



## **ABANDONED VEHICLES**

### **The Increasing Problem Countrywide**

Abandoned vehicles are an increasing problem over the Country. Some car owners abandon old vehicles without caring for the consequences. This creates an eyesore and can encourage vandalism and arson, endangering lives, property and the environment.

### **The Local Problem in East Cambridgeshire**

In East Cambridgeshire, like elsewhere in the Country, the numbers of abandoned vehicles have increased. This is shown by the number of complaints received by East Cambridgeshire District Council over the last few years. The slight reduction in 2002 and 2003 is mainly attributable to the promotional activities carried out by the District and County.

The introduction of the End of Life Vehicle Directive will make destroying vehicles much more costly and it is anticipated that the numbers of vehicles to be abandoned will rise still further. This will increase the burden on Local Authorities with regard to the costs of removing vehicles and officer time.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NUMBER OF REPORTS</b>
1998	120
1999	248
2000	530
2001	611
2002	488
2003	406

### **How do I dispose of a vehicle responsibly?**

If you have a car you no longer want, it is up to you to dispose of it properly. You can find details of breakers yards in the telephone directory. Sometimes you can deliver the vehicles to them with little or no charge, but if they need to be picked up it is likely that there will be a fee.

You can obtain details of suitable contractors from yellow pages. They should be fully licensed with the Environment Agency. There are some local companies below, although East Cambridgeshire District Council cannot recommend or guarantee the work of any companies.

DMR Grunty Fen. Tel: 01353 740741  
Mr W Meadowcroft, Bottisham Tel: 01223 811742

It is against the law to abandon a vehicle (Refuse Disposal Amenity Act 1978) and if convicted a fine can be imposed up to **£2,500 or 3 months** in prison.

In many instances people haven't informed the DVLA that they have sold, bought a vehicle or had it scrapped. This is an offence in itself. Similarly, if the vehicle does not display a tax disc and the DVLA have not been notified that the vehicle is off the road on private land, this is also an offence. The DVLA prosecute for these offences.

### **Who do I contact if I see an abandoned vehicle?**

If you live within East Cambridgeshire, with most cases you would need to contact the District Council on **01353 616286** or alternatively fill in the [downloadable form](#).

If however, you consider that the vehicle is in a dangerous position or causing an obstruction, the Police should be contacted, as they have powers to remove the vehicles more quickly.

### **What information do you want if I see an abandoned vehicle?**

The Officer will need to know the: -

- 1) Registration number of the vehicle
- 2) Make
- 3) Colour
- 4) Condition- is it in good condition, is it a wreck or is it burnt out?
- 5) Location of the vehicle
- 6) How long the vehicle has been there?
- 7) Have you got any idea of the ownership of the vehicle?

### **What does East Cambridgeshire District then do?**

On receipt of a complaint, the Local Authority must legally make all reasonable enquiries to establish whether or not the vehicle is abandoned. Some of these enquiries include a Police search, a DVLA request for details of the last registered keeper and general local enquiries.

East Cambridgeshire District Council, then send a letter to the last registered keeper of the vehicle, requesting that it should be removed immediately. The last registered keeper has 24 hours from the date of this letter to remove the vehicle. A notice is then placed on the vehicle and if no-one comes forward to claim ownership, details are passed to the contractor for its removal.

If the vehicle is taxed, the vehicle cannot be destroyed until this has expired. It is **East Cambridgeshire's** procedure that it will not be removed until the tax expires, to reduce storage costs for vehicles. This may however, result in the vehicles being on the roadside for a longer period of time.

### **What is the cost to the Council Tax Payer?**

East Cambridgeshire District Council is mindful of the increasing costs of providing this service to local taxpayers and therefore our procedure has been developed to provide the most cost effective way to deal with this problem and to minimise storage costs.

The costs will be recharged to the last registered keeper. It is the last keeper's responsibility to ensure the details are kept up to date and if the vehicle has been sold on, the DVLA should have been informed.

**How is East Cambridgeshire trying to improve this procedure to be able to take cars away more quickly?**

East Cambridgeshire District Council is working closely with other Local Authorities and the Cambridgeshire Constabulary to look at ways to improve the procedure and to deal efficiently with the increasing numbers of abandoned vehicles. This has improved the process greatly and with the implementation of new legislation this is an ongoing and dynamic process.