

The Royal Parks Regulations Consultation

The Royal Parks Regulations Consultation published in January 2009 contains proposals to amend the Royal Parks Regulations, which affect Private Hire Vehicles and Drivers. In addition the consultation covers proposals that would change parking times, charges and speed limits.

We have published the Sections containing the Introduction, details about the proposed changes and all the consultation questions.

The full consultation is available at Consultation@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk
Or in writing from:

Consultation on Regulations Review
The Royal Parks the Old Police House
Hyde Park London W2 2UH

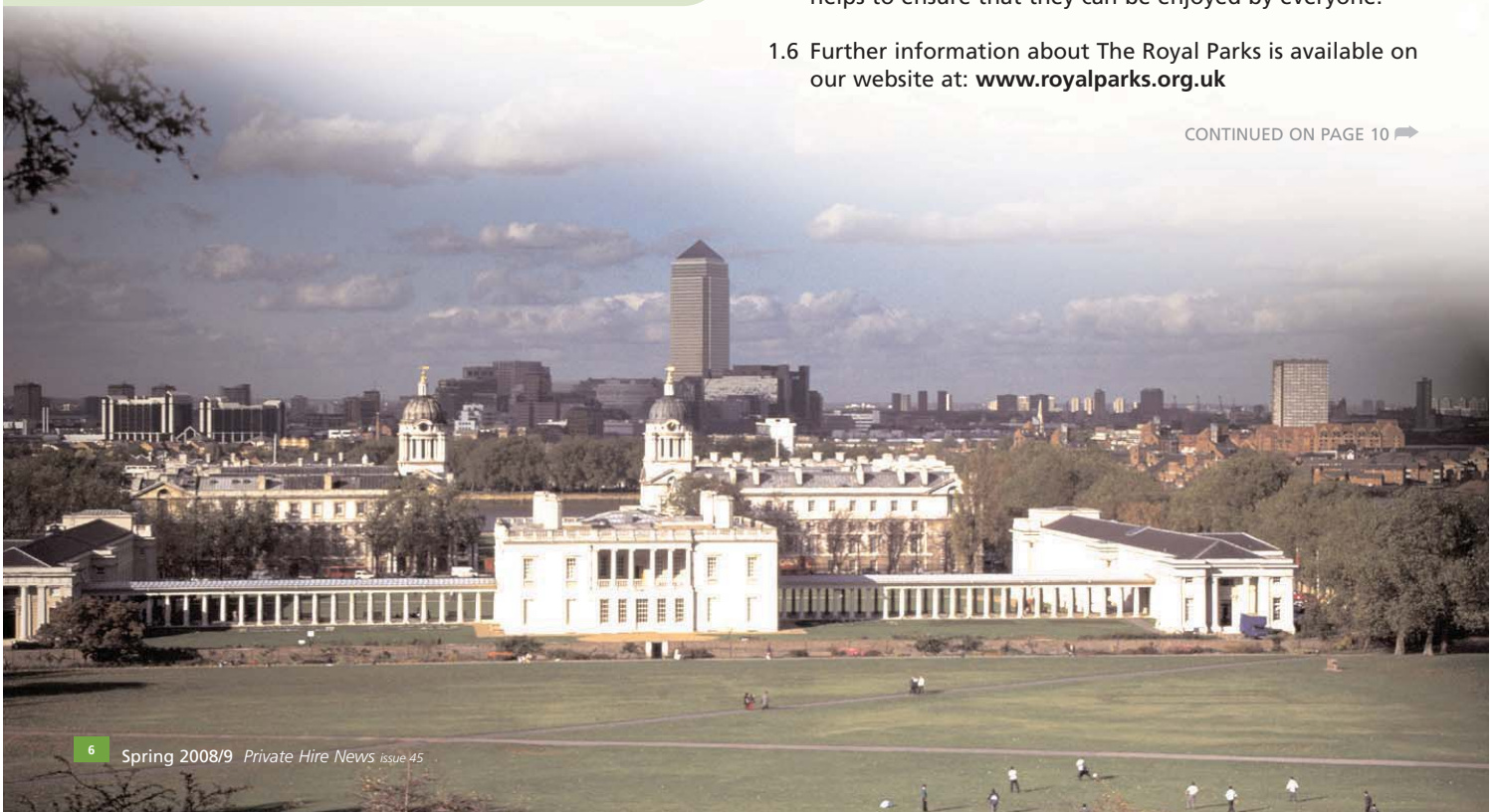
The LPHCA is delighted that the anomalies that were raised by us when members complained they had been ticketed and stopped when travelling legitimately about their business in the Royal Parks several years ago are now being addressed by this consultation.

The Association has published the consultation to enable members to make their own response. The LPHCA will publish its response in the next edition of Private Hire News. If any members have direct comments please email them to LPHCA@btinternet.com.

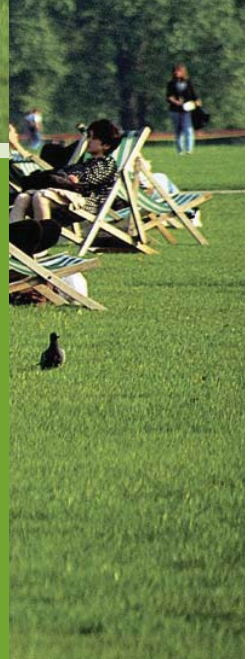
Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 The Royal Parks, which comprise over 5000 acres of historic parkland in and around London, are: Bushy Park, The Green Park, Greenwich Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, The Regent's Park & Primrose Hill, Richmond Park, and St James's Park.
The Royal Parks also manages a number of other open spaces in London, including Victoria Tower Gardens, Grosvenor Square Gardens and Brompton Cemetery.
- 1.2 This consultation paper concerns proposed changes to the Royal Parks Regulations.
The last major change to the regulations was in 1997, although there have been some minor changes since then.
- 1.3 The Royal Parks are owned by the Sovereign in right of the Crown, but the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has management powers for them under the Crown Lands Act 1851. The Royal Parks is an Executive Agency of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and manages the parks on behalf of the Secretary of State.
- 1.4 The Secretary of State has powers under the Parks Regulations (Amendment) Act 1926 to make regulations to secure the proper management of the Royal Parks. The current principal regulations are The Royal Parks and Other Open Spaces Regulations 1997(S1 1997 No.1639), as amended.
- 1.5 Managing the parks is about balancing the needs of different users, preserving the environment and protecting wildlife. The Park Regulations effectively set out a code of behaviour for the park environment, which helps to ensure that they can be enjoyed by everyone.
- 1.6 Further information about The Royal Parks is available on our website at: www.royalparks.org.uk

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The six corporate objectives of The Royal Parks are, to:

- Protect and develop the parks as world class environments, applying effective policies in environmental and ecological park management.
- Understand and respond to the needs of our diverse audiences and stakeholders, working with partner organisations to enrich lives.
- Deliver a broad culture of activities including education, sport and participatory offers.
- Conserve and enhance historic built environment Royal Parks.
- Deliver greater value for money for the taxpayer through increased income generation and ensuring that best value for money is obtained.
- Demonstrate internal organisational excellence in our workforce and corporate governance, and continually improve our finance, IT and communications systems.

Section 2: Proposed Changes to the Royal Parks Regulations

2.1 The Royal Parks is considering a number of changes to the regulations. Our proposals are set out below.

Introduction of Parking Charges in Bushy and Richmond Parks

- 2.2 Introducing parking charges in Richmond and Bushy Parks is consistent with our policy across the rest of the Royal Parks estate and supports our environmental agenda of encouraging visitors to travel to the parks by means other than private car wherever possible. It also discourages displacement of parking into the parks as a result of the imposition of parking fees by authorities outside.
- 2.3 The scheme we propose to put in place will introduce charges at rates that are broadly in line with those levied by the authorities in the surrounding areas. While not being punitive to those who have no option but to visit by car, we hope the charges will encourage visitors who can to travel to the park by public transport by bicycle, or on foot. The scheme includes a maximum stay, intended both to ensure a reasonable turnover of spaces (which would be fairer to visitors than our current system) and preclude abuse by commuters and shoppers of a facility that is provided exclusively for park visitors.
- 2.4 The proposed scheme would raise essential revenue towards the maintenance of The Royal Parks' roads and associated infrastructure.

Details of the scheme

2.5 We propose that parking charges should be introduced in all the public car parks in Bushy and Richmond Parks, and would welcome your views on the proposed charges and conditions as set out below.

Richmond Park		Bushy Park	
Up to 1 hour	£1.00	Up to 1 hour	£0.50
1 to 1½ hours	£1.50	1 to 1½ hours	£0.75
1½ to 2 hours	£2.00	1½ to 2 hours	£1.00
2 to 3 hours	£2.50	2 to 3 hours	£1.50
Over 3 hours	£3.00	Over 3 hours	£2.00

These charges would apply whenever the car parks are open.

There would be a maximum stay of six hours in any one car park.

A set proportion of the available parking spaces would be designated for Blue Badge holders. Blue Badge holders and motor bikes would be exempt from the charges, but subject to the maximum stay limit.

Q1

Do you support the introduction of parking charges in Richmond and/or Bushy Park?

Q2

If you accept the introduction of parking charges in principle, do you consider that the rates we propose are about right, too high or too low?

Q3

Do you agree that there should be a maximum stay for parking in Richmond and /or Bushy Park?

Q4

If you agree that there should be a maximum stay, do you think that 6 hours is about right, too long or too short?

Q5

Do you have any further comments about our proposal to introduce parking charges?

Allowing Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) into the Parks

- 2.6 The Royal Parks Regulations currently prohibit any vehicle that is “constructed, adapted or in use as a trade vehicle” from entering the Royal Parks unless they have express permission to do so, or legitimate business in the Parks. The only exception is for Hackney carriages (“black cabs”) licensed by the Public Carriage Office (PCO), and this is on the grounds that they provide a service for visitors. However, as Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) in London are now also licensed by the PCO, we propose to amend the regulations and allow them into the Parks on the same terms as are already allowed for black cabs.
- 2.7 This change is intended to benefit potential visitors - including the disabled who receive subsidised travel in PHVs – without making a significant difference to the volume of traffic in the Parks. Prior to the introduction of the licensing regime, PHVs had been largely indistinguishable from private vehicles, which made it difficult for us to enforce, in a proportionate way, the prohibition on PHVs using the Parks in the course of their trade. PHVs are now required to clearly indicate their PHV status.
- 2.8 We do not intend to relax our general prohibition on commercial vehicles entering the Parks unless they have explicit permission to do so, or legitimate business in the Parks. We would draw the new regulations as tightly as possible and only permit PHVs which, like black cabs, have been licensed in London by the Public Carriage Office. We do not intend, at this stage, to widen access to PHVs licensed by authorities outside London.
Information on the licensing regime for PHVs in London can be found at: www.tfl.gov.uk/pco

Q6

Do you support our proposal to allow Private Hire Vehicles that are licensed by the Public Carriage Office to enter the Royal Parks on the same terms as are already allowed in law for black cabs? If not please give your reasons.

Q7

Do you agree with our proposal to give express statutory force to the already accepted practice that black cabs are allowed to enter the Royal Parks even if they are bearing advertisements?.

Q8

Do you agree that we should make identical provision in respect of PHVs (provided that we implement our proposal to allow them to enter the Royal Parks)?

Introduce an express provision that taxis and PHVs displaying external advertisements may still enter the Royal Parks

- 2.9 The Secretary of State issued a direction in 1982 which set out that black cabs bearing external advertisements may enter the Royal Parks, despite there being a prohibition in the regulations against displaying advertising material without express permission. (The direction was issued under the Secretary of State’s power to grant such permission). This is now a long-standing practice and one which we consider would be appropriate to put on a statutory footing. We also propose to make the same provision in respect of Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) if we implement the proposal set out at paragraph 2.6 above. The kind of advertising that can be carried on these vehicles is restricted by the Public Carriage Office.

Lowering the speed limit on the roads in Greenwich Park from 30 mph to 20mph

- 2.10 We are considering implementing an amendment to the Regulations to reduce the speed limit in Greenwich Park from its existing 30mph to 20mph. This would bring the speed limit in Greenwich Park into line with that on the roads immediately outside it. We consider it wrong that at present drivers may drive faster within the Park than on many of the surrounding roads. We consider that a lower speed limit will contribute towards de-urbanising the Park, safety and the protection of wildlife, improving the park atmosphere and making it a more enjoyable experience for visitors.

Q9

Do you agree with our proposal to reduce the speed limit in Greenwich Park from 30mph to 20mph?

Q10

If you do not agree with our proposal to reduce the speed limit in Greenwich Park to 20mph please explain why.

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Lowering the speed limit on the roads in Bushy Park from 30 mph to 20mph

2.11 We are considering implementing an amendment to the Regulations to reduce the speed limit in Bushy Park from its existing 30mph to 20mph. This would bring the speed limit in line with nearby Richmond Park, where we successfully introduced a reduced speed limit in 2004. Bushy Park has similar landscape features, wildlife and park management challenges to Richmond. We consider that this measure will contribute towards de-urbanising the Park, safety and the protection of wildlife, improving the Park atmosphere and making it a more enjoyable experience for visitors.

Q11

Do you agree with our proposal to reduce the speed limit in Bushy Park to 20 mph?

Q12

If you do not agree with our proposal to reduce the speed limit in Bushy Park to 20mph please explain why.

Q13

Do you agree that the regulations should make clear that horse owners are not required to clean up after their animals?

Animal Faeces

2.12 The regulations can be interpreted as requiring that horse riders and drivers of horse-drawn vehicles, like dog owners, clear up after their animals. This is not the intention of the regulations, so we propose to clarify that this requirement does not apply to horse owners.

Update where, in Bushy Park, a person is allowed to sail a model boat

2.13 The statement in the current regulations which describes where a person may sail a model boat in Bushy Park is out of date. We intend, therefore, to amend the regulations to clarify that the only place in Bushy Park where you may sail a model boat is on the Model Boating Pond.

Increase existing parking charges

2.14 We have levied parking charges in Hyde Park and The Regent's Park since 1994 and in Greenwich Park since 2000. Changes to the charging rates may only be made by regulation. The current rates have been in place since 2004 and have not kept pace with the Retail Price Index.

2.15 We intend, therefore, to introduce increases that will bring our existing parking charges in line with inflation, and maintain comparison with the rates levied by authorities in the surrounding areas. We also intend to increase our penalties for non-payment so that they mirror those of the local authorities.

General comments

Q14

Do you have any other comments which relate directly to any of our proposals?

Please send your comments to: Consultation@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk

Or write to:

The Royal Parks, the Old Police House, Hyde Park, London, W2 2UH

Closing date for comments is 1 May 2009

