

**ADDENDUM 2**

**PARKING IN THANET**

**RESIDENTS' PARKING SCHEMES**

# RESIDENTS' PARKING IN THANET

## GENERAL

Members have introduced residents' 'on street' parking schemes in Thanet in order to address problems relating to the availability of local parking spaces for residents, and to stimulate a turnover of parking spaces to encourage shoppers and short term visitors to the area who may otherwise be discouraged from coming to a town because of a lack of suitable 'on street' parking. The schemes are also designed to improve traffic management in terms of flow, and may assist in reducing traffic speed.

## THE CONTROL OF PARKING SCHEMES

Since January 2000 the enforcement of all parking and waiting controls in Thanet was taken over by the Thanet District Council in partnership with and on behalf of the Kent County Council, which remains the Highway Authority. Under the agreement, the Thanet Joint Transportation Board (JTB), a committee which comprises Elected Members of both the County and District councils, has greater involvement in the promotion and introduction of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) in Thanet. The JTB will in turn make recommendations about TROs to the District Council's relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder.

Whereas the original residents' parking schemes were initiated by the Highway Authority, Members are now of the opinion that the concept of residents' parking is generally better understood and that it is appropriate that future schemes should be resident led. The Council, therefore, takes the view that no new residents' parking schemes will be proposed, investigated or introduced unless the request has come from, and is supported by, a significant majority of residents living within a particular area.

## RESIDENTS' PARKING EXPLAINED

This brochure is intended to clarify some of the issues associated with the provision and management of residents' parking schemes so that you may decide if the concept is relevant to your situation.

## THE CAUSES OF PARKING PROBLEMS

In broad terms, some of the traffic related problems which confront both residents and shoppers are:-

(a) difficulties caused when certain large goods vehicles need to make a delivery, either in

isolation or in combination;

(b) indifferent regard to time limits on waiting, with the knock-on inconvenience to other motorists and residents who rely on the availability of a parking bay;

(c) in many roads car owning residents without garages have regular parking difficulties, and residents with garages have occasional to frequent access problems, due to inconsiderate 'on-street' parking;

(d) commuters, including some who live outside the immediate area – who park close to railway stations and who utilise kerb-space all day which could be better used by other categories of motorists;

(e) pedestrian safety is compromised by pavement parking and by the manoeuvring of certain large vehicles through narrow streets congested with cars;

(f) shop workers who occupy parking places close to town centres, therefore denying the space to both residents and shoppers.

These problems are known to exist, to a greater or lesser extent, in other areas of Thanet.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What do residents' parking schemes offer?

In Thanet, residents' permit bays are always for shared use, meaning that the general public are able to use the parking bays but are subject to a parking time limit (generally for the periods of 1 hour, 2 hours or 4 hours) whereas Resident Permit Holders are permitted to park without time limit in those same bays.

There are two types of residents' parking places. The first is in areas where parking is most sought after, usually close to the main shopping areas where on street residents' parking places are subject to a one hour or two hour waiting limit between 8 am and 6 pm on Mondays to Saturdays. The second is in areas further away from the shops, where there are parking places subject to a four hour waiting limit between 9 am and 5 pm on Mondays to Fridays.

In both cases, there is no restriction after the period when the time limit ceased to apply, or on Sundays. The time limit does not apply to Permit Holders or to purchasers of a daily visitors permit.

Generally, pay and display (P&D) bays may not be used for residents' parking, although residents living within roads with P&D may apply for a permit to use a convenient adjacent road provided with residents' bays if they so wish.

### **Why are parking bays shared?**

The Kent County Council, as Highway Authority, has established the shared model for all past and future residents' parking schemes.

Experience, both in Thanet and elsewhere, has shown that better use of existing kerb space is achieved by allowing vacant residents' parking bays to be used for strictly time limited waiting by other drivers. In places where bays are strictly for residents only – usually only in city centres – this is sometimes very inconvenient for residents as there is then no recognised parking place for their visitors – which includes not only family, but repair services, etc. By providing significantly more parking places, shared parking has not been an issue in Thanet.

### **What time limits are best?**

There is no hard and fast rule – it is up to residents to consider the options and to propose which time limit will best suit their particular circumstances. It might be helpful to consider the following:-

*1 hour limit applying Monday to Saturday* – these parking places have the quickest turnover and are very useful close to shops where shoppers can make good use of the bays. It also means that returning residents have a better chance of immediately finding a vacant bay close to home. Not so useful if the walking time from the parking place to the shops and back will take up a good portion of the allotted hour, and inconvenient for residents having weekend visitors.

*2 hour limit applying Monday to Saturday* – usually placed further out from the shops, these bays are more useful to the motorist who wants more than an hour and is willing to spend a few minutes walking from vehicle to destination. Although the turnover of bays should ensure a parking place for returning residents, they may have less luck in immediately finding their 'ideal' parking place. Visitors can stay longer without needing a visitor's permit.

*4 hour limit applying Monday to Friday* - great for visitors who can stay from 1 pm on Fridays to 1 pm on Mondays without needing a permit. These parking places are avidly sought by motorists requiring free parking for up to four hours – shoppers, visitors, part-time workers and even some 'unsocial hours' shift workers.

Some areas already have time limited parking or P&D without any residents' scheme. In these cases, where residents request a scheme, it is probable the existing parking time limits will remain unchanged.

### **Who can have a Residents' Permit?**

When an area is nominated for residents' parking, any resident of that area will be able to

apply to the Council for the issue of a Residents' Parking Permit.

### **What types of vehicle qualify?**

Residents' Parking Permits will be restricted to:- (a) passenger motor vehicles; (b) goods vehicles having a gross weight not exceeding 3500 kilograms; and (c) motor cycles (with or without sidecar). Residents' permits are not provided in respect of caravans, trailers or lorries.

### **What about my visitors?**

All residents can obtain a daily permit for their visitors to park in a residents' parking bay. Permits are sold singularly (£2.50 each) or in books of 20 (£40). There is no limit on the number of permits you can have. You do not need to be a Residents' Permit holder to obtain a permit for your visitors – you merely need to live in the Zone.

### **What about tradesmen?**

If you have a tradesman who needs to park outside your house, arrangements can be made through the Council's Civil Enforcement Office for a weekly parking ticket. The tradesman will need to apply in person, and will be required to pay a fee.

### **Will it be compulsory to have a Residents' Parking Permit?**

No. If residents can work within the regulations which apply to other motorists, then there is no need to apply for a permit. It is only if residents need to park for more than the time limited parking period during the daytime on Mondays to Saturdays that a permit may be useful.

### **How much will a permit cost?**

From April 2010, the Thanet Council has set the annual fee for a Residents' Parking Permit at £60 for cars and light vans, and £15 for motorcycles. The penalty for non-permit holders who overstay their time limit will be £50 (reduced if paid within 14 days).

### **Why is the permit not free?**

To ensure the parking places are properly patrolled and the rules enforced, Thanet District Council employs Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs). The Council is required to operate parking schemes at no cost to the general rate fund – in simple terms, that means the wages of those who administer and enforce the scheme, plus the upkeep of the signs and lines, must be paid for by a contribution from those who use the parking places and from the penalties paid by those who infringe the rules. Resident Permit Holders are required to make a contribution to help offset the running costs of the scheme.

### **What about road tax?**

Road tax grants drivers the freedom to use the

roads under the same rules and constraints as other motorists, with no special privileges. Anyone who parks in a residents' parking area within the rules which apply to the general motorist, need only buy their road tax disc. Only residents, if they feel they need the extra facilities which a residents' permit provides, need to purchase one.

### **What about disabled drivers?**

Blue badge holders are statutorily permitted to park without payment in 'on-street' pay and display bays; without time limit in limited waiting and residents/shared parking places; and subject to not causing obstruction for up to three hours on a yellow line. Disabled persons' vehicles – along with all other non-goods vehicles – are not permitted in goods vehicle Loading Bays.

Disabled persons' vehicles properly displaying a blue badge will be permitted to park in a residents' parking place without the need for a Residents' Parking Permit. If the vehicle is used by other members of the family, it may be useful to consider what will be the position when the vehicle is not being used by the disabled badge holder.

### **What happens to the fees?**

Annual residents' parking fees, other permit and pay and display income, all go towards paying for the setting up and maintenance of a parking scheme. Lines and signs have to be provided and kept in good order, and a Civil Enforcement has to be provided to ensure non-permit holders obey the rules.

### **What action is taken?**

Civil Enforcement Officers will place a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) on any vehicle not displaying a Residents' Parking Permit, a pay and display ticket, or which has parked for longer than the authorised time limit. CEOs will similarly deal with infringements of yellow line restrictions, and parking on school 'Keep Clear' markings, bus stop clearways, and by unauthorised vehicles in special bays such as those for disabled persons' vehicles or for goods vehicles loading, or on taxi ranks.

CEOs will routinely pass to the DVLA details of vehicles not displaying a current road tax disc.

### **What happens to the fines?**

The Council is allowed to keep the penalties from 'on-street' parking place offences, but is required by law to use any surplus income for other parking related schemes. No money collected from on-street parking can be used to subsidise other areas of Council operations.

DVLA will continue to take action on any untaxed vehicle reported by CEOs.

### **Are Residents' Parking Permits limited?**

The Council will not be required to issue more permits than there are parking places available in the Zone. Permits will initially be limited to one permit per household. These will automatically be renewable each year. If, once everyone in the Zone has had an opportunity to apply for a first permit, there are some remaining, applications for second and even third permits will be permitted. These permits will not be automatically renewable each year. Renewal will be by fresh application each year, and will depend on availability. This will largely depend on how many 'first' permits need to be issued to – say – new residents to the Zone or existing residents owning a car for the first time.

This rule is in place purely to protect the scheme.

In Thanet no application for an additional permit (however many were required) has ever been declined. There have always been more than enough parking bays in each of the Zones to ensure all permit applications have been granted in full. This may not, however, be the case in the future, especially if the initiative to start a new residents' parking scheme comes from an area where parking is particularly difficult. That is why the Council proposes to retain this reserve power.

### **What happens if I move?**

For administrative convenience, all permits will expire on 31 March each year. Anyone joining the scheme part-way through the year will pay proportionately. Anyone leaving will be entitled to a proportionate refund.

### **What happens if I change my car?**

Permits are only valid on the car for which they are issued. When a resident changes vehicles, the permit should be removed and exchanged at the Council Offices for a permit for the replacement vehicle. A small administrative charge will be made.

### **Can my permit be withdrawn?**

The Council will authorise termination of Residents' Parking Permits if there is any contravention of the conditions concerning the issue or use of the permit. In these circumstances the permit holder will not be entitled to any refund. Termination of rights will not preclude the Council from also taking civil or criminal action if the circumstances warrant it.

### **Can I surrender my Residents' Parking Permit?**

Yes. A Residents' Parking Permit may be surrendered at any time and the appropriate refund will be given.

### **Business Permits**

Businesses have always been encouraged to park away from the main shopping areas to

ensure a maximum of kerb space is available for potential shoppers and local residents. Businesses may use both P&D and time limit parking places for loading and unloading, and for casual parking subject to observance of the rules applicable to that parking place. Business Permits enable a vehicle to be parked in a residents parking bay for longer than the time limit are available, and cost £350 per annum.

#### **What is a parking bay?**

A parking bay is a space marked on the road by white lines, with a parking plate nearby.

#### **Is it permissible to use a parking bay in the evening and on Sunday?**

Yes. Outside the times shown on the parking plate all may park without limit of time. Other parking place conditions, such as not carrying out vehicle maintenance, will still apply.

#### **Will there be an occasion when parking in a parking bay will not be permitted?**

Occasionally it may be necessary to suspend a parking bay for a particular reason. When this occurs notices will be posted or 'no waiting' cones will be placed.

#### **What happens if a non-permit holder overstays the time limit?**

When this occurs, a patrolling Civil Enforcement

Officer will place a Penalty Charge Notice on the vehicle informing the driver that a penalty of £50 has been incurred. Failure to pay the charge will invoke procedures under the Traffic Management Act 2004. If payment is made within 14 days, the penalty charge is reduced to £25. Residents' Parking Permit and Visitors' Parking Permit Holders cannot become liable to a penalty charge if their vehicle is correctly parked and their permit is properly displayed on the correct vehicle.

#### **What about yellow lines?**

Double or single yellow lines give effect to a prohibition of waiting which applies to everyone – including Residents' Parking Permit Holders. Throughout Thanet double yellow lines apply for the full 24 hours every day, including Sundays. Single yellow lines apply between 8am and 6 pm on Mondays to Saturdays. Drivers may park on a single yellow line in the evening and on Sundays provided no obstruction is caused.

#### **Where else can't I park?**

In Thanet, it is an offence to stop on specially marked bus stop clearways and school 'Keep Clear' zigzag markings, and drivers who do so can be given a Penalty Charge Notice. The Highway Code gives additional advice concerning parking.

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### **ADDITIONAL ANNUAL PERMIT HOLDER BENEFIT**

The holder of a valid annual resident's parking permit may park a vehicle of the permitted class for up to 1 hour free in nearly all the Council operated pay and display 'off street' car parks. Further information can be obtained from the Council's Civil Enforcement Office– telephone 577470/1

### **IS RESIDENTS' PARKING THE ANSWER?**

Before you make a decision as to whether a residents' parking scheme would be of benefit in your particular area, please also consider the following:-

(a) When engineers are asked to draw up a scheme it must be one which meets certain recognised criteria – what we call safety and technical audit. By law, the parking bays must be of certain dimensions, they must be placed in such a way that parked vehicles do not cause obstruction, and – most importantly of all – there must be enough room for fire engines and ambulances to get through. When carrying out the assessment to identify safe spaces to park, Officers may spot situations that necessitate additional waiting restrictions in the form of yellow lines to preserve the free flow of traffic. If you live in an area where parking is untidy but, because everyone co-operates it works that way, you may consider that a regulated residents parking scheme might not be appropriate because some existing spaces could be lost.

(b) In some towns a blanket 'yellow line' parking restriction of, say, 1 hour mid-morning and 1 hour mid-afternoon is sufficient to deter all day parking, and works quite well. If most of the residents take their cars to work then a limited number of residents' parking spaces spanning the 'yellow line' times might work.

(c) It is possible to make a traffic order prohibiting all vehicles except those requiring access to premises in the prohibited road. This allows residents, their visitors, deliveries and tradesmen, but prohibits those who have no business in the road but just want somewhere to park. The disadvantage of this arrangement is that, because it is logistically impossible to issue permits, the only way an offender can be prosecuted is if residents are prepared to report offenders to the Police, who would then issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information contact the Civil Enforcement Office, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate CT9 1XZ