

# GUIDE TO BUSKING & STREET PERFORMANCE IN SOUTHAMPTON



# WELCOME

In Southampton, busking and street entertainment have long been integral to the city's character, creating a vibrant and enjoyable atmosphere for both locals and visitors.

We warmly welcome buskers and street performers who add life to our streets. Buskers and street entertainers are free to perform in the city centre without a permit.

However, there are occasions when certain performances can become disruptive and intrusive to the daily lives of our residents, visitors, and workers.

To address these concerns and promote mutual respect, Southampton City Council and GO! Southampton have collaborated to develop these guidelines.

The aim is to foster a harmonious environment and facilitate the resolution of any issues that may arise.

Maintaining positive relationships with all users of public spaces is a shared priority, and these guidelines serve to support this objective.

## SOUTHAMPTON BUSKER'S CODE

The Southampton Busker's Code is a set of guidelines that aim to promote a positive and harmonious environment for both buskers and the local community.

This Code only applies to public land.

You cannot busk on private land or shopping centres such as Westquay or The Marlands without the permission of the owner.

By following these guidelines, buskers and street entertainers can help to ensure that their performances are enjoyed by all.

**YOU CANNOT BUSK ON PRIVATE LAND OR SHOPPING CENTRES WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE OWNER**



**THIS CODE ONLY APPLIES TO PUBLIC LAND**



# BUSKER'S CODE

## > KEEP THE NOISE DOWN

Music or voices should not be amplified to a level that can be heard beyond a distance of 25 metres.

## > DON'T HOG THE SPOTLIGHT

Buskers should not occupy a single pitch for more than one hour at a time. After performing, they are encouraged to move to a different location at least 50 meters away. Returning to the same pitch on the same day is discouraged.

## > GIVE YOUR FELLOW BUSKERS SOME SPACE

Buskers should avoid setting up their performances within 50 metres of another busker. If you can hear each other move or turn it down.

## > DON'T BLOCK THE WAY

Buskers should not obstruct the passage of pedestrians along the street. It is important to steer clear of areas nearby fire exits, cashpoints, or doorways, and to refrain from performing directly in front of businesses.

## > NO SELLING

Offering merchandise, such as CDs or posters, for sale is not allowed during busking sessions in Above Bar Street, Carlton Place and Oxford Street.

## > NO BEGGING

Soliciting contributions from passers-by, which can be interpreted as begging, is prohibited and may result in arrest and legal consequences.

## AND THERE'S MORE...

RETURNING TO THE SAME PITCH ON  
THE SAME DAY IS DISCOURAGED



SOLICITING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM  
PASSERS-BY IS PROHIBITED



# BUSKER'S CODE CONTINUED...

## > BE RESPECTFUL

If requested to lower the volume of your music or change your performance, please do so. Buskers should always be respectful of the wishes of the local community.

## > RESPECT THE HOURS

Busking activities should not commence before 9am and should finish by 8pm.

## > KEEP IT VARIED

Don't play the same songs repeatedly. Repetitive music can be annoying and disruptive to people who are trying to work or shop nearby. Take breaks every 20-30 minutes to give people a chance to rest their ears.

## > FLEXIBILITY

Be willing to be flexible and adjust if your performance is negatively impacting others. This could involve moving to a different location, playing at a lower volume, or changing the direction you're facing.

## > NO ANIMALS

Animals are not allowed in busking performances as it's cruel, dangerous to the public, and disruptive to the community.

## > FAMILY FRIENDLY

Be mindful that Southampton is a family-friendly city. Consider your audience when choosing songs and activities.

## > KNOW YOUR EQUIPMENT

Be aware of how your equipment sounds and how it may impact others. Some instruments, such as brass, amplified bagpipes, and percussion, can carry more and be more intrusive than others. Consider taking breaks and moving locations more often if using these instruments.

## > SPECIAL EVENTS

Be mindful of events and times when busking may not be welcome.

To see the annual programme of events go to  
[www.visitsouthampton.co.uk/events](http://www.visitsouthampton.co.uk/events)



IF REQUESTED, PLEASE LOWER THE VOLUME OF  
YOUR MUSIC OR CHANGE YOUR PERFORMANCE



BE MINDFUL THAT SOUTHAMPTON  
IS A FAMILY-FRIENDLY CITY



# THE TECHNICAL BITS...

## Street entertainment or street trading

In Southampton, busking does not involve a formal sales transaction. Donations are given to performers by members of the public on a voluntary basis.

If the provision of goods or services is part of your busking act, it must be offered on a voluntary basis, and this must be made clear to members of the public. It must also be a secondary aspect of your act, which means that people should be able to engage with your act/performance without any obligation to donate.

It must be highlighted that any donations made are on a voluntary basis so that the product or service is an extension of the act itself and people are not obliged to make any contribution.

For example, in some circumstances a member of the public may request a CD without donating. This should be made clear with an appropriate sign.

**We suggest the following wording:**

*"Due to Southampton City Council's street trading legislation,  
I am not allowed to sell these CDs (balloons, portraits, etc.).  
However, you are welcome to make a voluntary contribution  
if you would like to support my work."*

Any suggestion of a price will be considered as offering goods for sale, which is against local legislation.

Where the above guidance is observed, and the provision of goods/services is clearly a secondary aspect of the performance, enforcement action under street trading legislation will not be taken. However, random audits will be carried out by council officers to ensure compliance.

Any performances in aid of a charity will require a separate street collection permit: [www.southampton.gov.uk/business-licensing/licensing/fundraising](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/business-licensing/licensing/fundraising)



**IT MUST BE HIGHLIGHTED THAT ANY DONATIONS  
MADE ARE ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS**



**BUSKING ACTIVITIES ARE ONLY  
ALLOWED BETWEEN 9AM – 8PM**





# MORE TECHNICAL BITS...

## Music licences

Buskers must have a Performing Rights Society (PRS) music licence to play copyrighted music in public.

This licence gives them the legal right to play copyrighted music for extended periods of time.

Failure to obtain a PRS licence may result in the copyright owner taking legal action for copyright infringement.

It is the responsibility of each busker to comply with the regulations. More information can be found on the PRS website: [www.prsformusic.com/licences](http://www.prsformusic.com/licences)



## Children in employment and performance

If children wish to perform in the streets, such as busking, the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (Section 37) may apply to restrict licensing.

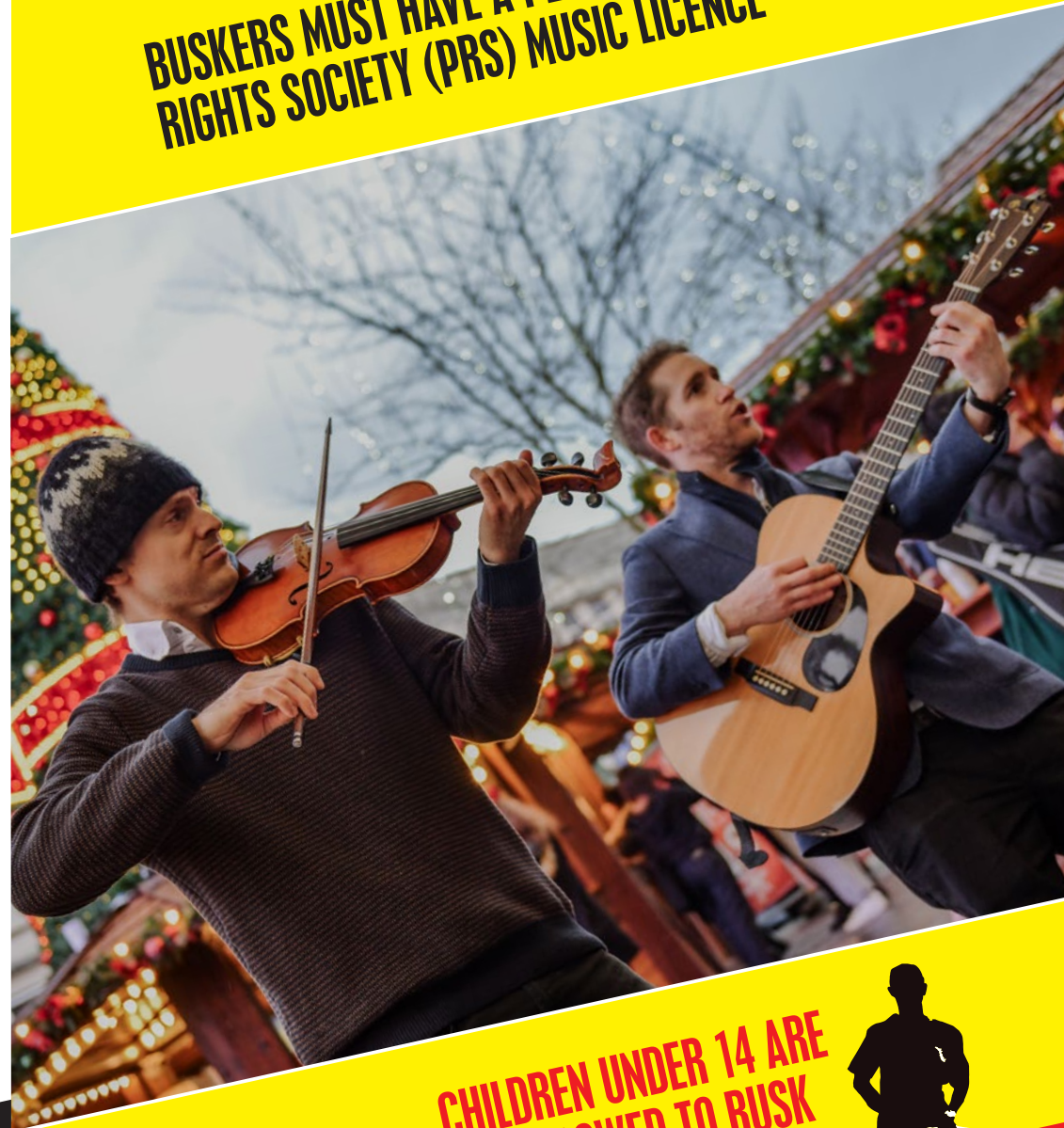
Children who are paid, absent from school, being broadcast, being directed, or have performed more than four times in six months will need a child performance licence and a busking licence.

Children under 14 are not allowed to busk.

For more information and if you think you may need a child performance licence, please visit: [www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/employ-teach/child-performance-licensing/](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/employ-teach/child-performance-licensing/)



**BUSKERS MUST HAVE A PERFORMING RIGHTS SOCIETY (PRS) MUSIC LICENCE**



**CHILDREN UNDER 14 ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BUSK**



# ...THE LAST FEW TECHNICAL BITS.

## Health & Safety

Everyone who performs in the street in Southampton has a responsibility to do so safely. This means taking steps to avoid accidents and injuries, both to yourself and to others.

**Here are some tips for staying safe while busking in Southampton:**

- > **Be aware of your surroundings.** Pay attention to traffic, pedestrians, and other potential hazards.
- > **Use caution when setting up and taking down your equipment.** Be sure to secure any loose items and avoid tripping hazards.
- > **Be mindful of your volume.** Don't play your music so loud that it disturbs others.
- > **Be respectful of others.** Don't block walkways or doorways, and don't solicit donations in a way that could be interpreted as begging.
- > **Performers are responsible for their actions.** The city council is not liable for any injuries, damages, or losses that occur because of their performance.

In addition to taking these precautions, it is also a good idea to have public liability insurance.

This covers you in case someone is injured because of your activities. It is an inexpensive way to protect yourself from financial liability in the event of an accident.

## The Law

Under Southampton City Council's Byelaws, it is an offence to cause a nuisance by making excessive noise.

This includes buskers who play their music too loudly or for too long.

If a busker is found to be in breach of the Byelaws, the Council may take action to abate the noise.

By following these guidelines, buskers can help to create a positive and harmonious environment.

**DON'T PLAY YOUR MUSIC SO LOUD THAT IT DISTURBS OTHERS**



**IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE**



# PERFORMANCE AREAS

In Southampton, there are three main areas for busking. Please see the map on the opposite page for the designated spots and below for what3words precise location finder:

## 🎵 Carlton Place

### 1. what3words

Use this code to locate the designated busking area.  
///oppose.fines.afford



## 🎵 Above Bar Street

### 1. what3words

Use this code to locate the designated busking area.  
///number.crisp.fails



### 2. what3words

Use this code to locate the designated busking area.  
///cable.pounds.water



### 3. what3words

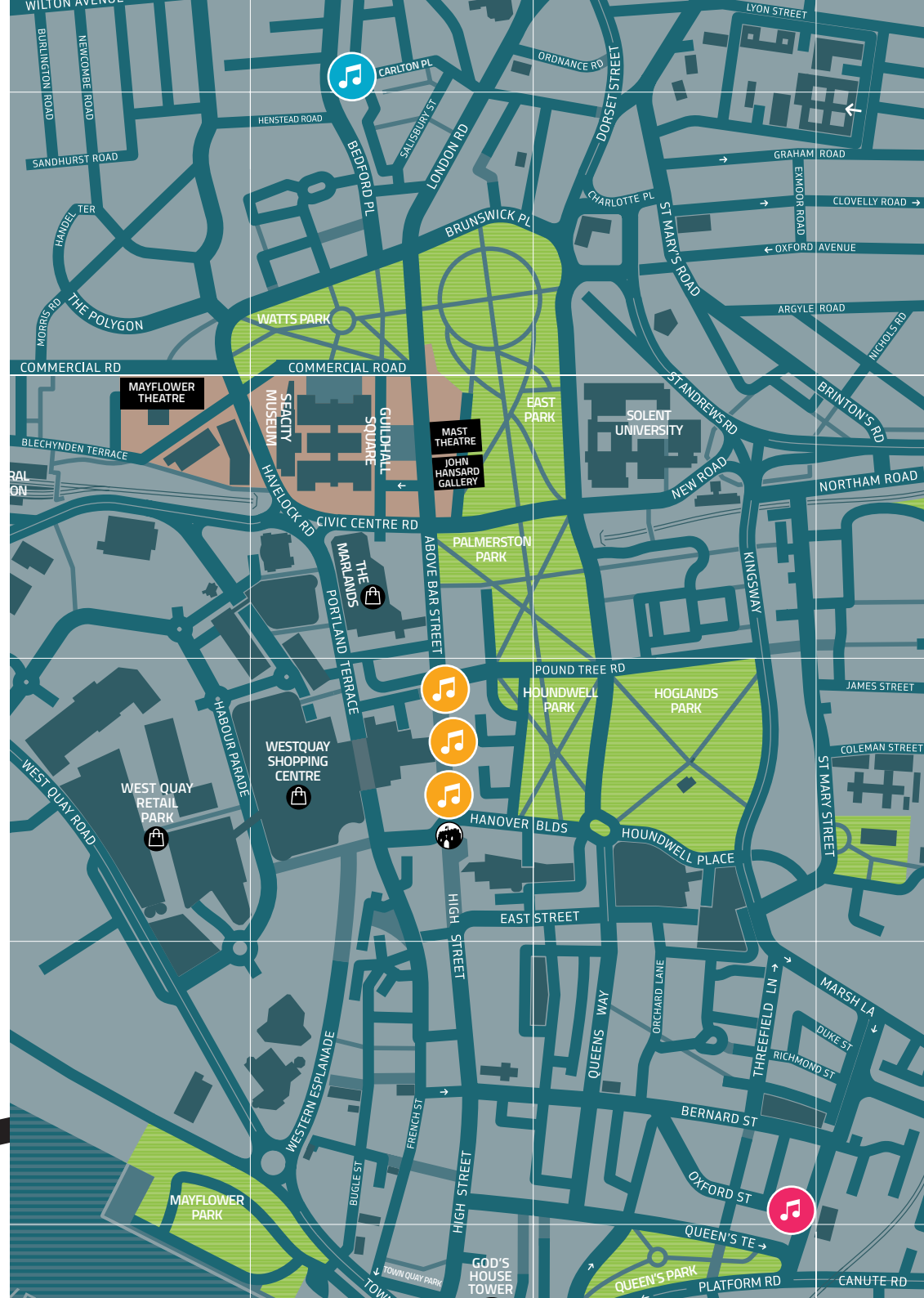
Use this code to locate the designated busking area.  
///mats.minute.melon



## 🎵 Oxford Street

### 1. what3words

Use this code to locate the designated busking area.  
///strict.scared.grow





For more information around busking and performing in  
Southampton city centre, please visit  
[www.southampton.gov.uk/business-licensing/licensing/street-entertainment](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/business-licensing/licensing/street-entertainment)  
or scan the QR code



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