off untraceable etc Off Street	116
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>299</b>
Number of vehicles clamped or removed	0
% Appeals PER NUMBER ISSUED On Street	10%
% Appeals PER NUMBER ISSUED Off Street	25%
% OF APPEALS received ALLOWED On Street	36%
% OF APPEALS received ALLOWED Off Street	56%

## Financial Information

<b>CAR AND BOAT PARKING</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	£1,190,212
Income	£(2,572,461)
<b>NET TOTAL COST OF SERVICE</b>	<b>£(1,382,249)</b>

## 7 Conclusion

Parking provokes a great deal of tension amongst motorists and residents some wanting stronger enforcement and then the motorist who resents receiving a PCN. The enforcement of parking in the country is something that people want and don't want at the same time. We receive complaints daily from the community asking and complaining that we should be taking enforcement action about vehicles illegally parked. We respond to these as best we can. When we do take enforcement it is resented. People do not like getting parking tickets.

The number of cancellations after appeal for the Off-street PCNs appears high however most appeals involve the motorist sending in a pay and display ticket that was not visible to the CEO but had apparently fallen down inside the car. This also applies to disabled blue badge holders who have not displayed a badge but who subsequently produce evidence of a valid badge.

Devon County Council reviewed the On street parking carried out by this council and its back office and commented on the performance in their report:-

South Hams District Council has demonstrated that it can run an effective parking enforcement service. It appears particularly efficient at running a back office service that processes all of the Districts enforcement activities as well as the on-street penalties. They should be commended on their approach to providing a parking service on behalf of the County Council and used as an example of good practice for other authorities. It is recommended that the CEO resource is increased to 6 to allow some enforcement in evenings.'

To view this report visit:

[http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision\\_making/cma/cma\\_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes\\_exc\\_20090721.html](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_exc_20090721.html)

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## Other sources of information

- Department of Transport Operational Guidance [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)
- Review of Decriminalised parking enforcement by British Parking Association June 2005. [www.britishparking.co.uk](http://www.britishparking.co.uk)
- Report by DCC first year CPE 2009 [www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk)



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