# St Ives pleasure boat operators face collapse as council clamps down on ticket touting



A significant dispute has emerged in St Ives, Cornwall, where local pleasure boat operators are grappling with new council regulations that threaten their livelihoods. The rules, enacted this year, have led to a reported loss of £50,000 for these operators, generating fears of potential business closures and job losses.

For over a century, ticket sellers at the gates near the town's lifeboat station have relied on traditional touting practices to attract tourists to their pleasure boat services. However, these long-standing practices have been curtailed by a public space protection order, limiting the number of booths from 16 to 10 and effectively banning the age-old tradition of touting.

Matt Spencer Smith, who operates several pleasure boat trips from the harbour, has expressed the stark challenges facing his business and others like it. "The council started coming down and fining people £100," he stated in an interview with the Daily Express. "They said if they catch us a certain amount of times it would go up to £1,000 and then to a criminal record." He added that with online ticket sales being insufficient to sustain business, operators are left with no choice but to confront potential bankruptcy.

The financial strain extends beyond operators, with Smith warning that approximately 30 staff members could soon find themselves out of work. "Businesses aren't going to survive," he remarked, emphasising the dire prospects facing not just the boat operators, but their employees and families as well.

In defence of its policy, St Ives Town Council cited safety concerns raised by local businesses, particularly the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Council representatives claim that the decision was prompted by worries about the safety of operations at the gate leading into the town’s lifeboat station. However, this justification has not assuaged the fears of local operators, who feel blindsided by the council's actions. "We need a good May bank holiday otherwise we could go under," Smith stated, highlighting the seasonal nature of their businesses and the urgent need for a successful holiday period.

The St Ives Boat Association has voiced collective frustration, stating that despite being three weeks into the tourist season, little progress has been made. "The heavy-handed council are still issuing fines," they noted, elaborating that no new licences had been granted and expressing confusion over the council's motives. They questioned why the presence of an additional six ticket sellers at a designated location posed such an issue.

As operations continue to be hampered, the affected businesses are increasingly compelled to explore alternative avenues, including protests, petitions, and potentially legal action, to advocate for their rights and livelihoods. The current situation underscores a broader tension in St Ives, where the traditional fabric of the town is being challenged by regulatory changes, leaving many residents anxious about the future of their community and its businesses.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://stivestowncouncil-cornwall.gov.uk/info-page/public-spaces-protection-orders-in-st-ives/> - This page details the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in St Ives, Cornwall, which restricts certain activities along the seafront, including soliciting or touting for business and the distribution of free literature. The order, enacted in December 2024, limits the number of booths from 16 to 10, effectively banning traditional touting practices.
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-61099492> - This article reports on a new by-law in St Ives that prohibits shopkeepers from placing merchandise on pavements. The by-law, which came into force on 1 April 2022, also impacts unlicensed traders and buskers, aiming to regulate activities in the town, particularly along the harbour front.
3. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/675/made/data.html> - This document provides the full text of the Cornwall Harbours Harbour Revision Order 2023, which modernizes and consolidates the statutory harbour powers for harbours including St Ives. The order includes provisions related to harbour operations, moorings, aids to navigation, and penalties for obstruction of works.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cornwall-harbours-harbour-revision-order> - This publication outlines the Cornwall Harbours Harbour Revision Order, which consolidates the statutory harbour powers for harbours including St Ives. The order provides for clarity of the harbour limits, general functions, constitution and governance arrangements of the Cornwall Harbours Board, advisory bodies, application of harbour revenue, establishment of reserve funds, and borrowing powers.
5. <https://www.cornwallharbours.co.uk/document-centre/> - This document centre provides downloadable documentation including byelaws and general directions, fees and charges, forms, safety guidance, notices, and other documents relevant to Cornwall's harbours, including St Ives. It includes byelaws and general directions for St Ives Harbour.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cornwall-61099492> - This article reports on a new by-law in St Ives that prohibits shopkeepers from placing merchandise on pavements. The by-law, which came into force on 1 April 2022, also impacts unlicensed traders and buskers, aiming to regulate activities in the town, particularly along the harbour front.
7. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2049379/popular-seaside-town-crippled-1k> - Please view link - unable to able to access data