

Off Street Annual Parking Report 2011/12

Introduction

The Traffic Management Act 2004 introduced a requirement for Enforcement Authorities to report on their Parking Enforcement Activities on an annual basis. Runnymede Borough Council, under an agency agreement, carries out 'On Street' parking enforcement on behalf of the Highways Authority, Surrey County Council.

For these 'On Street' activities Surrey County Council is the Enforcement Authority and they will be producing a report to cover the activities of the various Boroughs carried out on their behalf.

Runnymede Borough Council operates a number of 'Off Street' car parks most of which are operated under a 'Pay and Display' charging system. Enforcement Activity is undertaken in these car parks by Runnymede Borough Council and this document is published to report on those activities.

Legal Provisions

The Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) lays down the requirements under which, Civil Parking Enforcement is carried out. These provisions apply to 'off street' car parks as well as on the roads. The car parks in the Borough are subject to a Traffic Regulation Order (The Borough of Runnymede (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2008.)

This order, and its amendments, details the car park regulations in car parks. The order also allows for the issue of Penalty Charge Notices for certain contraventions of the order. The issue of these notices and the procedures which follow their issue are laid down by the TMA and regulations made under it.

Patrol and Enforcement activities in the car parks are carried out by Civil Enforcement Officers.

Borough Car Parks

There are 14 pay and display car parks within the Borough and most are located in the town and village centres to service the needs of visitors to those centres. Two larger car parks close to railway stations, at Virginia Water and Egham, provide long stay facilities for commuters and people working in the towns. One car park serves the popular leisure facility at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds.

All of the pay and display facilities have previously been awarded the 'Park Mark', safer parking award. Due to the cost of maintaining membership of this scheme

the Council withdrew from it in the year in order to achieve a financial saving. The Parking Services team does however aim to maintain the facilities to the standard required by that scheme.

All of the Council's town and village car parks are covered by CCTV operated 24 hours per day from the Safer Runnymede Control room.

The main objective of making charges in the car parks is to cover the costs of their maintenance, infrastructure and management, ensuring that the people using the facilities pay for them.

The secondary objective is to ensure that parking is available for people using the facilities in the town and villages by ensuring a turn over of spaces in the car parks. This is particularly important in the car parks supporting the shops in the town centres where most car parks are 'short stay' facilities.

The level of charges in the car parks is reviewed annually by the Councils Environment and Sustainability Committee. The Committee balances the charges at a level that maximises the income, without deterring visitors, which could affect the viability and vitality of the town and villages in the Borough. A comparison with charges from comparable car parks in adjoining Boroughs is always made as part of this process. Runnymede is consistently at the lower end of charges levied as it has to compete with the neighbouring larger shopping centres of Staines and Woking.

The Environment and Sustainability Committee decided to increase charges in the Borough 'Town Centre' car parks with effect from January 2012. Charges in the Boroughs small 'Out of Town' car parks remained unchanged.

17 new pay and display parking machines were installed in the car parks in October last year to replace the ageing stock. These machines are networked so that their status can be monitored remotely by the Parking Services staff. This helps to ensure that faults can be rectified promptly.

Enforcement Activities

The Borough employs three uniformed Civil Enforcement Officers to patrol and enforce on and off street matters throughout the Borough. As well as ensuring the charging regime in the car parks is complied with, the staff also help to ensure that any defects, or other issues affecting the car parks, are reported and rectified. The Officers are all trained to nationally recognised standards and receive refresher training when necessary. The officers were all provided with body worn CCTV facilities during the year to enhance their safety and provide an accurate recording, to an evidential standard, of incidents they are involved in.

Penalty Charge Notices

Vehicles appearing to be parked in contravention of certain aspects of the Traffic Order can be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) which is normally attached to the vehicle or handed to the driver by the CEO. The level of the charges, set by central government, is currently £50 for a lower level contravention, and £70 for a higher level contravention. The charges can be settled at a reduced charge of £25 or £35 respectively if paid within 14 days of issue.

The level of the charge is designed to reflect the severity of the contravention. For example if someone was to remain in the car park for a longer period than they had paid for then they would receive a lower level charge. Those who park in a disabled person's bay, when not holding the appropriate badge, which is considered to be a more serious contravention, would receive a higher level charge.

Once a PCN has been issued, the driver can challenge the issue of the notice with the Council. Trained members of the Parking Services Team will consider the circumstances and any mitigation given by the driver. While the challenge is being considered the case will be placed on hold so that, even if the challenge is rejected, the motorist can still settle the matter at the reduced charge.

When a challenge is made and rejected, or no payment made, the owner of the vehicle is sent a 'Notice to Owner'. This is the driver's opportunity to make formal representations against the issue of the Penalty Charge Notice. Consideration of these representations is carried out by the Parking Services Manager. Should the representations be rejected a driver then has an opportunity to appeal against that decision to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal. This is an independent body where Adjudicators will consider the case and whose decision is binding on both the Council and the Motorist.

Statistics April 2011-March 2012

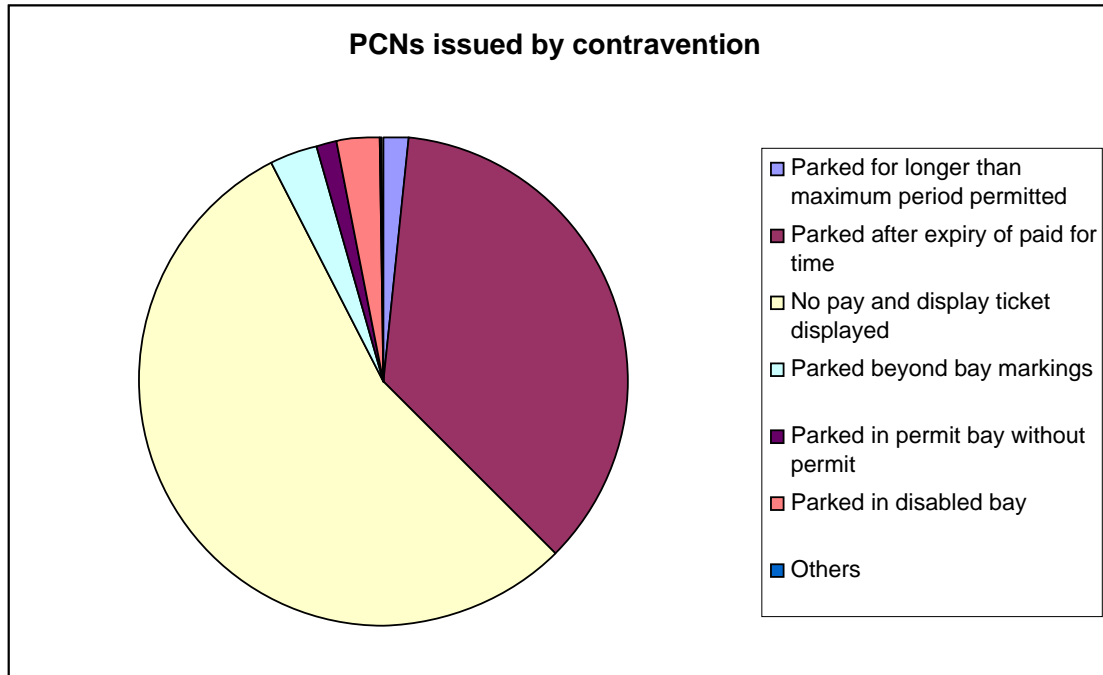
OFF STREET PARKING	Number	%
Total PCNs issued	32613	
Higher level PCNs issued	117	4.4
Lower level PCNs issued	2496	95.5
Paid at discount	1607	61.5
Paid at full (or above)	276	10.6

PCNs paid	1883	72.1
PCNs against which formal or informal representations made	759	29.1
PCNS cancelled as a result of formal or informal representations	389	14.9
PCNs cancelled for other reasons	89	3.4
PCNs written off	43	1.66

In comparison to the last year PCN issue was down by 789.

Contraventions

The below chart show the PCN issue for various contraventions.



Adjudication Statistics

During the year 2011/2012 nine cases were appealed to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal by motorists. The Adjudicators refused seven of those and allowed two.

Income and Expenditure

Income and expenditure in relation to off street parking activities

Expenditure £355,035
Income £632,001
Surplus £276,966

This completes the annual report for off street car parking activities in the borough of Runnymede.

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4th October 2012