

Report on Parking Services 2011/12



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1 Introduction

Sedgemoor District Council's Parking Service provides facilities for residents, visitors, businesses and shoppers across the district. Thousands of customers use the car parks each week. For some customers this service is the only contact with the Council. Clean, tidy and well maintained car parks give a good first impression for visitors and tourists to Sedgemoor. It is therefore important to provide a high quality service while minimising expenditure. This report shows how the service has met this aim during the year 2011/12.

2 The Service

The table below shows the location of Council owned car parks across the district.

Town	Number of car parks	Number of spaces
Bridgwater	9	708
Burnham	4	642
Highbridge	1	109
Axbridge	1	20
Cheddar	2	193
Nether Stowey	1	19
Total	18	1,691

Apart from Nether Stowey, the Council charges for the use of all of these car parks as shown on the scale of charges in Appendix A.

Drivers with a disabled badge can park in any bay free of charge. The Council sells season tickets for all long-stay car parks at a discount of around 40% over day ticket charges. Town centre residents who live within 200m of a car park may buy a residents' season ticket at a discount of around 70% over day ticket charges. In addition, the Council manages loading areas and season ticket only car parks in Bridgwater. In Burnham-on-Sea the Council manages on-street parking along the Esplanade on behalf of Somerset County Council.

The service covers the following functions:

- Car parking policy
- Collecting cash and issuing Excess Charge Notices
- Maintenance and repair of car parks and ticket issuing machines
- Selling season tickets, residents season tickets, receipt of cash from ticket machines, receipt of Excess Charge income
- Processing Excess Charge Notices

3 Staff

The Council employs 3 full-time inspectors to issue Excess Charge Notices and collect cash from ticket machines. This was supplemented by a temporary seasonal car park inspector over the peak summer period.

The Revenues Service process the Excess Charge Notices. Cash Office staff sell season tickets, bank cash from ticket machines and receive Excess Charge payments. These duties amount to about 1.5 full-time equivalent.

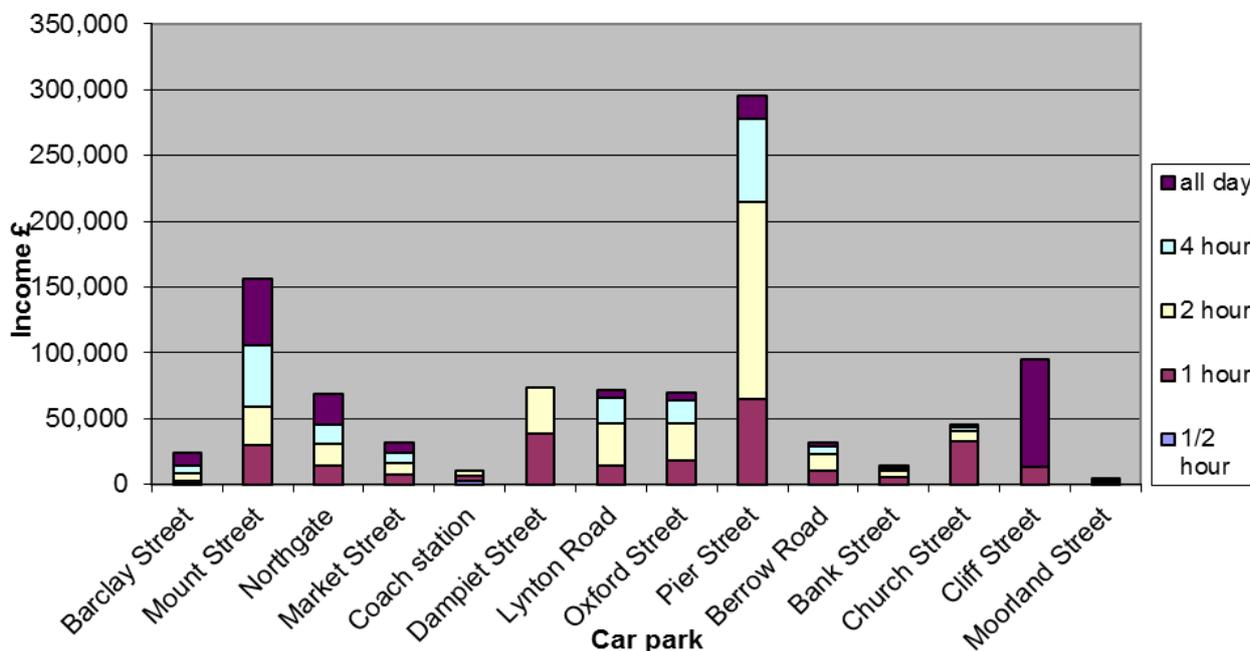
The transport officer and external works officer direct policy, line manage the inspectors and supervise maintenance and repairs. This is in addition to duties in other areas,

4 Income

Off-street Car Parks

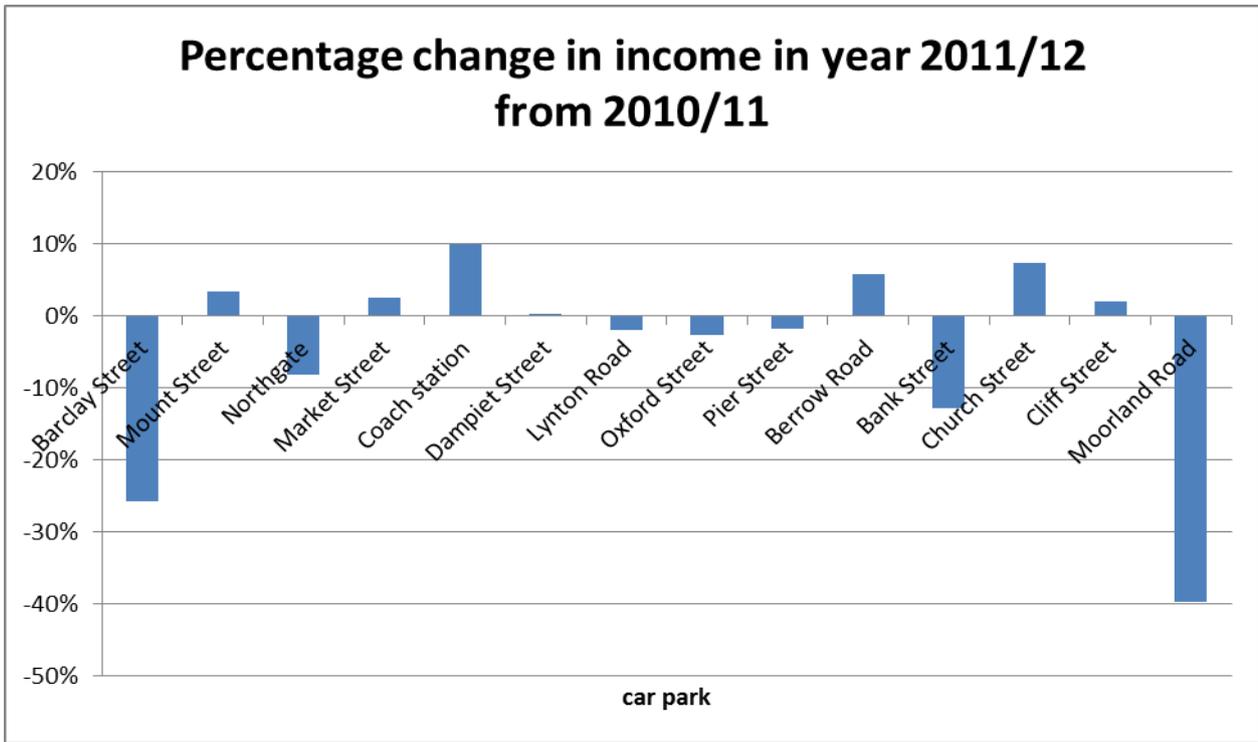
The table below shows income from ticket sales from car park ticket machines by car park split into type of ticket sold. Pier Street car park generates by far the greatest income because it is the largest car park and is very popular in summer.

Cash receipts 2011/12



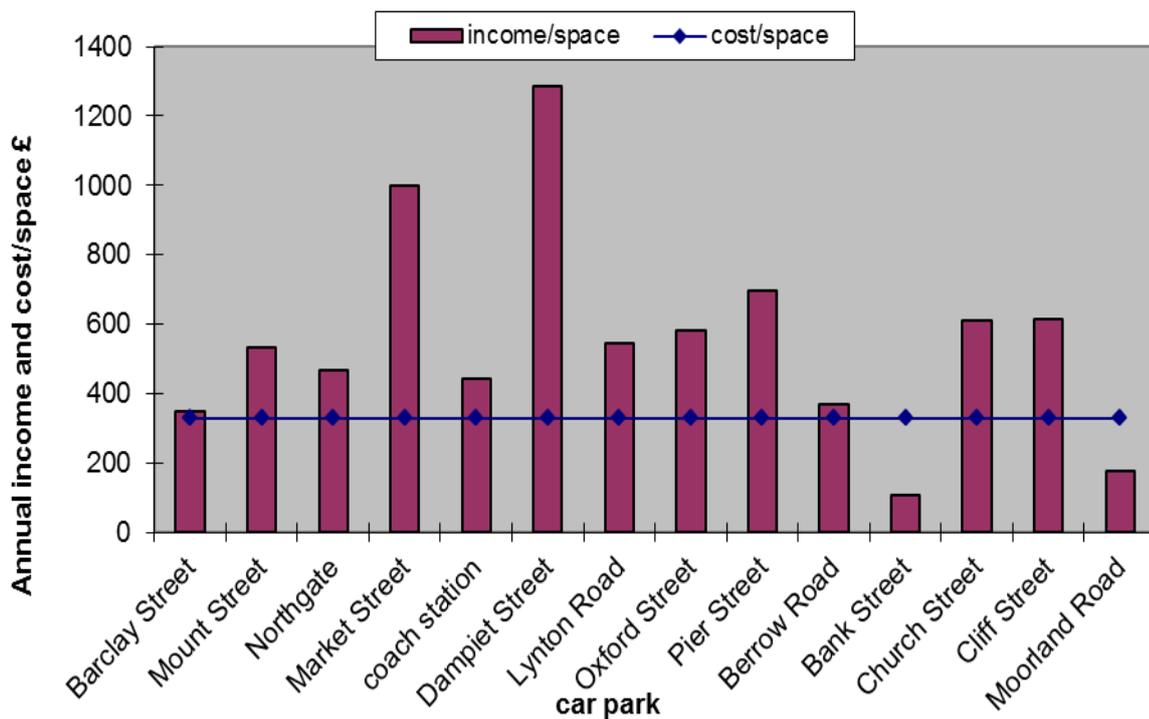
The table below shows the change in ticket income since last year.

Year	2010/11	2011/12	Difference
Day ticket sales	£861,865	849,165	-1.5%



Barclay Street car park was used by a contractor to park his vehicles for construction of an adjacent development in 2010/11 so the income was greater than usual. This work was completed by the end of that financial year so income reduced in 2011/12. Moorland Road car park is adjacent to Meadow Street car park, owned by Axbridge Town Council. Meadow Street car park stopped charging in May 2011 so patronage has diverted away from Moorland Road leading to reduced income. The chart below shows income/space for each car park. Dampiet Street in Bridgwater is a short stay car park has the greatest turnover per space.

Income and Cost / space 2011/12



Season Tickets

Season ticket sales have slipped along the same lines as day tickets due to the recession. Charges for Sedgemoor DC staff season tickets were introduced in August 2010 at half the current season ticket rate so the income for 2010/11 does not represent a full year. The table below shows sales compared with 2011/12.

Year	2010/11	2011/12	Difference
Season ticket sales	£54,887	£53,152	-3.2%
Staff season tickets sales	£25,783	£38,839	N/A

On-Street parking

The table below shows the income from charging on-street during the summer at the Esplanade, Burnham on Sea. Income is slightly down on the previous year. Somerset County Council withdrew Sedgemoor DC's agency to operate on-street charging on 1st April 2011. Sedgemoor DC continues to operate and enforce on-street parking but under a management arrangement whereby Somerset CC receives the income minus Sedgemoor DC's management fee and running costs.

Year	2010/11	2011/12	Difference
On-street income	£60,195	£56,359	-6.3%
Sedgemoor DC expenses	N/A	£19,248	N/A
Payment to Somerset CC	N/A	£37,111	N/A

Excess Charges

The table below shows the income from of excess charges issued compared with the previous year. The number of excess charges issued was up by 17% due the employment of a temporary inspector over the summer peak period. In addition, careful issuing of the ECN notices and a rigorous follow-up procedure reduced the number of cancelled notices and hence contributed to increased income.

Year	2010/11	2010/11	Difference
Excess Charge Income	£84,314	£106,851	+26%

5 Expenditure

Expenditure in the report period is shown under broad headings in the table below –

Item	2010/11	2011/12
Rates	114,317	120,529
Patrol and cash collection	95,597	94,180
Management	53,582	55,804
CCTV contribution	46,114	27,911
Cleaning	26,789	24,967
Support costs	16,340	13,509
Receipt of cash / sale of season tickets	23,230	10,497
Repairs	12,919	16,136
Excess Charge Notice processing	30,950	22,752
Ticket machine service contract	10,375	18,204
Insurance	8,070	6,750
horticultural maintenance	11,417	9,068
Ticket machine replacement	7,745	0
Utilities	10,995	10,520
Computer licences	3,273	3,737
Miscellaneous	4,759	10,287
Depreciation charges	1,749	1,172
Total	£478,222	£446,022

Expenditure in 2011/12 was broadly in line with expenditure in 2010/11. However additional costs were incurred on ticket machine service due to changes needed to ticket machines needed to accommodate the change to new 5p and 10p coins. Some CCTV cameras were taken out of service which reduced the cost of CCTV cover

6 Maintenance

Sedgemoor District Council's Clean Surroundings Service continues to clean the car parks and maintain the landscape areas.

Line markings were replaced in Mount Street West in Bridgwater, Cliff Street in Cheddar and Castle Street in Nether Stowey. Tariff board signs were replaced in every car park except Mount Street. In preparation for Civil Parking Enforcement, the boards were printed with text suitable for enforcement under the Traffic Management Act 2004 but covered with temporary text to allow enforcement under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 up to the date of transfer. All ticket machines were adapted to take the new style 5p and 10p coins. The External Works Officer carries out monthly inspections to ensure the car parks meet the Council's high standards of safety and cleanliness.

Customers report faults with ticket machines by contacting Customer Services. Some faults are customer error, and some due to defects with the machine. Most defects can be readily rectified by the Inspector but some require a visit by the service engineer

retained under a service contract. Most service visits are completed within 48 hours of call-out.

7 Acquisitions and Disposals

The Council acquired a 21 space car park in Eastover Park, Bridgwater during the period of the report. This car park was provided for local residents as part of a planning agreement for a new Doctor's Surgery built in part of the park. In May 2011, Axbridge Town Council took over responsibility for Meadow Street car park.

8 Enforcement

The car park inspectors issue Excess Charge notices using the electronic ticket issuing machines. The machines also take photographs of the offence. These machines download each evening to the Revenues Service notice processing system. The Revenues Service issue reminders and follow through any un-paid ECNs. The chart below shows the number of notices issued and recovery rate compared with the previous financial year. The recovery rate is the proportion of ECNs issued which result in payment.

Year	2010/11	2011/12	Difference
Excess Charge Notices issued	2,762	3,225	+17%
Recovery rate	72%	80%	+11%

The number of Excess Charges issued increased due to the employed of a temporary inspector over the summer peak period. In addition, the recovery rate improved leading to an overall increase in ECN income of 26%.

9 Civil Parking Enforcement

Somerset CC will introduce civil parking enforcement across the whole of the county in June 2012. Under this arrangement, the County Council will take over enforcement of on-street parking regulations from the Police. A Civil Parking Enforcement regime will apply to all public parking areas, both on-street and off-street. Sedgemoor District Council has agreed to buy enforcement and notice processing from the Somerset CC at an agreed rate to enforce off-street car parks. The County Council will employ an enforcement contractor to enforce parking regulations both on and off-street. Parking inspectors employed by each district council will transfer to the new service under TUPE along with any office staff dedicated to notice processing. Sedgemoor will continue to receive revenue from the car parks and be responsible for car park policy and maintenance.

10 Customer Contact

Sedgemoor District Council welcomes comments from customers. Season ticket holders receive a questionnaire when they renew their ticket and there is a customer feedback form on the Council's web site. In addition, comments and complaints received in writing from the public are registered with Customer Services. In 2011/12, Five written complaint were recorded concerning operation of the car parks summarised in appendix B

The Revenues Service process Excess Charge notices so receive a considerable number of telephone calls from customers. The greatest number of complaints comes from customers who receive an Excess Charge Notice after the ticket has blown off the dashboard and the customers subsequently produce a valid ticket. The Council does not use adhesive tickets for reasons of economy. It is current Council policy not to waive the Excess Charge in these circumstances and this generates a certain amount of bad feeling with customers. This policy will be reviewed as part of the transfer to CPE so as to ensure common practise across the county.

Inspectors attend to a ticket machine fault as soon as practical but often no fault is found. The problems could be customer error. Contacts between the Inspectors' and the public can be under stressful circumstances, such as after issue of an Excess Charge Notice. Verbal complaints against staff are sometimes made in the heat of the moment. Any written complaints against staff are thoroughly investigated and action taken if appropriate. Inspectors receive training for dealing with such 'person to person' situations. No written complaints concerning staff were received in this period.

11 Summary

The year 2011/12 has seen a continuation of the economic downturn but car park income remains almost the same as last year and views from customers remain positive.

Year	2010/11	2011/12	Difference
Income £	1,074,503	1,048,007	-2.5%
Expenditure £	478,222	464,950	-2.7%
Net Income £	596,281	583,057	-2.2%

Appendix A

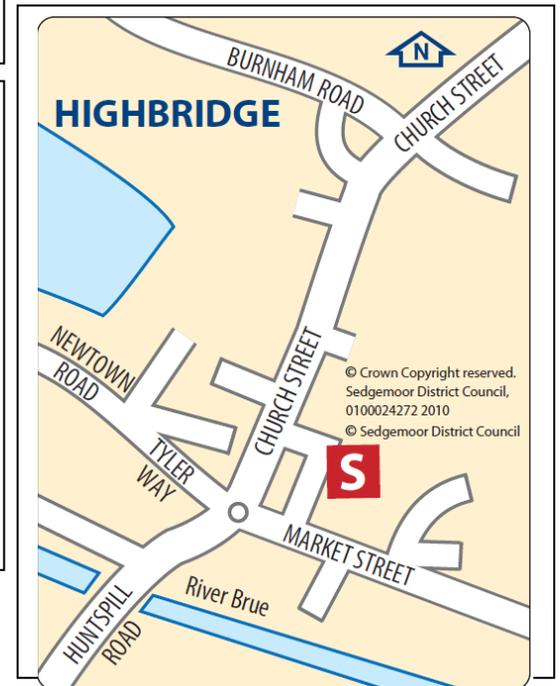
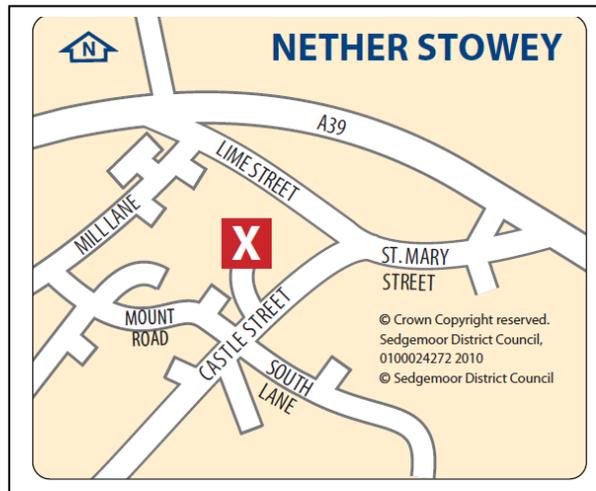
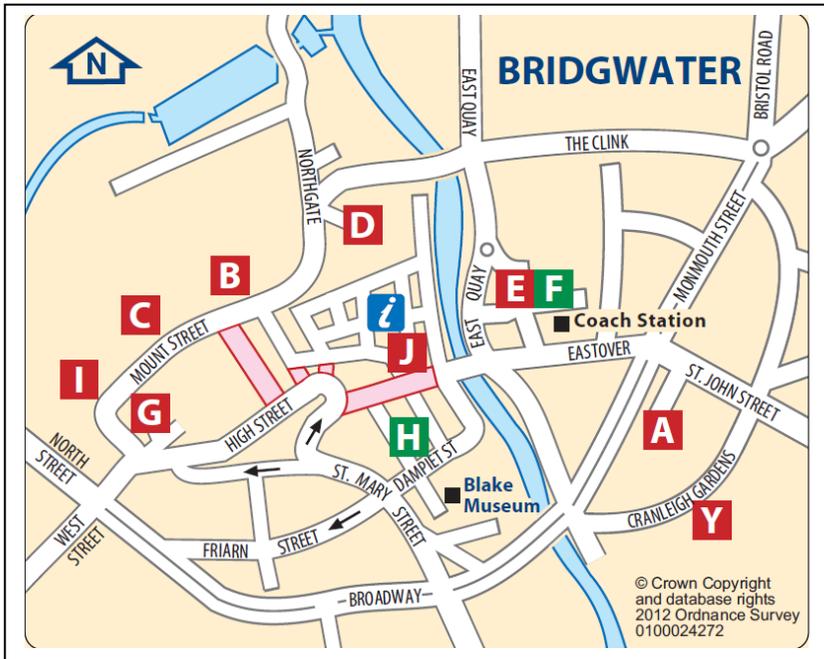
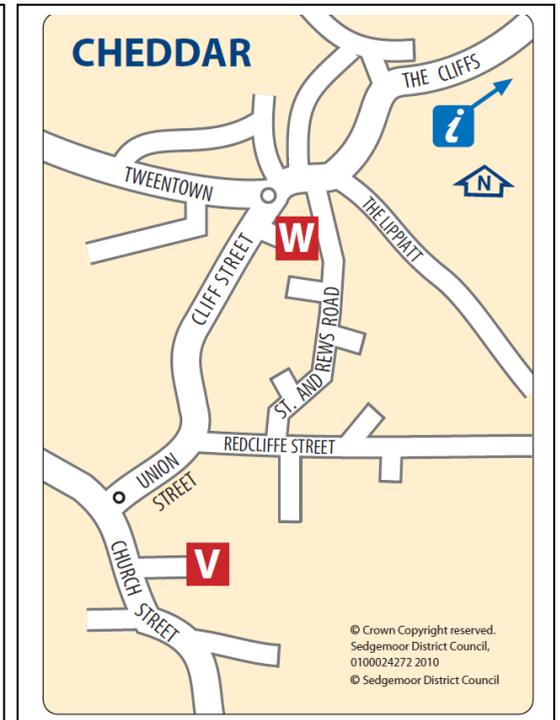
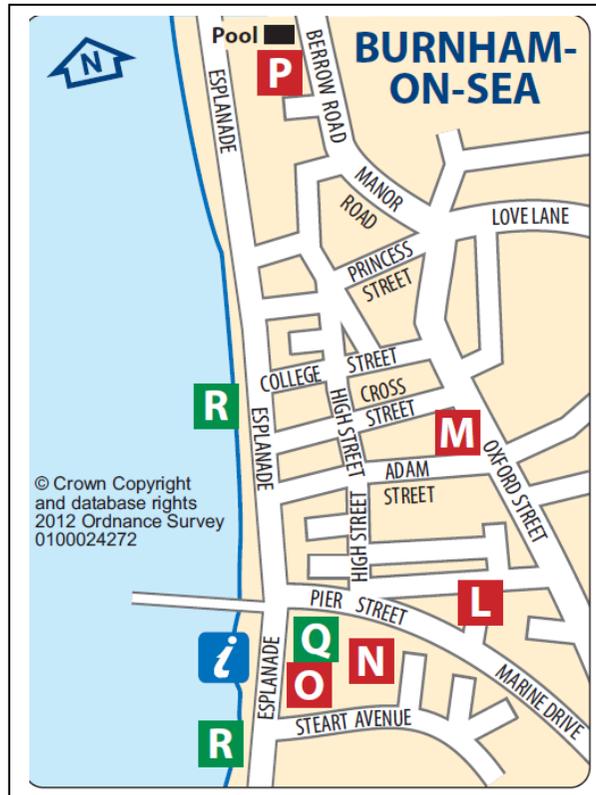
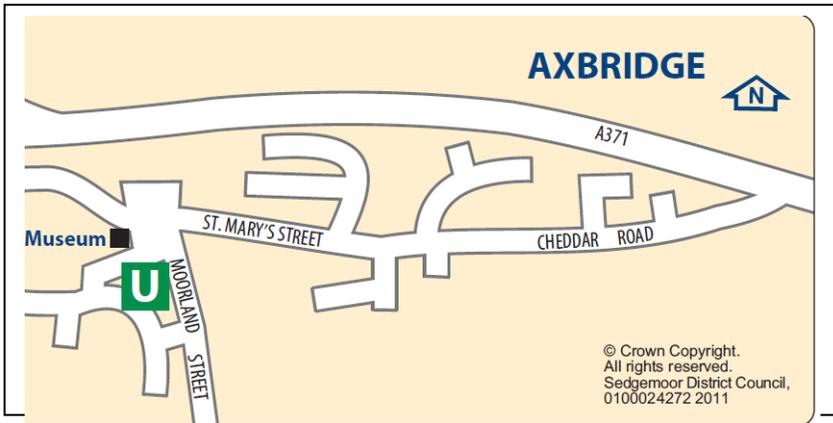
Parking Charges Jan 2011 - Mar 2013

Car park	Cars					Other vehicles		Sunday/ Bank Hol Charge	
	1/2 Hour	1 Hour	2 Hours	4 Hours	9.00 am - 6.00 pm	Up To 3 Hrs	9.00 am - 6.00 pm		
Bridgwater						Coaches			
Eastover Shoppers *	20p	50p	£1.00	£2.10	£3.20	XC	XC	N	
Mount Street E*	X	60p	£1.20	£2.50	£4.20	£4.20	£6.20	N	
Mount Street W *	X	X	X	£2.50	£4.20	XC	XC	N	
Northgate *	X	60p	£1.20	£2.50	£4.20	XC	XC	N	
Market Street*	X	60p	£1.20	£2.50	£4.20	XC	XC	N	
Dampiet Street	X	60p	£1.20	X	X	XC	XC	N	
Eastover short stay	30p	60p	£1.20	X	X	XC	XC	N	
Coach Station	permit parking for coach passengers					50p	XC	XC	N
Mount Street S	allocated season ticket parking only 24hrs/day						XC	XC	N/A
Queen Street	allocated season ticket parking only 24hrs/day						XC	XC	N/A
Bridgwater House	permit parking only £5.00, 24 hrs/day						XC	XC	N/A
Burnham-on-Sea						Boat trailers (Coaches free)			
Lynton Road (Winter) *	X	60p	£1.20	£2.50	£4.20	XC	XC	Y	
Lynton Road (Summer) *	X	60p	£1.20	£3.10	£4.70	XC	XC	Y	
Oxford Street *	X	60p	£1.20	£2.50	£4.20	XC	XC	Y	
Pier Street E (Winter) *	X	60p	£1.20	£2.50	£4.20	£2.50	£4.20	Y	
Pier Street E (Summer) *	X	60p	£1.20	£3.10	£4.70	£4.20	£6.20	Y	
Pier Street S (Winter) *	X	60p	£1.20	£2.50	£4.20	XC	XC	Y	
Pier Street S (Summer) *	X	60p	£1.20	£3.10	£4.70	XC	XC	Y	
Berrow Road *	X	50p	£1.00	£2.10	£3.20	XC	XC	Y	
Pier Street W	X	60p	£1.20	X	X	XC	XC	Y	
Highbridge									
Bank Street * (Mon-Sat)	X	50p	£1.00	£2.10	£3.20	XC	XC	Y	
Bank Street * (Sun)	X	X	X	X	50p	XC	XC	Y	
Bank Street* (Bank hol)	<i>free on bank holidays</i>					XC	XC	N	
Cheddar									
Church Street *	X	50p	£1.00	£2.10	£3.20	XC	XC	Y	
Cliff Street *	X	60p	£3.20	£3.20	£3.20	XC	XC	Y	
Axbridge						Coaches			
Meadow Street *	20p	50p	£1.00	£2.10	£3.20	£4.20	£6.20	N	
Moorland Street	20p	50p	£1.00	£2.10	X	XC	XC	N	
Nether Stowey									
Castle Street	<i>free parking all year</i>								
Season tickets	The following season tickets can be purchased:					The following residents permits can be purchased:			
Season tickets may be used in all car parks indicated by *	Annual £525		Quarterly £140		discount on annual tickets for 5 tickets 5%		discount on annual tickets for 10 or more tickets 10%		
	Annual £260		Quarterly £70						
Conditions	X = Not available XC = Coach parking not available				Excess Charges £60 reduced to £40 if paid within 7 days				
Charging Times	Pay and Display car parks				9.00 am to 6.00 pm				
	Season ticket and permit car parks				24 hours/day				
	Summer = (March - Oct inc.) Winter = (Nov - Feb inc.)								

On street parking	1 Hour	2 Hours	3 Hours	4 Hours	Charge times	Sunday Charge
Burnham-on-Sea						
Esplanade (Summer)	60p	£1.20	£2.00	£3.10	9.00 am - 6.00 pm	Y
Summer = (April - Sept inc.) no season tickets no campers over 4.8m long no trailers or HGVs						

Complaints received by Customers Services

Case No	Service	Complaint Reason	Complaint Resolved	Lessons Learnt	Resulting Actions
430570	Community Development and Well Being	Cheddar car park has spaces allocated for long vehicles, but these were taken up by cars even though there were plenty of other spaces in the car park.	Tom Dougall confirmed that we will look into the issue to see if any improvements can be made to the service.	Continue to improve the service to meet the Customers' needs.	Review enforcement frequency
479785	Community Development and Well Being	Complainant wishes to appeal the excess charge notice which has been issued whilst parking in the Discount Car Park, Berrow Rd, BOS on 20th November 2011.	Tom Dougall had written to the complainant 22/11/2011 stating that we regularly review signage and will look at the Berrow Road car park. There are prominent yellow signs above each ticket machine. SDC charges on Sundays in the tourist towns of Burnham-on-Sea and Cheddar.	Continue to review signage in all car parks	No change needed
414437	Community Development and Well Being	Anonymous caller complaining about the poor signage for vehicles other than cars in Morrisons car park, BOS.		No lessons learnt	Majority of customers find signage satisfactory, no change needed
482717	Community Development and Well Being	Mrs H complained about the car park at Roynon Way, Cheddar and the lack of spaces.	Tom Dougall responded to complainant 28/11/2011 stating that he will ask the parking inspectors to keep a check on parents' parking while waiting to pick up their children from Fairlands school.	Parents are using this car park for short-stay parking while waiting for children	Car park enforcement to be carried out at all times.
544147	Community Development and Well Being	Complaint from Mr & Mrs O who were visitors to Burnham, regarding parking their motor home along the esplanade.	T Dougall explained that long motor homes take up more space than the equivalent number of cars. SDC has to balance the needs of all types of visitor to the sea front.	Adhere to Council policies regarding the parking of motor homes along the esplanade.	Continue to advise customers of SDC regulations.



- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| A St John St | H Dampiet Street | Q Pier Street West |
| B Mount St East | J Queen Street | R Esplanade |
| C Mount St West | L High Street | S Bank St |
| D Northgate | M Oxford Street | U Moorland St |
| E Eastover | N Pier Street East | V Church St |
| F Coach Station | O Pier St South | W Cliff St |
| G Market Street | P Discount | X Castle Street |

Y Eastover Park