

Specimen Busking Permit for Bath
A draft designed by Jeremy Broun FRSA

Permits issued by the Tourist Information Centre 9am till noon each day.
Allocated so that some permits are available for visiting entertainers up until noon.
Monitored by a designated BANES Entertainments Officer

This is an agreement between the named street entertainer(s) below and BANES Council to perform at a specified pitch at the time stated for one* hour. By signing you are agreeing to abide by the rules and protocol of busking in Bath. Please read carefully, enter your details in Block Capitals and sign below.

Date . . . *10 Jan 2014* . . . State the day of the week: *Saturday*

Name of performer(s) . . . *John Smith*

Type of performance *singing*

Instrument(s) used *guitar*

Amplification (tick box) / enter the wattage *10* max 15 watts

Allocated pitch (see map overleaf) *Abbey Churchyard*

Time *1pm* I wish to advertize/sell my/our CDs / and enclose my fee of £

Rules:

Buskers are not allowed to ask for money but can accept donations. Selling CDs requires a fee (to be set).

Amplification. A maximum of 15 watts is allowed but this does not mean it should be turned up to full volume. The performer(s) agree to get somebody else to give a sound check from a distance not much greater than the immediate audience to ensure it is adequately heard but not beyond.

If the amplification is too loud the licence may be revoked and a Noise Abatement Notice served immediately. The performer(s) will be asked to control the volume to a reasonable level or to stop performing (by the entertainments officer or any other council official after one warning only. No further permits will be issued to the performer(s) if compliance is not met. This applies also to non-amplified music that is too loud.

A specific number of permits will be available for all the city centre pitches each day. There will be more permits issued at weekends. In the interests of fairness to all buskers and to avoid repeat repertoires which annoy some shopkeepers and local residents, only one permit is allocated per day to a performer up until noon. If after noon there are spare permits, further permits will be allocated to the performer(s).

I agree to abide by these rules. Signed . . . *John Smith* Authorised by

Notes: Any specific bye laws will be stated on this document regarding any confiscation of equipment, fines etc empowered to BANES Council under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014.

* one hour can be changed to 45 minutes or 30 mins according to demand eg during prolonged hot and dry spells in the summer.

P.T.O

The rationale for a Permit system

Self-regulation has only proved to serve the interests of a few buskers some of whom expect a livelihood from the streets, at the expense of excluding many other legitimate buskers and who are causing the anti-social problems that have become recurring news.

1. A permit clarifies and formalises an acceptable code of practice for entertainers
2. It involves a commitment as the performer(s) sign the permit (agreement).
3. It offers a **fair system of street performing for both local and visiting street entertainers** to replace the recent protective system exercised by a particular group of buskers who hog the streets, "stitch up" all the pitches at the 10am meetings and are responsible in the main for the excessive noise and repeat repertoires that are intolerable to many residents and local businesses. **It is not fair that all pitches throughout the city are allocated at 10am each day.**
4. It attempts to **control amplification by setting a limit on the power of an amplifier.**
5. It regulates the level of busking throughout the week and particularly during the peak season (hot summers) by the number of permits allocated. Eg less on a Sunday or early week to **give quiet periods to the streets of Bath** and to respect the church services.
6. It covers the issue of **selling CDs** as a nominal fee for street trading could be charged.
7. As the permits are pitch specific it gives control in **spreading buskers out across the city away from the honey pot locations.** Eg encouraging busking in Kingsmead Square where there is a café culture and perhaps in Queens Square which is busy with pedestrians in the summer. The focus has been far too much around the Abbey and the Pump Rooms because they are safe crowd pullers,
8. It **allows flexibility in dealing with excessive demand for busking pitches** eg. during prolonged hot dry spells in that the allocated time of one hour can be reduced to half an hour.
9. In the longterm it should be cost effective causing less stress to the people of Bath who create the commerce and less time taken up by council officials etc dealing with complaints. Possibly a nominal permit fee could be introduced as in some other towns.

If BANES Council consulted a few responsible buskers the issue of amplification could be solved more effectively. Eg. musicians know which particular amplifiers are very loud irrespective of size.

A map of all pitches (10) will be shown here
(taken from The Bath Buskers Guide)

Ps. The proposed banning of amplifiers by BANES Council focuses directly on the two locations adjacent to Bath Abbey (Abbey Churchyard & Kingston Parade) and in Abbey Green which is not a busking pitch (See The Bath Buskers guide endorsed by officials). This may keep the rector of Bath Abbey happy but what about Union Street where shopkeepers suffer loud buskers in this narrow acoustic corridor? Equally Russell & Bromley at the bottom of Milsom St have expressed concerns of lost trade to me when I was buskers' representative.

Ironically the prime busking pitch Abbey Churchyard has the highest level of pedestrian noise which is the very reason many buskers require an amplifier as they simply would not be heard above the crowd!!

The rector of Bath, according to his media interviews has not actually called for amplifiers to be banned outside the Abbey.

Whereas the emotive issue is amplification the legal issue is noise disturbance and that applies to non-amplified musicians such as opera singers with powerful voices, trumpet players etc. Bath is an echo chamber, an acoustic bowl.