



Chard Town Council

Guidance on Busking in Chard

Busking and other forms of street entertainment are part of the Chard 'experience', creating an enhanced atmosphere and providing pleasure to many people, both local residents and visitors. On occasion, however, particularly for people living or working in the town centre, busking may be intrusive, annoying, and offensive. As a result, both the Local Authority and the Police may receive complaints about the volume and sometimes the nature of busking and street entertainment. This guidance has been compiled to assist all parties in understanding the situation and to enable a positive outcome for all concerned.

Chard Town Council is not authorised to intervene with busking issues.

Key contacts in the event of a problem with buskers

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 noise in the street from musical instruments may be a statutory nuisance and Somerset Council is able to take legal action to abate the nuisance and prohibit or restrict its recurrence; this may include the seizure of musical instruments and amplification equipment. The Control of Pollution Act 1974 prohibits the use of a loudspeaker in the street (which includes squares, courts etc) between the hours of 9pm and 8am.

Under the Police Reform Act and Criminal Justice and Police act 2001 the Police can regulate disorder. Public Nuisance is controlled under common law.

The Highway Authority (Somerset Council) can use powers under the Highways Act 1980 to enforce the removal of buskers who are obstructing the highway.

For obstruction of the public highway and offensive behaviour contact the Police on 101; for threatening behaviour where there is fear of harm dial 999.

For noise control and licensing, contact Somerset Council 0300 123 2224.

Charity collections: Anyone who says they are collecting for charity should have authorisation from the charity and permission from Somerset Council to hold a street collection.

Avoiding complaints

1. Busking should not be intrusive or a nuisance to nearby premises.
As a guide, noise (for example music and voice) should not be so loud that it can plainly be heard at a distance of 50 metres. Amplification equipment is discouraged.
2. Entertainers are advised not to perform for longer than 1 hour in any location and not perform again in that location (or within 50 metres of it) for 2 hours.
Note: to avoid complaints from premises, particularly noisy entertainers (e.g. bagpipers or drummers) should not perform for longer than 30 minutes before relocating.
3. Entertainers are advised not to locate within 50 metres of another performing

entertainer.

4. Entertainment should be limited to the hours of 10:00hrs and 20:00hrs.

If the above guidelines are not followed and busking becomes a serious problem to residents/businesses, please report it to the Police on 101.

5. Entertainers should not obstruct the highway, block walkways, fire exits or impede traffic, either whilst performing or through people gathering to listen or to watch the performance. Note:-The highway includes any pedestrianised areas.

6. Entertainers should not use street furniture such as benches, telephone boxes, post boxes, cycle stands as part of the act, and should avoid areas where members of the public need access.

7. Entertainers are responsible for arranging their own public liability insurance.

Street Trading

Busking is not the same as street-trading. Street Trading is defined as 'The selling or offering for sale of any article in the Street'.

For Chard this is regulated by Chard Town Council, see:

<https://www.chard.gov.uk/your-council/what-we-do/markets/>

To report unlicensed street trading taking place, contact Chard Town Council:

chardtouncil@chard.gov.uk or 01460 239567.