

Off Street Parking Report 2009

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 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 centre. 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 been awarded the 'Park Mark', safer parking award. This award is made following an inspection of the facility by a

Police Crime Reduction Officer and an Inspector from the British Parking Association. The inspection looks at the physical attributes of the car park together with the management of the facilities. Reported crime in the car parks is also considered before an award is made.

Two free parking facilities have also received an award under the scheme. The latest inspections were completed in August 2009.

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

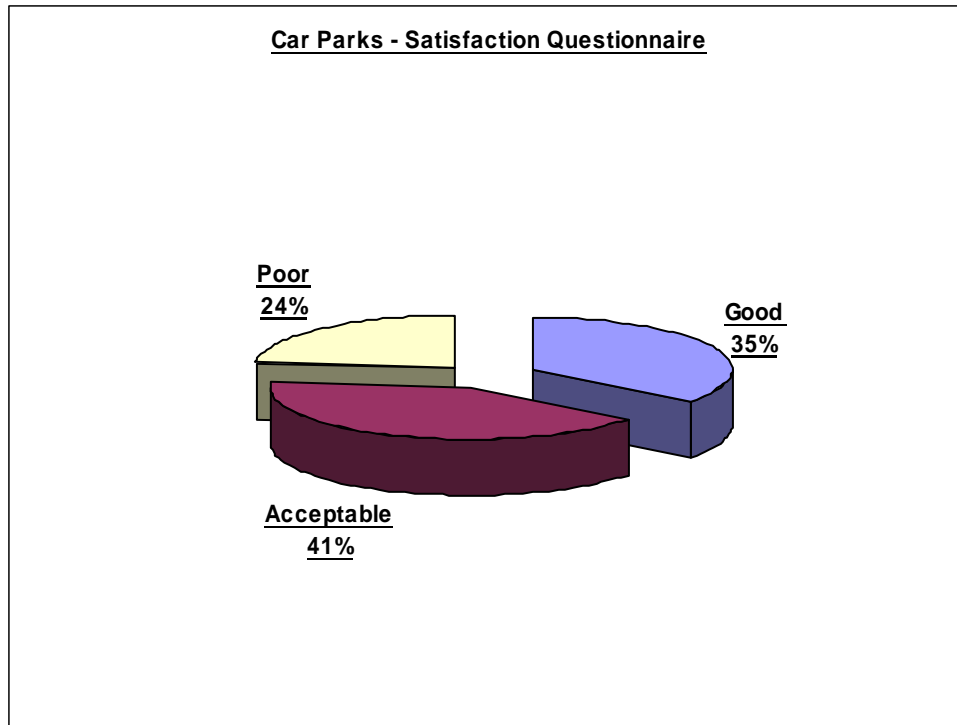
The main objective of making charges in the car parks is to cover the costs of their maintenance, infrastructure and management, ensuring that the people using the facilities pay for them.

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 Elected Members of the Council who carry out the difficult task of balancing the charges at a level that meets the objectives of charging yet enhances the vibrancy of the town and villages in the Borough.

An annual survey is undertaken where questionnaires are distributed to car park users to seek their views on a number of aspects relating to the car parks. These findings are reported to members and help them to assess future car park charges. Other issues raised are considered by the Management team for remedial action as necessary.

The overall result of the last survey in relation to customer satisfaction is shown below. This result records the overall customer satisfaction of Runnymede residents with the safety, charges, accessibility, cleanliness and lighting of car parks in the borough.



Enforcement Activities

The Borough employs four 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 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.

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. 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 might park in a disabled persons bay when not holding the appropriate badge, would receive a higher level charge.

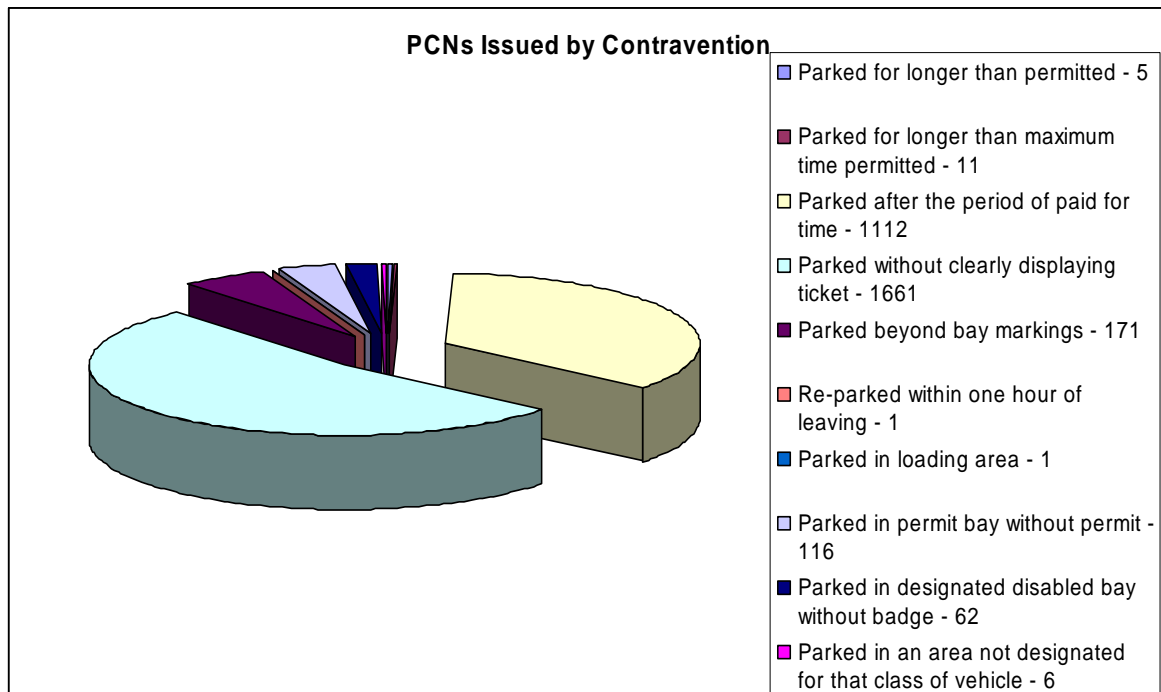
Once a Penalty Charge Notice is issued, the driver can challenge the issue of the notice with the Council. Trained members of the Parking Services Team will

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 2008-March2009

OFF STREET PARKING	Number	%
Total PCNs issued	3146	
Higher level PCNs issued	185	6
Lower level PCNs issued	2961	94
Paid at discount	2005	64
Paid at full (or above)	111	4
PCNs paid	2116	67
PCNs against which formal or informal representations made	514	16
PCNS cancelled as a result of formal or informal representations	361	11
PCNs cancelled for other reasons	160	5
PCNs written off	35	1
Vehicles immobilised	N/A	
Vehicles removed	N/A	



Adjudication Statistics

During the year 2009 two cases were appealed to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal by drivers. The Adjudicators refused both cases.

Income and Expenditure

Income and expenditure in relation to off street parking activities

Expenditure £548,000

Income £619,800

Surplus £71,000

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

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 25 September 2009