

# Draft Public Realm Usage Policy

**VICTORIA  
PLACE**  
WOKING



*Last Approved by Council at the meeting on 22 October 2015*  
Updated May 2023

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 As owners and managers of the public spaces indicated within the boundary shown on the town centre map in Section 6. It is important to Woking Borough Council ('the Council') that any activities taking place in these spaces enhance the image of Woking town centre as a quality destination in which to spend time, and do not compromise anyone's safety or well-being.
- 1.2 Jubilee Square and Victoria Square are the two main focal points of activity within Woking town centre, but other open spaces which the Council is responsible for and are covered by this policy include:
  - Albion Square
  - Commercial Way
  - Crown Square
  - Gloucester Walk
  - Gloucester Square
  - Market Walk
  - Mercia Walk

Within these spaces, visitors can participate in a variety of activities, including being entertained, browsing stalls, learning something new, or simply enjoying the open air.

## **2 Policy objectives**

- To promote and develop the image of Woking town centre as a quality destination in which to spend time.
- To effectively manage the number of external activities taking place, to safeguard users and their enjoyment of the public space.
- To ensure clear pedestrian routes and access for emergency vehicles are maintained.
- To facilitate and encourage events and entertainment to take place, subject to the guidelines herein.
- To manage and maintain the public realm under the direction of the Council's Director of Place, or their nominee, and with consideration for the needs of other town centre stakeholders.

## **3 Management Arrangements**

### **3.1 Indoor Areas**

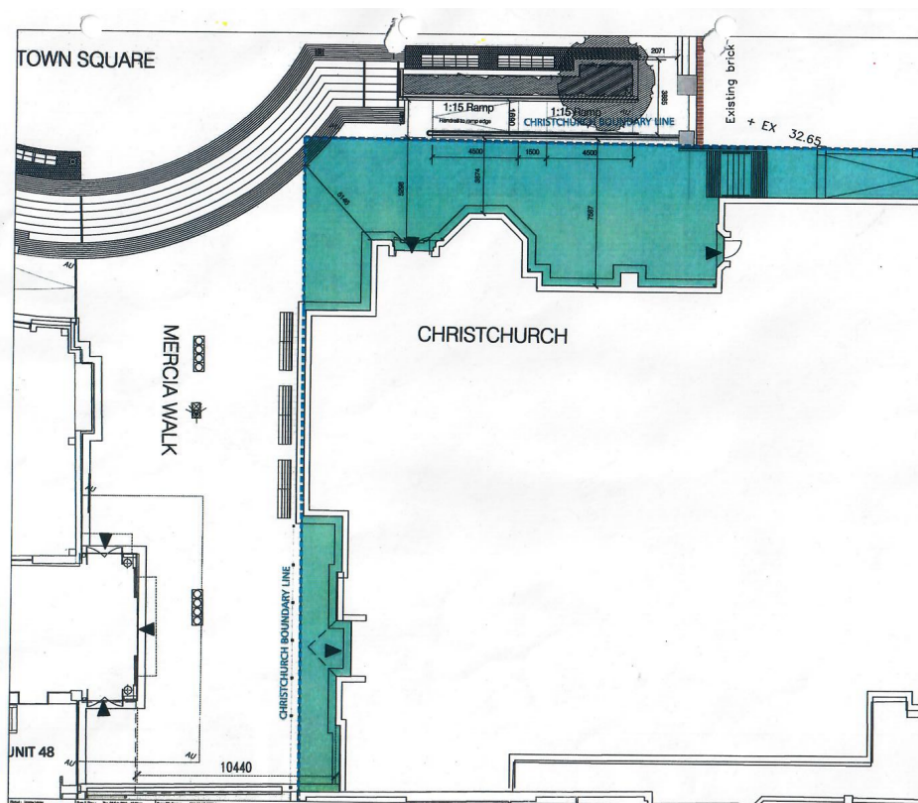
Victoria Place manages bookings and events taking place within the Peacocks Centre (including Market Walk), Henry Plaza and Wolsey Place.

### **3.2 Outdoor Areas**

To maintain a cohesive and coordinated approach to events and activities taking place in the town centre, the Victoria Place management team will be responsible for booking and managing events and activities in those areas of the public realm adjacent to Victoria Place, within the context and principles of this policy on behalf of the Council.

### 3.3 Christ Church

All bookings or enquiries that would take place on Christ Church's outlined area must be made directly with Christ Church's conferencing department.



3.4 This will ensure that events and activities are co-ordinated and controlled to ensure shoppers, visitors and others using the town centre have a positive experience, disruption and conflict is minimised and, where appropriate, a cohesive charging regime can be applied.

3.5 The Council will continue to have preference for its own events/activities or those that it specifically promotes or supports. These will be notified to Victoria Place annually, or giving as much advance notice as possible, and due consideration will be given to any pre-existing bookings.

3.6 A central booking diary will be maintained by Victoria Place and made available to the Council, so that any specific arrangements can be made, for example for non-routine cleaning.

## 4 **Booking terms**

4.1 All bookings must be made through Victoria Place. Bookings are made on a first-come, first-served basis. Please note - ensure you consult the Event Booking Form Guidance Notes when filling out the form.

4.2 Mandatory documentation is required at least 14 days in advance of **any** booking is as follows:

- Written evidence of Public Liability Insurance cover for £5m minimum.
- Written method statement with a photo/sketch of proposed event (if applicable).

- Sample of any promotional literature (if applicable).
- Written risk assessment (if applicable). Depending on the nature of your event, Victoria Place may also request to see a copy of your fire risk assessment.
- Evidence of any other licence required for the proposed activity.

N.B. All bookings must adhere to our terms and conditions.

- 4.3 Vehicular access is not permitted, unless express permission is granted for specific activities at permitted sites (fully comprehensive insurance is required for any vehicle involved in the event, for which the maximum gross vehicle weight is 3.5 tonnes).
- 4.5 Market stallholders must have the permission of the Council's Market Manager to trade.
- 4.6 A maximum of one information distributor and/ fund raiser/ coin collection may be made at any one time.
- 4.7 If any space is booked for a large-scale promotion, such as or similar to those listed below in point 6.2, sole use will be given to that organisation.
- 4.8 Victoria Place management team in liaison with the Council will decide which organisations and activities are appropriate for each of the public spaces, on an individual basis.
- 4.9 Victoria Place management team in liaison with the Council reserves the right to:
- refuse any application where the public space is required for other purposes
  - refuse entry to any organisation, relocate activities within the town centre
  - cancel any booking as it deems appropriate
  - charge a fee to 'commercial' organisations as per the published hire tariffs.
  - propose amendments to this policy, as it deems appropriate
- 4.10 Victoria Place or the Council will not be liable for any loss or damage to equipment or goods belonging to or under the control or custody of booked users of public spaces.
- 4.11 Victoria Place or The Council reserve the right to charge the event organiser for any remedial works deemed necessary because of the activities undertaken within its public spaces.

## **5 Code of conduct**

- 5.1 Activities should normally only take place between 10am and 6pm, with any entertainment performances lasting no longer than two hours, with no return within two hours unless special permission has been granted.

- 5.2 Set up/ break down of an event should be outside the hours of 10am to 6pm. Any event taking place before/after these times will need approval from Victoria Place.
- 5.3 Any activity must cease if a request to do so is given by representatives of Surrey Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue, The Council, or Victoria Place.
- 5.4 Amplifiers may only be used at reasonable levels and not cause disruption to the activities of neighbouring organisations and businesses. Amplifiers powered by generators are only permitted with the express permission of The Council or Victoria Place, and in exceptional circumstances only.
- 5.5 Users of electrical equipment must have a PAT certificate for all appliances.
- 5.6 Official ID must be worn or always displayed by users representing an organisation.
- 5.7 Users must position themselves and/ or their stall so as not to obstruct any access/ egress point to shops and other premises. Where practical, this should be at least three metres away.
- 5.8 The size and scale of activity for each proposed booking will be considered on its individual merits.
- 5.9 No user should cause obstruction of the highway, footpath, or physical or visual access/egress point to shops and other premises.
- 5.10 No user should perform in a manner that may be considered dangerous to themselves or members of the public or speak or dress in a manner which is likely to cause alarm, distress, or offence.
- 5.11 No user should cause members of the public to feel pressurised or harassed by their actions or words, nor utilise manipulative techniques in order to engage with the public.
- 5.12 Consideration must be given to the town centre's off-peak cycling prohibition, which affects several areas at certain times of the day.
- 5.13 Additional guidance follows for users undertaking specific types of activity, for which public spaces have been designated.

## 6 Town Centre Map



### Notes:

Please refer to The Council's [Street Entertainment Guidance](#), for full details of terms and conditions for street entertainers, including buskers.

## 7 Jubilee Square and Victoria Square

7.1 The use of Jubilee Square and/or Victoria Square will be restricted to events and promotions managed by the Council or partners authorised by it, unless special permission has been granted by the Council (such as for charity fundraising, or cultural events/ entertainment).

This will be booked through Victoria Place, who will manage and supervise operational issues as appropriate. Only one booking may take place at a time in either of the Squares, except for the Poppy Appeal and Normandy Veterans, who are welcome for the length of their annual campaign.

7.2 Permitted annual civic events organised by community groups and organisations may include, but are not restricted to, the following (with indicative dates):

- Chinese New Year Celebrations (January/February)
- Shopmobility Pancake Race (Shrove Tuesday)
- Erection of wooden cross (Holy Week)
- Act of Witness (Good Friday)
- Easter Sunday Parade/ Service (Easter Sunday)
- St George's Day Parade (April)

- Veterans' Day Parade (June)
- Woking Food and Drink Festival (September)
- Diwali lantern parade (November)
- Remembrance Day 11 (November)
- Remembrance Sunday Service (November)
- Christmas Tree installation/ lights switch on (November)

## **8 Charity fundraising**

8.1 Designated spaces: Gloucester Walk, Jubilee Square (by Town Gate), Market Walk (either end), Mercia Walk (under the canopy at either end), Wolsey Place (either end), Commercial Way (at junctions with Church Path and Chapel Street).

- Collections are only permitted on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, except for the Poppy Appeal and Normandy Veterans, who are welcome for the length of their annual campaign.
- A licence must be obtained in advance from the Council's [online application form](#) or for fund raising/ coin collections and/or a lottery. Applications must be made at least one calendar month before the proposed date of the collection.
- Only one charity may conduct fundraising at a time.

8.2 Direct debit canvassing is not permitted anywhere.

## **9 Commercial promotions and selling (including market traders)**

9.1 Market traders can apply to join the artisan market, regular farmers' market, and periodic specialist markets, at the discretion of the Council's market operator.

9.2 All traders within Woking's market are subject to conformance with the current regulations for their area of trade and current charges.

9.3 Promotional activities will be permitted up to six times per year per organisation.

9.4 Consideration must be given to businesses adjacent to the event location, to avoid disturbance and/or conflict of interest (e.g., one restaurant cannot promote itself directly outside another).

9.5 Organisations involved with giving away or selling food must be registered as a food business with their local Council's Environmental Health Team and operating to an acceptable standard.

9.6 Charges will be made to commercial organisations, as agreed with the Council's Commercialisation Officer, and rates will be subject to negotiation depending on individual circumstances, competition for spaces, time of year and the footfall in the area.

9.7 More attractive rates will be offered to smaller local commercial organisations than to larger national/international ones. Commercial activity, rates charged, and income generated will be subject to regular review between the Council and the centre management within Victoria Place.



- 9.8 Use of public realm by local community groups, charities and other similar not-for-profit making organisations will continue to be free of charge.
- 9.9 Street vendors wishing to sell their products within Woking town centre will need to hold a licence for their activity and to apply for consent from the Council. Both the license and the Council's written consent will need to be always carried when selling products.
- 9.10 Promotional activity by commercial organisations, including 'pop ups' can take place in any of the event areas shown on the map, if permission is granted by Victoria Place or the Council, as appropriate, subject to the nature of the promotion/product and due consideration being given to adjacent businesses. Businesses that would be in direct competition with tenants of Victoria Place or those on adjacent streets would not be permitted to undertake self-promotion within the same area.

## **10 Leafleting**

- 10.1 Leafleting is not permitted in Jubilee or Victoria Squares, or outside any entrance to Victoria Place.
- 10.2 A maximum of 12 bookings are permitted per year, per organisation, once a month only, between Monday and Thursday. Only one booking may be made at a time.
- 10.3 Leafleteers should be static, whether accompanied by a stall or not, and not to approach passers-by unnecessarily.
- 10.4 Leafleteers should not be positioned outside premises that could cause a conflict of interest.
- 10.5 Council-supported services and events can be promoted via leafleting more widely within the public realm.
- 10.6 Applicants should complete an event booking form and the Council's Customer Services team will process these on behalf of Victoria Place.
- 10.7 Leafleteers must adhere to the Council's booking terms & conditions (see page 3), including the requirement for Public Liability Insurance.

## **11 Market research**

- 11.1 Market research is not permitted in Jubilee or Victoria Squares, or outside any entrance to Victoria Place.
- 11.2 Market researchers must adhere to booking terms & conditions, including the requirement for Public Liability Insurance.
- 11.3 A maximum of 12 bookings are permitted per year, per organisation, once a month only, between Monday and Thursday. Only one booking may be made at a time.
- 11.4 The Council reserves the right to carry out market research on Council supported services and events more widely within the public realm.

## **12 Political, religious and lobby groups, and parades**

- 12.1 Woking Borough Council encourages the use of the public realm by groups which support the diversity of the Borough but retains the right to refuse permission to organisations whose views or activities would lead to potential public order issues or widespread offence.

## **13 Street-scene and digital advertising**

- 13.1 Please see Woking Borough Council's guidance on using [pavement A-boards](#) which applies to the entire public realm within Woking town centre.
- 13.2 Digital screens within Victoria Place are reserved for their own use or by the Council for its own messaging.
- 13.3 Banner advertising space along Commercial Way can be hired with the agreement of the Council, subject to availability and suitable banners being provided by the advertiser.
- 13.4 The use of Woking Borough Council's borough boards and drive-by boards are restricted to community and other not-for-profit groups. Priority is given to arts and cultural organisations within Woking.

## **14 Traffic management and vehicle access**

- 14.1 Vehicles will only be given permission to enter a public space in exceptional circumstances.
- 14.2 Any organisation given special permission to bring a vehicle into an event zone in the public realm must provide written evidence of fully comprehensive insurance for any vehicle involved in their event and sign an agreement to compensate the Council for any damage caused either voluntarily or involuntarily to the fabric of the road surface and/or built structures in or adjacent to their event site.
- 14.3 Please note that the only locations in which promotional vehicles are allowed to park, as part of an event, are Albion Square and Crown Square, unless special permission has been granted by the Council.
- 14.4 Vehicular access to unload goods is also permitted in Commercial Way, subject to advance permission being sought from Woking Borough Council. Please note that there is controlled access between Chapel Street and Victoria Square.
- 14.5 Vehicles needing to access Christ Church to provide wedding or funeral services will continue to be able to do so via Town Gate, subject to the terms given above.

## **15 Contact details**

### **15.1 Booking enquiries**

Hire of any public space enquiries within the town centre - inside or outside - should be made directly to Victoria Place:

### **15.2 Victoria Place**

Centre Management Suite  
Woking GU21 6GH

[info@vpwoking.co.uk](mailto:info@vpwoking.co.uk)  
01483 741000

### **15.3 Christ Church**

Please contact Conferencing and Events at Christ Church Woking to book space within the church premises:

[conferencing@ccwoking.org](mailto:conferencing@ccwoking.org)  
01483 727496

### **15.4 Market traders**

To apply to join any markets in Woking, please contact the Council's Market Manager, Steve Barrett:

[steve.barrett@woking.gov.uk](mailto:steve.barrett@woking.gov.uk)  
07458 003 845

### **15.5 Food vendors**

New traders of a food business will need to [register with the Council](#).  
You can also contact the Council's Environmental Health Team for advice:

[environmental.health@woking.gov.uk](mailto:environmental.health@woking.gov.uk)  
01483 743840

### **15.6 Street traders and promotional activities -**

For more details on how to apply for consent to trade within Woking Borough, please see the Council's webpage on [Licensing and Permits](#) including [Street Trader Licence](#) & [Pavement Furniture licence](#)

[licensingteam@woking.gov.uk](mailto:licensingteam@woking.gov.uk)  
01483 743840

### **15.7 Street Collections**

To apply for a charitable street collection licence, please complete the [online application form](#) or contact the Environmental Health team.

[street.collections@woking.gov.uk](mailto:street.collections@woking.gov.uk)  
01483 743840

### **15.8 Comments**

Urgent concerns during your booking should be raised in person with a member of the Victoria Place security team (also available out of hours and at weekends). Other comments, please contact the Council's Customer Services Team who will pass your enquiry to the relevant person (s).

[customer.services@woking.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@woking.gov.uk)  
01483 743451