

Harassment earns jail term

A man has been jailed for six months for harassment.

Jacob Smith, of Norman Street, Dover, was convicted of harassing a man and woman by shouting and swearing at them between May 1 and November 10, 2015.

He had pleaded not guilty at Folkestone Magistrates Court and was sentenced on Wednesday last week. Smith, 51, also has to pay a £115 victim surcharge.

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Plan to get HGVs off roads and laybys and into designated stop sites

Bid for more 24-hour lorry parks waiting on law change

County transport chiefs say plans for by Paul Francis
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a series of lorry parks in Kent depend on the government being prepared to make it unlawful for HGVs to park in laybys and residential roads.

Kent County Council has earmarked a number of potential sites for round-the-clock lorry parks but says they cannot be developed until ministers agree to a change in the law.

The council has launched a consultation over its Freight Action Plan, setting out steps and policies it believes are essential if the county is to cope with a huge rise in HGV traffic.

A key element is creating at least three round-the-clock lorry parks to counter what has been dubbed "fly parking".

Cllr Matthew Balfour, KCC cabinet member for transport, said it would be inappropriate to identify the possible sites until steps were taken to make it an offence to park in unauthorised places.

"I have asked the minister for a specific change in the law which says that HGVs over a certain weight should not be parked anywhere other than an authorised place for longer than a few minutes.

"We are talking to the Department

for Transport about getting the law changed to tackle illegal parking – then we will be able to make the commercial viability of lorry parks greater, which I hope will mean we can get lorries off our village greens and laybys into secure lorry parks."

However, he said the increase in freight traffic could potentially be checked by the Brexit decision.

"I don't have a crystal ball particularly over negotiations about Europe but it may be that there will be less freight coming through Europe and it may be that we will be trading further afield," added Cllr Balfour.

"A lot of the freight is 'JIT' – just in time – using warehouses and distribution centres in France and Belgium – and if that changes and we have large ships coming into some of the new port facilities, certainly around the Thames, then that would be the structure but I don't know what is going to happen."

The scale of the problem of illegally parked HGVs was underlined by a survey carried out last September when, over just three days, officials recorded 1,973 lorries parked in side streets and residential areas.

In December, the Prime Minister said she shared Kent's desire to deal with the issue of illegal parking.

Consultation on the council's freight plan is under way and will end on March 12.

For details, go to kent.gov.uk/

'We are talking to the Department for Transport about getting the law changed to tackle illegal parking'

UNDER PRESSURE

- How Kent's roads will have to cope with increasing freight traffic:
- Nearly three million HGVs came to the UK from mainland Europe in 2015
 - Freight traffic is growing at 4% a year
 - The number of goods vehicles travelling between the UK and mainland Europe has increased by 84% in last 20 years
 - There will be a 22% increase in HGV movement between 2010 and 2040

'Victory for commuters'

MP Charlie Elphicke has welcomed news that a new car park at Dover Priory train station looks set to be built in 2017.

The 100-space, surface-level car park was given planning permission by Dover District Council at the end of last year.

It follows a long campaign led by the Dover MP to get more parking provision at the site off Folkestone Road where people from Dover and Deal park to catch fast trains.

Essex-based developers Churchgate Ltd will deliver the scheme.

Mr Elphicke said: "This is fantastic news and looks set to be a real victory for commuters.

It proves we were right to keep fighting for more parking at Dover Priory.

"This car park will ensure local

people can commute and travel conveniently – another crucial step in building a better future for Dover and Deal.

"I will continue to make the case for more spaces, but there is room to expand and add decks when demand dictates it."

Churchgate Ltd has been working with Network Rail about using adjacent land which would increase the capacity to around 140 spaces.

The Network Rail-owned land was valued this week and Churchgate has confirmed an intention to buy it.

Derek Govey, Churchgate's managing director, said: "We want to get building it as soon as possible and it will definitely be completed by the end of the year."

Lorry loads of despair

HGVs found illegally parked on KCC routes and Highways England roads across Kent on selected days in September 2016

*No survey taken



AREA	Tue	Wed	Fri	Ave	Total
Swale	105	209	38	117	352
Canterbury	127	135	72	111	334
Ashford	109	94	117	107	320
Tonbridge & Malling	64	93	63	73	220
Gravesham	64	79	67	70	210
Dover	91	42	37	57	170
Sevenoaks	51	43	16	37	110
Dartford	34	32	39	35	105
Maidstone	41	21	25	29	87
Shepway	19	7	9	12	35
Thanet	10	13	6	10	29
Tunbridge Wells*	0	0	1	0	1
OVERALL	715	768	490	658	1,973

Source: KCC Draft Freight Action Plan for Kent, 2017

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